

Date/Dyddiad: 8th February 2018

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Dear Parent

Education funding per pupil in the Vale of Glamorgan

We write to you on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Schools' Budget Forum, which is a group set up by the Local Authority to monitor any issues relating to the funding of schools in the Local Authority. As a group, we have some very serious concerns that the methods used to determine the funding of education across Wales are flawed and result in significant inequalities amongst students.

The funding of education in Wales is driven by a Welsh Government formula which determines the level of funding each local authority should receive.

The level of funding allocated per pupil within the Vale of Glamorgan is the lowest in Wales and we believe that Vale of Glamorgan pupils are disadvantaged as a result.

The Local Authority has made an effort to direct more funding into education services and is currently funding education at £3 million above the amount suggested by Welsh Government in the formula.

However, pupils in the Vale of Glamorgan continue to rank 22nd out of 22 authorities in terms of funding per pupil.

The gross schools budgeted expenditure in the Vale of Glamorgan for the current financial year is £5,022 per pupil, which is £606 per pupil below the Welsh average of £5,628. As you will realise, this means that your child is on average having £606 less spent on their education per year than the average child across Wales.

The highest funded authority has a gross budget per pupil of £6,382, resulting in a difference of £1,360 per pupil between the highest and lowest funded authorities.

Furthermore, the gap between the highest and lowest funded authorities appears to be increasing and the relative position for pupils in the Vale is worsening. It is a surprising fact that, despite the pressures of inflation, the level of funding for Vale School Students is now on average £123 lower than it was four years ago in 2014.

The Budget Forum has spent some time analysing the Welsh Government formula and believe it to be flawed and no longer relevant. The Welsh Assembly Government state that the principles underpinning their formula are equity, stability, clarity and relevance and yet we note that the formula has not had a total review since 2001 and uses census data from as far back as 1991 to distribute some elements of funding. In addition, we note that the formula allocates funding for pupils with additional learning needs based on factors of poverty rather than the huge amount of information available based on pupil needs and this data has not been updated since 2003. These are just two examples of a number of issues that have led us to the conclusion that the formula is not fit for purpose.

The Budget Forum and Council Leader, Cllr. John Thomas, have separately written to Welsh Government three times, raising specific concerns and have requested that the Welsh Government consider a total review of a formula that leads to such apparent inequalities in funding across Wales to the detriment of pupils in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Regrettably, the Welsh Government has failed to satisfactorily respond to our letters and has shown no willingness to address our concerns.

As a result, we have decided to share our concerns with you in the hope that working together we will be able to persuade the Government to give this vital issue more consideration and revisit their formula in an attempt to ensure that funding for students across Wales can become more equitable.

If you would like to support us we would ask that you write to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams at the following email address; Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales and raise your concerns. We would be grateful if you could copy us into your correspondence at the following email address; schoolsfinancesupport@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully



Councillor John Thomas
Leader
The Vale of Glamorgan Council



Dr V M Browne
Head Teacher
Chair of The Vale of Glamorgan
Council Budget Forum

