



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Bob Patel MBE
Chair
Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies
c/o SIPS Education Ltd
Guardian House
Cronehills Linkway
West Bromwich
B70 8GS

Our Ref: TW1571

15 April 2019

Dear Mr Patel,

I have now received a reply from Nick Gibb, the Minister of State for School Standards, following representations I made on your behalf about school funding; a copy is enclosed for your information.

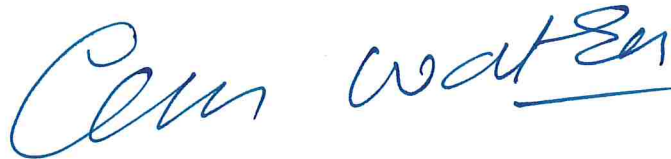
I appreciate that members of the ASGB will be disappointed with the content of the Minister's letter; however, I can assure you that I will continue to press ministers for a fairer settlement for our area.

I have also recently spoken with the cabinet member for children and families, Cllr Hackett, about the primary to secondary funding ratio in Sandwell, as I understand the level at which this is set continues to be a significant concern for head teachers, governing bodies and the ASGB.

I also note your invite to attend a future meeting. I have forwarded this to my diary secretary who will be in touch shortly.

In the meantime, if there are any other issues that you wish to bring to my attention please do not hesitate to get back in touch, by telephoning my constituency office on 0121 569 1904, or by emailing me at tom.watson.mp@parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Tom Watson
Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East



2019-0012776POGibb

Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Mr Tom Watson MP
Terry Duffy House
Thomas Street
West Bromwich
B70 6NT

Your ref: TW1571

9 April 2019

Dear Tom

Thank you for your letter of 11 March, addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, enclosing correspondence from your constituent, Mr Bob Patel MBE, Chair of the Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies, regarding school funding. Your letter was passed to this Department and I am replying as the Minister of State for School Standards.

While there is more money going into our schools than ever before, we recognise the budgeting challenges schools face and that we are asking them to do more. The Government is investing an extra £1.3 billion in schools and high needs over the period 2018-19 and 2019-20, over and above the budget set at the Spending Review in 2015. Core funding for schools and high needs has risen from almost £41 billion in 2017-18 to £43.5 billion in 2019-20. Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that real terms per pupil funding for 5 to 16 year olds in 2020 will be more than 50 per cent higher than it was in 2000, and more than 70 per cent higher than in 1990. Spending plans beyond 2019-20 will be set at the next Spending Review, and we cannot pre-empt these decisions, but we are committed to securing the right deal for education.

We are delivering on our promise to reform the unfair, opaque and outdated school and high needs funding systems, and introduce national funding formulae. Resources have been directed where they are needed most, based on the individual needs of every school in the country. Schools are already benefitting from the gains delivered by the national funding formula, which has allocated an increase for every pupil in every school, with up to 3 per cent increases for historically underfunded schools.

In 2019-20, schools in Sandwell have received an additional 1.5 per cent per pupil in schools block funding compared to 2017-18. This is equivalent to an additional £15.4 million in total, which also reflects rising pupil numbers.

To provide stability for schools, local authorities continue to be responsible for the distribution of funding in their areas, in consultation with local schools. The actual amount that schools receive, therefore, may be different to the amount they are attracting through the national funding formula.

We recognise that the high needs budget faces significant pressures. That is why we are providing additional high needs funding for all local authorities, totalling £250 million over 2018-19 and 2019-20. This brings the total allocated high needs funding to £6.1 billion for last year and £6.3 billion for 2019-20.

We have set out plans to support local authorities in providing strategic leadership and oversight of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We will continue engaging with local authorities, health providers, families, schools and colleges to build our understanding of what is driving the cost pressures on high needs budgets, and to work with the sector to help manage them.

We recognise that local authorities and schools have faced cost pressures in recent years. In August 2018 we announced the School Resource Management Strategy, which provides schools with practical advice on savings that can be made on more than £10 billion non-staff spending costs across England last year. This includes support and guidance for schools and academies to help them reduce costs on things like energy, recruitment costs and insurance so that schools can invest their resources into the areas that make the most difference to pupil outcomes. The document is available at: tinyurl.com/Y7Gv7o9d.

With best wishes.

