

July 2019

Rt Hon Damian Hinds
Secretary of State for Education
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Hinds

We are writing to you in our capacity as Chair of Governors and Headteacher at {insert school/academy name}

[Consider inserting statement re recent Ofsted inspection, appropriate comments from within it and also recent developments in student outcomes]

In [date] at a meeting of our [insert name] we received reports in relation to the funding of the school over the next three/five years. These showed that the school would fall into a deficit position by [date] as set out in the table below.

Year	Income	Expenditure	Surplus/deficit	Year end balance
2019-2020				
2020-2021				
2021-2022				
2022-2023				
2023-2024				

These figures are based on advice in respect of future spending commitments received from the DfE, the School Forum and statements from Government in respect of future commitments to current short-term in-year subsidies to support new obligations being placed on school budgets, e.g. pension increases, annual pay awards.

[These figures do assume the continuation of these current support payments without which the financial position would be as follows:

Year	Income	Expenditure	Surplus/deficit	Year-end balance
2019-2020				
2020-2021				
2021-2022				
2022-2023				
2023-2024				

Even based on the more optimistic assumptions in the first table it is clear that the school will be having to consider further economies in the next year in order to minimise future in-year deficits and the erosion of balances which have been essential in recent years to address some of the under-funding that has taken place.

Government statements that more is being spent on education than ever before ignores the fact that:

- Whilst the cash paid out may have increased the real value of the funds has decreased since there has not been a realistic allowance for inflation included
- The number of pupils in education in the UK has increased at a greater rate than the funding in education, so that the AWPU has relatively decreased
- Statements by the Institute of Fiscal Studies that an 8% reduction in real terms spending on education has occurred during the last [X] years
- Statements made by prospective leadership candidates in June/July that there is an urgent need to increase spending on education
- Payments given to overcome immediate shortfalls or political expediency do not form the basis for long-term planning of budgets.
- Increasing expectations and obligations placed on schools in respect of pupil welfare, mental and physical health, social problems e.g. knife crime, county lines and drugs which require both time and staff to deliver but for which no funding is made available

You are fully aware that the majority of expenditure in schools goes on staff, staff who are essential if students are to receive a quality education and personal support that will enable the UK economy to develop in the coming decades. Making changes to staffing levels is disruptive to pupil education, to the breadth of curriculum that can be offered, a dis-incentive for people to enter the profession and costly in terms of severance payments that have to be made. Consequently, the greater the uncertainty about future funding the greater is the pressure on Governors and Headteachers to plan several years in advance to minimise deficits which may result in action having to be taken that results in such wastage.

[On investigating further articles relating to funding for schools, a report to the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, John Roberts in June 2018 indicated that only 15% of its fund is accounted for therefore raising the question – ‘What has happened to the £70 million support for the North of England?’ The Department for Education is facing questions on how or whether the fund has been used since it was announced in 2016 and as a result the Commons Education Select Committee wrote to the DfE demanding answers after the former Treasury Minister, Lord Jim O’Neill told MPs that he was unaware of any of the £70 million fund being spent.

It has also been noted that the DfE has now identified three schemes which it says are being funded through the strategy – £6 million on the creation of maths hubs and boosting maths teaching in the North West; £5 million on home learning trials for early years children in the North; and the Northern elements of a national English hubs programme.]

*[When the current **Britannia Bridge School** was opened in September 2017, additional space was allocated for children who needed additional help with Reading, Writing and Maths, especially writing (in accordance with Ofsted recommendations), the school developed a programme of additional help using ‘breakout rooms’ where children received additional help from Higher Level Teaching Assistants, and the results to date have been extremely positive.*

What myself and the members of the Governing Body of the school want to ascertain is, when faced with continuing reduced budget, how does the school:

- *continue to assist the children to make the additional progress needed*
- *continue to support children who are on the SEND register*
- *provide the many additional learning experiences that help children develop both their learning and social skills*

The last thing the Governors want to have to consider is making staff redundant as a reduction in both teaching staff and teaching assistants will have a detrimental effect on the progress the school is determined to make.]

