



RUTH CADBURY MP

Member of Parliament for Brentford and Isleworth

Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

9 February 2018

RE: St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Dear Nick,

I am writing to you regarding St Mary's Catholic Primary School which is located within my Constituency. As you may have seen in the media recently, they are currently consulting with parents to close on Friday afternoons. It is concerning that the head and governors are having to consider this drastic option.

They are having to face these decisions because the funds the school receives has not kept up with rising costs. I understand the option they are consulting parents on involves changes to the school day and the school week without reducing total teaching hours at the school. This will allow for the removal of teaching cover which releases teachers for PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time. They plan to start this from September 2018.

The school has already had to make cutbacks over the last 5 years which include:

- Not filling vacant posts; a part-time teacher, a music teacher, support workers, and the gardener.
- Parents being asked for contributions for pencils, colouring pencils, glue sticks, etc.
- Staff have accepted shorter working hours.
- Music classes have been cut.

I understand the next set of options available to St Marys included reducing sporting activities. This was dismissed due to concerns of childhood obesity and the recent achievement of the School Games Platinum Award. A contribution per child of around £400 per year was proposed, as well as parents volunteering. However both these options were also rejected by Governors. The school is also not allowed to borrow and is required to operate with a balanced budget.

You may recall from our meeting in October with Head teachers, Parents and Councillors the impact on our local schools were outlined and the drastic measures were explained, which

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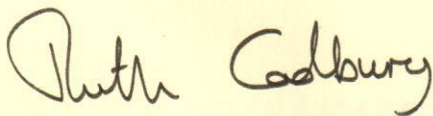
included St Mary's closing early on Fridays to save costs. Unfortunately this prospect is one step closer to becoming a reality and the consultation with parents has thrown the financial situation of the school into light, along with many other schools across the country.

I urge you to save our schools from having to take these steps by:

- Adding increased flexibility to the National Funding Formula
- Allowing greater flexibility to address budget shortfalls
- Clarifying the Early Years block DSG allocation
- Reviewing capital allocation
- Reviewing free school policy, so local authority can decide if new schools are needed
- Reviewing the Apprenticeship Levy, a charge from which many schools get little benefit

Regrettably you declined our invitation to come and visit St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isleworth, after meeting its head teacher, Farley Marsh, last October. Perhaps, you will reconsider our offer in light of their worsening circumstances.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Cadbury MP
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