

Our Children in Stockport are Worth More

A Day of Positive Action by Stockport Schools Friday 12th October 2018

Stockport is one of the worst funded education authorities in England. Even with the new funding proposals our children receive less money per pupil than many of the local Greater Manchester authorities and we currently sit in the worst half funded of schools in the country having previously been 136th of 150 authorities. On average this looks like around £1000 per pupil less than learners who attend Manchester schools.

Representatives of primary and secondary head teacher groups met with Damian Hinds in June to put forward our case for better funding. They explained the great divide between our schools funding and others in the country and the impact that this was having on our schools.

School leaders have continued to make difficult choices to best resource our schools and provide the best opportunities for our learners but with rising costs, demands to maintain school buildings and the continuous challenge of meeting expectations for all, this is becoming increasingly difficult. Currently, we are proud of the outcomes for our children and despite the funding constraints we are able to provide quality first teaching for all. Our school budgets however, are quickly diminishing in real terms and as schools approach breaking point very difficult decisions regarding provision will inevitably have to be made.

As a collective of school leaders across all phases and settings we continue to call on the Secretary of State for Education to increase funding for all those within early years, primary, secondary and special schools.

We ask that as parents, you continue to lobby our local MP Ann Coffey to make her aware of our situation and to further reiterate the circumstances our schools are in.

Last week, Head teachers from all over the country took the unprecedented step to illustrate their concerns over school funding by staging a march from Parliament Square to Downing Street to present a letter highlighting concerns. Stockport was represented in this march.

For pupils with additional needs we are concerned that the High Needs budget is not fit for purpose. Schools are under enormous pressure to provide appropriate entitlement of support as numbers continue to increase and pupils are presenting with a range of complexities in many cases. Under the proposed formula schools are increasingly challenged to deliver on outcomes for learners identified with additional needs,

Funding for early years childcare is also stretched, particularly as a result of the introduction of Government funding levels for 30 hours of 'free' childcare. School budgets are not equipped adequately to cover the basic costs of delivery.

Funding for Stockport's schools in recent years remains out of line with inflation and although some schools saw a modest increase in funding for 2018-19 this has been eroded by increasing costs including salary and pension increases, growing recruitment costs, inflation and the burden of paying into the Apprenticeship Levy.

Friday 12th October is a day we would like our voices to be heard. Rather our children and families' voices to be heard. Schools in the authority will be carrying out a range of activities to look further into how more funds could and would enhance the learning experiences for our children.

Our children will be given the opportunity to share their thoughts and vision for the educational experiences they feel they are entitled to.

Parents will be invited to write to and talk to local MPs to share the collective view.

We look forward to a positive day of action and one where we have a chance to share our thoughts and further improve outcomes for our children.

The Schools of Stockport.