

Bury Schools facing financial crisis

This letter is being written on behalf of Headteachers across primary, secondary and special schools in Bury to highlight the huge issues being faced as a result of prolonged, significant and increasing underfunding. These concerns are shared across most of the country and in all types and phases of school. As one of the lowest funded local authorities, Bury schools are already using their funding efficiently and we have major concerns about the further financial pressures we are now experiencing. We feel that it is important to let parents and the community know what the impact has been and will be on our schools – and hence on the children of Bury.

Ministers repeatedly claim that education funding is protected and seem to be in denial about the realities of school funding and its impact on children. They talk about there being more money in education than ever before, when there are half a million more children in schools than in 2010. Whilst the funding per pupil has remained the same, costs to schools have risen significantly including additional costs created by government policy. The Institute for Fiscal Studies found that education funding reduced by 14% in real terms in the period 2011-16. The National Audit Office predicted that schools would need to make a further 8% reduction in spending between 2017 and 2020. The much-heralded National Funding Formula includes no new money.

It is quite simple – there is less money in schools.

Meanwhile schools are also having to take on greater responsibility as the services that we have previously accessed are either being cut, charged for, or are failing to operate properly - as their budgets are also under severe pressure e.g. social care, mental health, school improvement services. Government policy means that many Bury Local Authority Services, previously so successful in support of Bury children, are no longer available or incur significant costs to schools.

Some other services for children manage their reduced budgets by raising their thresholds i.e. you now have to have a 'bigger' issue to access the service. However the problems for children remain and often schools are being expected to offer greater pastoral support at a time when our capacity to do so has reduced. From April 2018, Bury schools will have to bear more of the costs for supporting a child with Special Educational Needs from its own budget. These children will still require the same level of support. At the same time, the number of specialist places in Bury (and nationally) for children with additional/special educational needs is not keeping up with demand.

We appreciate that education cannot be immune from economic realities. Unfortunately schools are not able to recoup money by increasing our prices or save money by raising our thresholds.

Bury schools will work hard to ensure that cuts have the least possible impact on teaching, learning and pastoral care. However, tough decisions will have to be taken. Governors and Headteachers can no longer guarantee that such cuts will not impact on our children. You may already have seen, or will probably see:

- Larger class sizes;
- Fewer teachers and senior staff;
- School buildings falling into disrepair;
- Cuts to pastoral services including teaching assistants and support staff in general;

- Outdated computer equipment;
- Fewer GCSE options in secondary schools;
- Fewer trips and after school activities that have previously been subsidised or offered free;
- Difficulty in recruiting teachers (the numbers of teachers joining the profession has been below target for the last 5 years and is a major concern in some high school subjects such as Mathematics, Science and English).

Part of the solution must be for greater investment in our schools to better improve outcomes for our pupils. However, we are well aware of the challenges faced by many public services at this time. Please be assured that Governors and Head Teachers will take the utmost care with budgets, to ensure all the money is spent effectively on your children.

Please continue to support your schools through this very difficult period in education.

