

Cambridgeshire Pupils Worth Less?

South Cambridgeshire MP, Heidi Allen today launched a joint campaign with local Head Teachers for pupils in Cambridgeshire to be given a fairer deal in the Government's National Funding Formula.

In December, the Government published proposals to deliver a National Funding Formula across all schools in England. The government pledged to develop a clear, simple and transparent system that matches funding to children's needs and the schools they attend. Schools were told that they would receive a consistent and fair share of funding.

However, Heidi Allen, who has been meeting with the Education Secretary, Justine Greening, to discuss the proposed changes, believes weighting of the current factors in the formula is disproportionate to need and will not address the impact of historical under-funding if simply superimposed on the current school landscape.

Heidi said: "Under the current funding proposal, 27 of my schools will be even worse off; in real terms by about 4%. When you are existing on a shoe string, such a reduction would constitute the final straw."

Cambridgeshire schools, which received an interim funding boost in 2015-16, have historically been some of the lowest funded schools in the country, with per pupil funding up to £3000 lower than the same age pupils in Haringey, Tower Hamlets and other high funded areas. If the government's proposal were implemented, based on current pupil data, those schools in London would be in line to receive up to £6,675 per pupil per year, yet schools in South Cambridgeshire would still only receive £4,198; How is that fair?

Heidi said "this isn't just about fairness, it's about equality. The Education Secretary recognised, in her own consultation document that 'underfunded schools do not have access to the same opportunities to do the best for their children, and it is harder to attract the best teachers to afford the right support' – I believe the Secretary of State is absolutely right and that's why I'm pushing for the weighting of the formula to be recalculated. My pupils are not worth less than equivalent pupils in Haringey. "

Heidi is asking all parents, teachers, pupils and residents to respond to the Consultation, currently running until 22nd March, which is seeking feedback about the funding proposals. Heidi said "I'm pleased the Department have given us this opportunity to road-test the effect of these proposals. This is our chance to demonstrate what they really mean for our young people. If you care about your school and want to support it please visit either your School website or my website <https://www.heidisouthcambs.co.uk/> for more details about submitting to the consultation. A strong consultation response is the only way we will get the message across that Cambridgeshire pupils are worth more."