



The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
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Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader of Plymouth City Council
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22 March 2019

Dear Secretary of State

We have written to you previously to highlight our concerns at the level of funding received by Plymouth schools. On the 18th March we debated again in our Council meeting the issue of the cap which is locking in historic funding levels and preventing the much needed rapid improvement.

We note that according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, spending per pupil in England's schools has fallen by 8% since 2010. We can see the impact of this reduction and remind you that the only increase has been a result of increased pupil numbers. In Plymouth, because of the historic unfairness and inequity in the way that education funding has been calculated, the situation is particularly serious and schools in the City are currently still receiving £338 less per pupil than an average school in England.

Plymouth schools are being forced to make damaging cuts and this is resulting in fewer teachers, Teaching Assistants and learning resources in the classroom. The Council believes that these cuts are making it harder for schools to improve their performance and deliver good outcomes for children in Plymouth. Some schools have even taken the step of closing early.

Whilst we acknowledge that the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) is an attempt by Government to address the funding shortfall, we do not believe the NFF goes far enough, or fast enough, to reverse the cuts to school budgets in Plymouth.

Furthermore, the 3% gains cap, introduced alongside the NFF, is severely limiting the amount of money going to Plymouth schools in the NFF phased implementation period. The Council notes that under the NFF Plymouth should have gained £10.6 million in 2018-19. However, as a result of this gains cap, Plymouth schools only gained £5 million, leaving a significant hole in school budgets.

For some schools in Plymouth, particularly those with high need, the impact of this is massive. For example, in 18-19:

- Sir John Hunt (Budshead) lost £320,000
- Tor Bridge High (Moor View) lost £380,000
- Beechwood Primary (Southway) lost £86,000

We call on the Government to review the formula and remove the damaging gains cap which is punishing schools in Plymouth. The current situation is not satisfactory for our education system.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tudor Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader, Plymouth City Council