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Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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Ms Charlotte Marten
Headteacher, Rugby High School
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7 March 2017

Dear Ms Marten,

I write further to your letter of 27 January, addressed to Mr Mark Pawsey MP, regarding the national funding formula. Mr Pawsey passed your letter onto me, and I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

I appreciate it will be disappointing that, while Warwickshire as a whole would receive an additional 0.6 per cent of funding for its schools as a result of our proposals, Rugby High School would see a 2.5 per cent reduction in its funding.

In making our proposals, we want to ensure that the formula will match funding to need, using up-to-date data so that children who face entrenched barriers to their success, such as socio-economic deprivation, receive the support they need to succeed. We want the formula to recognise educational disadvantage in its widest sense. We also want to support schools as they continue to work to break the link between disadvantage and attainment. We therefore think it is right that schools serving children with additional needs, who face entrenched barriers to their success, receive extra resources to help support these children.

Although we are proposing that basic per pupil funding should be by far the largest factor in the national funding formula, we are clear that the national funding formula must allocate substantial extra funding to schools whose pupils are more likely to need extra support to catch up. As part of this, we are placing a greater emphasis on pupils' prior attainment so that schools receive additional funding to ensure that no child is left behind.

As a result of our proposals, schools whose pupils have higher than average attainment and tend not to be from disadvantaged backgrounds – including many grammar schools – may see reductions in their budgets. As set out in our recent consultation, Schools that Work for Everyone, we expect grammar schools to expand their intake to include more pupils from a disadvantaged background. Where they do so, their funding will rise.

I note your concerns about the redistribution of funding and the impact on London and other cities under our proposed formula. We are clear that as we implement a national funding formula, we must provide sufficient stability for schools. We have listened to those who highlighted the risks of major budget changes for schools in our first stage consultation, and as a result of this we are including significant protection so that no school would face a reduction of more than 1.5 per cent per year or 3 per cent overall per pupil as a result of this formula.

In matching funding to need, it is right that London and other cities continue to receive a high level of funding compared to others. Even where levels of affluence have increased, many of these areas remain the most deprived in the country and have more children with additional needs.

I am grateful to you for sharing the budgetary information from Rugby High School. It is important that, as part of the consultation, we gather as much evidence as possible about the impact of our proposed formula.

We recognise the increasing cost pressures that schools, along with other public services, are facing. These pressures sit alongside significant scope for efficiency in the system on non-pay and procurement, where we have set an ambition of a least £1 billion of savings by 2019-20, and through better deployment and use of the workforce.

We know that many schools have already taken important steps to operate more efficiently. To support further savings across the country, we have published a wide range of tools and support, and these are available at: tinyurl.com/HUTWG36. This includes tools to help schools assess their level of efficiency, guidance and case studies, and support for schools to organise a financial health check. We also recently launched a school buying strategy to support schools to save over £1 billion a year by 2019-20 on their non-staff spend, maximising the resources that can be spent in the classroom.

We recognise that some will disagree with the balance we have struck in our national funding formula proposals, and would welcome any further views from Rugby High School through a formal response to the consultation. The consultation will be open until 22 March, and is available at: tinyurl.com/HLODTAL.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



cc Mr Mark Pawsey MP