Bury Headteachers

Mrs G. Branch (Headteacher, All Saints CE Primary School);
 Mrs F. Gledhill (Headteacher, The Ark Pupil Learning Centre);
 Mr P. Greenhalgh (Headteacher, Broad Oak Sports College);
 Mrs C. Simon (Headteacher, Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary School);
 Mrs M. Graves (Cams Lane Primary School);
 Mr P. Barlow (Headteacher, Chantlers Primary School);
 Ms M. Howarth (Headteacher, Chapelfield Primary School);
 Mr P. Hudson (Headteacher, Chesham Primary School);
 Mr D. Gerrard (Headteacher, Christ Church Ainsworth CE Primary School);
 Mr I. Young (Executive Headteacher, Christ Church Primary School, Walshaw);
 Ms C. H. Hubert (Headteacher, The Derby High School);
 Mr D. Waites (Headteacher, East Ward Primary School);
 Mrs E. Parkinson (Executive Headteacher, Elms Bank School);
 Mr J. Wilton (Headteacher, The Elton High School);
 Miss R. Pars (Headteacher, Elton Primary School);
 Mrs S. Wardle (Headteacher, Emmanuel Holcombe CE Primary School);
 Mr C. Ashley (Headteacher, Fairfield Primary School);
 Mr S. Crosier (Headteacher, Greenhill Primary School);
 Mr D. Griffith (Headteacher, Greenmount Primary School);
 Mr M. Golding (Headteacher, Hazlehurst Primary School);
 Mr P. Lord (Headteacher, Heaton Park Primary School);
 Ms C. McLachlan (Executive Headteacher, Higher Lane Primary School);
 Mr I. Tetlow (Head of School, Higher Lane Primary School);
 Mrs G. Evans (Headteacher, Holcombe Brook Primary School);
 Mr S. Waddington (Headteacher, Hollins Grundy Primary School);
 Mrs E. England (Headteacher, Holly Mount RC Primary School);
 Mr M. Elder (Headteacher, Holy Trinity CE Primary School);
 Mrs T. Townsend (Headteacher, Lowercroft Primary School);
 Mr D. Lansdale (Acting Headteacher, Lowercroft Primary School);
 Rabbi B. Sulzbacher (Principal, Manchester Mesivta);
 Miss A. Ridley (Headteacher, Mersey Drive Primary School);
 Ms H. Chadwick (Headteacher, Millwood Primary Special School);
 Mrs D. Ainscoe (Headteacher, Old Hall Primary School);

Mrs J. Davies (Headteacher, Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School and Guardian Angels RC Primary School);
Mr D. Stephens (Headteacher, Park View Primary School);
Mr C. Bell (Headteacher, Parrenthorn High School);
Mr D. Mellor (Headteacher, Peel Brow Primary School);
Ms T. Owen (Headteacher, Philips High School);
Miss R. Evans (Headteacher, Prestwich Arts College);
Ms N. Nelson (Executive Headteacher, Radcliffe Primary School);
Mrs K. Higson (Headteacher, Ribble Drive Primary School);
Mr D. Marsh (Headteacher, St. Andrew's CE Primary School, Ramsbottom);
Miss S. Wilson (Headteacher, St. Andrew's CE VA Primary School, Radcliffe);
Mr A. Loster (Acting Headteacher, St. Gabriel's RC High School);
Miss R. Senior (Headteacher, St. Hilda's CE Primary School);
Miss A. C. Withey (Headteacher, St. John's CE Primary School);
Mr S. Ollis (Headteacher, St. John with St. Mark CE Primary School);
Mrs E. Moncado (Headteacher, St. Joseph's RC Primary School);
Ms M. Michael (Headteacher, St. Luke's CE Primary School);
Mrs K. Perry (Headteacher, St. Margaret's CE Primary School);
Mrs F. Robinson (Headteacher, St. Marie's RC Primary School);
Mrs G. Woodward (Headteacher, St. Mary's CE Primary School, Hawkshaw);
Mrs S. Jones (Headteacher, St. Mary's CE Primary School, Prestwich);
Mrs S. Bowes (Headteacher, St. Michael's RC Primary School);
Mrs A. Hainsworth (Headteacher, St. Monica's RC High School);
Mrs J. Morris (Headteacher, St. Paul's CE Primary School);
Mr S. Wedgeworth (Headteacher, St. Peter's CE Primary School);
Mrs J. S. Parsons (Headteacher, St. Stephen's CE Primary School);
Mrs S. Farnworth (Headteacher, St. Thomas's CE Primary School);
Mr J. Gregory (Headteacher, Sedgley Park Primary School);
Mr T. Gledhill (Headteacher, Spring Lane School);
Mr D. Hargreaves (Headteacher, Summerseat Methodist Primary School);
Mrs. T. Bevan (Headteacher, Sunny Bank Primary School)
Mr B. Duffy (Headteacher, Tottington High School);
Mr S. Holden (Headteacher, Tottington Primary School);
Mrs C. Reynolds (Headteacher, Unsworth Primary School);
Mr M. Lonsdale (Headteacher, Wesley Methodist Primary School);
Mr M. Van Hecke (Headteacher, Whitefield Primary School);
Mrs K. Macadam (Headteacher, Woodbank Primary School);
Mr B. Roadnight (Headteacher, Woodhey High School);
Rabbi Yodaiken (Principal, Yesoiday HaTorah).