



**May 2017**

## **Open letter to the Prime Minister Theresa May,**

As leaders of education across the London Borough of Lewisham, we want to draw attention to the damage being caused to the education of children in our schools by the reduction in funding that is available for us to spend directly on their education. We are concerned that your pledge in your manifesto will be of little help to our schools, children and young people.

We are aware of the regularly stated position of your government asserting that you are putting more money than ever before into schools. What you fail to point out is that schools are having to use an increasing proportion of their budgets to cover rising costs relating to national insurance and pension contributions, and escalating costs of services, leaving an ever decreasing balance for us to deliver the quality of education that we and our staff teams are committed to delivering.

Even if per pupil funding levels for primary and secondary schools are frozen at current rates, anticipated inflationary pressures over the next three years mean an 8% real terms cut in schools spending power which will impact on our classrooms.

Maintained nursery schools in Lewisham are already losing nearly 36% of their funding with the introduction of the Early Years funding formula in April this year.

For all of our schools this level of cuts is untenable and will impact directly on the quality of education delivered to our young people. Whilst in all schools we will do our best to meet our statutory duties, the quality of this provision, and our ability to meet the individual needs of different groups will be severely compromised.

As we move into a new financial year, with the possible introduction of the new National Funding Formula we want to draw attention to what is at stake:

- The breadth and diversity of the curriculum will be diminished as we are forced to increase class sizes. It is often the creative and performing arts that are first to be hit as schools are forced to reduce choice.
- The pastoral care and wellbeing of students is being threatened by the cuts that have already taken hold and will be worsened by the imposition of the new funding formula. At a time when the mental health of young people is being highlighted we are seeing counselling provision, mentoring and general support being reduced across our schools. In a borough that works hard to keep young people safe, in often

challenging circumstances, we are concerned that these cuts will jeopardise the safety of the most vulnerable.

- The Inclusive education we are committed to provide will be threatened as funding reduces our capacity to support children's individual additional and special educational needs.
- The proposed change to funding will inevitably result in a cut in the money available for the professional development and training of our staff. At a time of significant change imposed by your team it is essential that we are able to equip our staff to deliver the changes without compromising standards.
- At a time of teacher shortage it is also very costly for schools to support Initial Teacher Training, but vital that we do so. With reduced staffing levels in schools how can we build in the time required for mentoring and supporting trainees in becoming the high quality teachers needed?
- The things that we offer outside of the curriculum will also suffer: Music tuition, drama productions, Science and Technology clubs, school sport, school trips and visits. All of these provisions along with many others make a significant contribution to the development of our young people.

Over recent years the government has been proud of the performance of London schools and has benefited hugely from our success. London schools have been at the forefront of educational development and have been able to model best practice for others. Are we really prepared to see all that has been achieved cast aside?

Education leaders in Lewisham urge the Prime Minister to reconsider her proposal to change the funding arrangements for schools across England, and to acknowledging that decisions made by her predecessor have already had a significant impact on our ability to deliver the best for our young people.

We would like to invite the Prime Minister to discuss the challenges we face and would seek to work with her to ensure that our schools can offer the very best to the children and young people of Lewisham.

Yours Sincerely

*Education Leaders, Lewisham*

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Nikki Oldhams, Headteacher, Chelwood Nursery School

Sharon Lynch , Headteacher, St William of York Catholic Primary School

Maxine Osbaldeston , Headteacher, Launcelot Primary School

Ken Johnson, Headteacher, Deptford Park Primary School

Rebecca Dove, Headteacher Sandhurst Infant and Junior School



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Dean Houson , Headteacher St. Saviour's RC Primary School, Lewisham  
Sally Saunders, Headteacher, St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School,  
Jan Shapiro, Headteacher, Addey and Stanhope School  
Cathryn Kinsey , Headteacher, Clyde Nursery School  
Julia Scannell, Headteacher , Sedghill School  
Meghan Pugh, Headteacher, Rangefield Primary School  
Mary Collins, Headteacher, Holy Cross Catholic Primary School  
Sonia McFarlane, Headteacher, St James Hatcham CE Primary School  
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Margaret Hanrahan, Headteacher St Winifred's Primary School  
Annie Grimes, Headteacher Stillness Infants School  
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Hania Ryans, Headteacher Fairlawn Primary School  
Diane Brewer, Headteacher Baring Primary School  
Dean Gordon, Head of School, Grinling Gibbons Primary School  
Tina Harracksingh, Head of School, Lucas Vale Primary School  
Sara Anderman, Headteacher HAseltine Primary School  
Christina Jenner, Education Teaching Alliance Lewisham  
Matthew Ringham, Headteacher, Our Lady and St Philip Neri Primary School  
Louise Blyde, Headteacher St Josephs Catholic Primary School  
Christine Barnes, Headteacher, Sir Francis Drake Primary School  
Geraldine Constable, Headteacher St Georges Cof E School  
Marie Neave, Headteacher Drumbeat School and ASD services



Sue Harte, Headteacher, John Stainer Primary School  
Ruth Holden, Headteacher , Bonus Pastor Catholic College  
Increase Eko, Headteacher, Adamsrill Primary School  
Christine Bernard, Head of School, St Mary's Primary School  
Yana Morris, Headteacher Rushey Green Primary School  
Lynne Haines, Headteacher Greenvale School  
Riana Gouws, Headteacher, St Michael's CE Primary School  
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Katherine Palmer, Executive Headteacher, Eliot Bank & Gordonbrock Schools Federation  
Edward Dove, Headteacher , Marvels Lane Primary School  
John Goodey, Executive Headteacher, St John Baptist & St Mary's Lewisham Primary Schools  
Ian Hyde, Headteacher, Kelvin Grove Primary School  
Caroline Phillips, Head of School, St John Baptist CE Primary School  
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Debbie Tompkins, Headteacher, All Saints CE Primary School  
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Nathalie Dummer, Head of School, Altheney Primary School  
Duncan Kamy, Headteacher, Prendergast Vale School  
Paula Ledger, Headteacher, Prendergast School  
Elisabeth Stone, Headteacher, Kilmorie Primary School  
Ian Wilson, Headteacher, St Margaret's Lee CE Primary School  
Julie Loffstadt, Headteacher, Horniman Primary School  
Hilary Jarvis, Headteacher St Augustine's Catholic Primary School  
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Rob Thomas Executive Headteacher Trinity All Through School  
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Lisa Morris, Headteacher Brindishe Lee Priamry School  
Paul Hooper, Headteacher Coopers Lane Primary School  
Frances Holland, Headteacher, St Stephens CE Primary School  
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Sally Williams, Headteacher, Myatt Garden Primary School  
Paul Moriarty, Headteacher, Good Shepherd Primary School  
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Miranda Baldwin, Head of School, St Matthews Academy  
Elizabeth Jones, Exec Headteacher, Abbey Manor College  
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