In conclusion, we have to ask what is the Government's long term policy for schools and their funding? Is setting a deficit budget deemed to be acceptable, and finally why are the children not only of Wigan but also over the whole country not being offered the best education possible by funding schools accordingly?

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely

RESPONSE BELOW FROM NICK GIBB MP, MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCHOOL STANDARDS



Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for Schools Standards

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Ms Dorothy Harrison
Chair of Governors, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

12 February 2019

Dear Ms Harrison

Thank you for your letter of 28 January, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding school funding. I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

The Government are investing an extra £1.3 billion in schools and high needs over the period 2018-19, over and above the budget set at the Spending Review in 2015. Core funding for schools and high needs has risen from almost £41 billion in 2017-18 to over £43.5 billion in 2019-20. Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) shows that real terms per pupil funding for 5 to 16 year olds in 2020 will be more than 50 per cent higher than it was in 2000, and more than 70 per cent higher than in 1990. Spending plans beyond 2019-20 will be set at the next Spending Review, and we cannot pre-empt these decisions, but we are committed to securing the right deal for education.

We are delivering on our promise to reform the unfair, opaque and outdated school and high needs funding systems, and introduce national funding formulae. In 2018-19, resources have been directed where they are needed most, based on the individual needs of every school in the country. Schools are already benefitting from the gains delivered by the national funding formula (NFF), which has allocated an increase for every pupil in every school in 2018-19, with up to 3 per cent increases for historically underfunded schools.

Under the formula, the funding that **Britannia Bridge** Primary School attracts increases from a baseline of £1,001,000 in 2017-18, to £1,005,000 in 2018-19 (based on 2017-18 pupil numbers) and £1,006,000 in 2019-20 (based on 2018-19 pupil numbers). This is an increase of 1.0 per cent per pupil by 2018-19, compared to 2017-18. LAs continue to be responsible for setting school budgets at local level, in consultation with local schools, so **Britannia Bridge** Primary School's actual budget may differ from these figures. If you are unhappy with how Wigan's local funding formula works, it is advisable to speak with the schools forum about this, and the LA.

Pupil premium funding is allocated on top of core funding for schools, for raising attainment of disadvantaged pupils. **Britannia Bridge's** total deprivation pupil premium allocation in 2018-19 is £110,880, with 84 eligible pupils. Pupil premium allocations have not yet been set beyond 2018-19.

With regard to funding for pupils with SEN, LAs are required to provide schools with sufficient funds to enable them to provide additional support up to the value of £6000 for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. When high level needs costs for an individual pupil are more than £6000 per year, the LA provides top-up funding from its high needs budget. It is for the LA to determine what level of top-up funding is required for each pupil. In high needs budget, for example to support schools which are particularly inclusive

or whose pupils have a greater range of special educational needs than the local funding formula might suggest.

We recognise that the high needs budget faces significant pressures. That is why we are providing additional high needs funding for all LAs, totalling £250 million over 2018-19 and 2019-20. This brings the total high needs funding to £6.1 billion for this year and £6.3 billion for 2019-20. Wigan will receive an extra £0.7 million in 2018-19 as a result of this extra funding, and it's high needs funding will increase by a further £0.9 million in 2019-20.

We have set out our plans to support LAs in providing strategic leadership and oversight of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We will continue engaging with LAs, health providers, families, schools and colleges to build our understanding of what is driving the cost pressures on high needs budgets, and to work with the sector to help and manage them.

We have launched a supporting school resource management document which provides schools with practical advice on savings that can be made on the. £10 billion non-staff spending costs across England last year. This summarises the support that the Department is making available to help schools reduce cost pressures and make every pound count to produce the best outcomes for pupils. This document is available at: it.yurl.com/Y7Gv7o9d.

With regard to the 2016 Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, the Government committed £70 million to support educational improvement in the North. This spend supports a range of policies including support for maths and English Teaching and Home Learning Environment trials. It also included funding for bolstering leadership capacity in the north and teacher supply. Further information of how this funding has been allocated is available at: tinyurl.com/Y7lmro6m.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Gibb

