**Strategic Principals’ Forum**

**17a Maghaberry Road**

**Moira**

**County Armagh**

**BT67 0JE**

September 2019

Dear Parent,

I am writing on behalf of the Strategic Principals’ Forum, which is a group of 547 primary schools from all across Northern Ireland. Together we represent over 129,000 children who deserve much better financial provision for their learning and development than our system currently provides.

Many of our nursery and primary schools are really struggling at the moment because of our government’s failure to adequately fund them. If your child’s school is one of these, let us be very clear … **this is not the fault of your school!** This is simply because they are just not given enough money to make the school work for your children. If your child’s school is not yet in such a position it may be just around the corner. We believe that the current overall funding allocated to primary and nursery will continue to drag school after school into having to make significant cuts, no matter how an individual school’s position might appear at the moment.

We believe that all of us, school leaders, governors and parents, have a moral obligation to speak out for the sake of our children. Please help us in the following ways:

* continue to support your school principals as they do their absolute best for your children in very difficult circumstances,
* continue to support your teachers who are working so hard to help your children thrive, and
* phone, write, email your MLAs and MPs demanding that the needs of our children are at the top of their agendas urgently.

Thank you, once again, for all of your support.

Dr Graham Gault (Chair of Strategic Principal’s Forum NI)



Ballydown Primary School

 64 Lisnaree Road

 Banbridge

 Co Down

 BT32 4JS

 Tel:- 028 40662738

 Principal: Mr B Murphy M.Ed. B.Ed. PQH(NI)

# October 2019

Dear Parent

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Governors. As you can see from reading the attached letter, we are facing huge financial difficulties in education. We feel it is necessary to inform you about the extent of the current financial constraints schools are under. Like a lot of schools, we are in deficit.

Schools are funded using the **Common Funding Formula**. This formula, at the basic level, provides funding for the school per pupil. However, additional funding is offered to schools according to Free School Meals, SEN, Social Deprivation, newcomer pupils, small schools allowance etc. This means that some schools can have very significant additional funding. The current funding formula penalises schools like ours which has very low percentages of free school meals, SEN and Newcomers.

We as a Board of Governors met recently with The Education Authority, who have confirmed that there are no other ways in which we can cut costs to avoid us going further into deficit. They are in agreement that the current allocation of funding through the Common Funding Formula unfairly penalises us. We are at the lowest end of funding per head due to the shortcomings in the current formula. We receive on average approximately 10% (£310) less per pupil than the average. Despite being at maximum capacity funding does not cover running costs of our school. In addition, the current funding does not take into consideration increased costs since 2010.

Our involvement in Shared Education over the past two years has been very good in allowing us to seek additional funding. This has meant that classes have been able to go on a lot of trips and have activities which we could not afford to subsidise. Shared Education pays for most of the transport associated with these trips; something which is a huge cost and which can make trips impossible, otherwise.

We very much appreciate your continued support of the PTAs fundraising events throughout the year. We are becoming increasingly reliant on your generosity to allow us to continue providing the best education for our children. In turn our extremely hard-working staff will continue to ensure the high standards of education and pastoral care are maintained.

Please understand if we ask for a little more financial support, at times. We are trying to do our best to keep it to a minimum.

Yours sincerely

B. Murphy

(Principal & Secretary to The Board of Governors)