

PRINCE HENRY'S HIGH SCHOOL

An "Outstanding" Academy for Students aged 13-18
Headteacher: Dr A A L Evans BSc(Hons), PhD



14th September 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

The Headteachers of Worcestershire's 34 High Schools have jointly agreed to write a letter to all parents regarding school funding. Please see below a letter which outlines our collective concerns. We are seeking your support in making the case to Worcestershire MPs that schools cannot continue to deliver the same level of provision, opportunity and support unless funding for Worcestershire schools is improved.

Over recent years all of us have had to live with tighter budgets. The schools of Worcestershire have certainly been no exception to this. Staffing is the greatest cost to any school and historically approximately 80% of our budget has been required for wages and salaries. High schools in Worcestershire have, year on year, had to reduce the range of options, increase class sizes, cut back on non-teaching staff and provide less individual support to the most vulnerable.

Prince Henry's has been fortunate enough to have accumulated some reserves and we have been able to protect our students to some extent, but we have also had to make some cuts. Many Worcestershire High Schools in this academic year have been forced to set a deficit budget. Last year, Prince Henry's managed to finish the financial year in a balanced position, but sadly, had little left available for further investment in the curriculum. The problem is now so acute that the Headteachers of each of the county's high schools will today be writing letters such as this to every one of their parents because, unless the situation changes, we simply cannot continue to provide the service for which Worcestershire high schools have become known.

Last year the Department for Education brought in a new system for allocating money between different parts of the country. This scheme, the National Funding Formula, is an attempt to spread the spending on schools more fairly. It is, of course, a welcome step in the right direction, but counties such as Worcestershire remain at a disadvantage. It remains true, for example, that a child in the West Midlands conurbation is substantially better funded than one of similar age in Worcestershire. (In the current year the basic unit of funding for each secondary pupil in Worcestershire is £887 less than in Birmingham.) It is simply not fair that a child in a Worcestershire school receives less funding than their peer in another part of the country, even a few miles up the road, when we have standard national pay scales for staff, the cost of utilities and services are the same, as are text book and material costs.

But the problem goes much deeper than this. Not only is the national educational financial cake still being divided unfairly, in real terms it is getting smaller. Despite headlines announcing an increase in the national allocation for schools, the real value of government funding has been falling. The Institute for Fiscal Studies, which carries out independent objective research, calculates that the value of funding for the nation's schools will be 4% less this year than it was three years ago and 8% less than it was in 2010. Beyond this are the other increases which many organisations have to meet, in pensions, insurance and all that is involved in running our buildings day by day.

No parent needs to be reminded that the high school years are a precious opportunity. They do not come again. But we do need your support in making this point emphatically to government. Please consider doing this in any way that you choose. I am attaching the draft of a letter, which you may choose to use, should you decide to join those of us making the case to our MP.

We hope we can count on your support, and I have already written to our local MP, Nigel Huddleston.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Evans'.

Dr A Evans
Headteacher

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Working in collaboration with Bredon Hill and St Egwin's Middle Schools