13 January 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

Update - Worth Less?

Firstly, on behalf of colleagues across the county, we would like to wish you a happy new year.

As 2016 begins, we would like to update you on our Worth Less? campaign. The good news is that a coordinated approach by Headteachers from every primary, special and secondary school across the county has been given universal support by parents, carers and other key stakeholders. Your input on Facebook and through letters to your MP has made a real difference. Awareness of the unfair, systematic underfunding that all schools in West Sussex suffer from has never been higher.

We also remain grateful for the work of local politicians who are working with the government to try and improve matters both in the short and longer terms. The fact remains, however, that children in West Sussex receive £41 million less than the average and over £200 million less than pupils in many larger urban areas such as (local authorities within) London.

As you know, the government has begun to listen to concerns and a funding formula review is underway. In due course, it will be important to analyse and consider the details of any proposed changes.

In the short term, however, the news is not good. Despite the systematic underfunding for children's education in West Sussex, the government has only been able to offer £930k (from April 2016 – March 2017) as an interim payment to the 300 schools in West Sussex. Sadly, this represents an increase of less than £10 per child. Bluntly, it is the equivalent of the cost of a cinema ticket. Bearing in mind that our children are funded 10% less than the national average, this is simply not good enough and children's education across West Sussex will suffer as a result.

Other Headteacher colleagues and I are mindful of being realistic in our approach but we believe it would be wrong to stand by and see children in West Sussex being disadvantaged any longer. With this in mind, **we are campaigning for an uplift of £200 per pupil** (from April 2016) until a new formula is put in place. In effect, this would generate £20 million for all schools yet still leave us £200 (per pupil) below the national average. We think that **'£200 for £20m'** is both realistic and reasonable and we will be contacting local MPs and the Department for Education to make this point loud and clear.

Your proactive support has never been needed more. In order to gain this funding improvement, we urge you to do the following:

- Continue to 'Like' and 'share' the campaign – **particularly '£200 for £20m'** and comment positively on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/WorthLessWestSussex
- Contact your local MP - **you could use the attached pro forma** - and re-state the need for an immediate improvement to current funding from April 2016.
- Contact local newspapers, BBC Radio Sussex and South Today/Meridian TV expressing your support for Worth Less? and, in particular, '£200 for £20m'.

Thanks again for your continued support which is already making a difference.

Yours faithfully,
Rob Corbett, Principal, Ifield Community College