



01788 810518
rhsadmin@rugbyhighschool.co.uk
www.rugbyhighschool.co.uk

Longrood Road RUGBY CV22 7RE
Headteacher: Ms C Marten M/

Rt Hon Nick Gibb
Minister of State for School Standards
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
Westminster
LONDON SW1P 3BT

14 March 2017

Dear Mr Gibb

Thank you for your letter of 7th March regarding the letter that I wrote to Mark Pawsey MP about the national funding formula.

At Rugby High School we support the principle of a national funding formula. We agree with and share the goal that no child should be left behind. We accept that children with low prior attainment and recently arrived children who speak English as an additional language need additional help to catch up. We know from our own experiences that children from deprived backgrounds need support and help to access the full curriculum. Schools need additional money to pay for this support.

Rugby High School has been at the forefront of the move to attract more applications from students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For a number of years now we have identified disadvantage immediately after Children in the Care of the Local Authority and Children with an Education Health Care Plan as a priority in our oversubscription criteria. We have set a lower qualifying score for these students in order to create a level playing field. Our admissions arrangements for 2018 double the number of places reserved specifically for these children from 10 out of 120 to 20 out of 120. They also further lower the qualifying score for these children.

We were really pleased to see that the government has listened to what we have been saying about the barriers that children from deprived backgrounds face in accessing a grammar school education and that the limits that currently apply to qualification for free school transport for those in receipt of free school meals are to be increased. This will have the effect of making our school accessible for the first time to children from deprived backgrounds living in Coventry, Hinckley and Nuneaton who would not have qualified for free transport under the old arrangements.

Rugby High School is in the process of expanding (we are currently moving from three form entry to four form entry (growth that started in September 2013 and will be complete in 2017). This was made possible by two capital grants: one for new classrooms and laboratories and one for a sports hall. It was this growth that made it possible for us to include a specific priority for children from deprived backgrounds in our oversubscription criteria.

Part of our current financial dilemma is being driven by a decision made by the local schools' forum in 2015 to allow 'for the funding of the Minimum Funding Guarantee by capping the gains in per pupil funding for any school in a particular year'; a decision that was made with no explanation of the consequences for individual schools. This means that this school not only will have to deal with the lagged funding (soon to be abolished for schools that are growing) which we have been wrestling with for the past four years but

on top of that will have to deal with the consequences of the cap which will deprive us of a further £28,000 of income on top of this. It will mean that there will be 52 students on our roll for whom we receive little or no funding. To receive little or no funding for 9% of the school roll (Years 7-11) is not sustainable.

We will be considering whether the school has the capacity to further expand as you indicate in your letter that the government wishes us to do. However, we can't do that on the current terms. We have virtually no reserves left and we can't continue to carry the costs associated with expansion with a cap on what we can receive in terms of increased income (even if there is no lagged funding in the future). The proposals that the government is currently consulting upon will not, even if we filled all the additional places with students from deprived backgrounds, yield enough money to fund the expansion with a cap in place.

According to the department's financial efficiency tool we are a financially efficient school. Of the 50 financial neighbours it identifies, we are ranked 21 with a decile score of 5. Of the schools above us there are just three with lower funding per student than Rugby High School. There is one school below us with lower funding. There may be significant scope for efficiencies across the system but not at this school which will be spending 90% of its income on staffing in 2017-2018 and is already judged by the efficiency tool as 'reasonably financially efficient'.

The point remains that if the government does not raise the basic per pupil level of funding for poorly funded schools like Rugby High School, students who attend these schools simply will not be able to access the broad and balanced curriculum that our Funding Agreement commits us to delivering. I urge the government to reconsider before it is too late.

Yours sincerely



Charlotte Marten
Headteacher

Cc Mark Pawsey MP
Graham Brady MP