10 December 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

I want to write to you as you may have seen a letter or flyer issued by Calday Grammar School with regard to funding for secondary schools on Wirral. Whilst I have a great deal of sympathy for any headteacher trying to manage a budget; there is just not enough money in education, I am somewhat worried about the picture being painted by Calday’s flyer in which it poses the question is the current proposal to fund secondary schools, ‘…Fair, Reasonable or Equitable’. The flyer asserts that grammar schools on the Wirral are being funded at a lower level than other secondary schools, that this is demonstrably unfair as their Progress 8 (the key government measure for school accountability) is higher than other schools and that the budget allocation serves to support non-selective schools. I do not believe that this assertion is fair, reasonable or indeed true. Calday Grammar School are asking their parents to challenge the funding formula to ensure that the school receives more funding. This would come at a cost to other schools.

I need, in the spirit of transparency, to make it clear that I am a father of a child at Calday, with another set to join the school in September 2019. I am also a headteacher of a secondary modern school who will see a small rise in funding as a result of the proposed changes to the funding model. I too have had to undertake significant cost savings over the last few years, with all the reductions to school budgets and more as we merged two schools losing £150,000 a year just by dint of merging.

I have also attached some data produced by the Department for Education (DFE) with regard to the claim around progress 8. Within the national DFE datasets they make reference to 12 local authorities across the whole of England, within which outcomes for students are impacted significantly as a result of so many students attending a selective school. Wirral is one such highly selective local authority. In effect the 12 local authorities see a significant reduction of progress 8 for students who **do not** attend selective schools. Students who do not attend a grammar school in these local authorities sit in what is in effect a deficit model, through no fault of their own. Such is the extent of the impact that the DFE provided a subset of data to compare ‘like for like’. That data is attached, and I leave it to you to decide if Calday’s claim ‘’…that the six grammar schools are the most financially efficient in the borough’ (against the criteria of cost per student vs educational outcomes measured against progress 8.)’ stacks up. Quite simply, as the progress 8 goes up in my school, it has to go down in someone else’s; not the fairest measure of the complexity that some schools face.

I am fortunate in my job, I love my job good and bad. I try to be honest at all times and that sometimes creates difficulties, but we need to be honest about what type of education system we want for the young people of Wirral. I need to be honest about what I want not just for my own children, but in a world of limited resources, what do I want for all children in the local authority.

The last national published data set for free school meals/pupil premium (FSM/PP) is 2017; my school has 26.5% of students in receipt of FSM/PP, that is compared to 29.1% nationally. Calday Grange Grammar School had 5.8% of its students in receipt of FSM/PP and, to give that some further perspective, Birkenhead Park School had 74.3% of its students in receipt of FSM/PP. Free school meals are used as a proxy for significant disadvantage; the scale of support required for the young people and their families at Birkenhead Park School is truly far greater than required at my school. I understand and agree with a greater level of funding flowing to those who most need it. My FSM/PP students are nearly five times that of Calday’s, but Birkenhead Park School have nearly 13 times that of Calday.

Equally and perhaps most importantly, all Wirral headteachers were asked for their view on the funding formula; we always are. The reality is that we do not all get what we want, but we are a collective here to serve all students across the local authority. My school, in and of itself, is no more or less deserving of funding than Calday, certainly not by dint of a lack of selection at the age of 11; it is not more or less deserving than Birkenhead Park School either. However, a school is more than an entrance test or a name; it is the people within it and sometimes we give more to people simply because that is the right thing to do morally, because they need that help, they need our support as a community.

Calday are asking that parents contact their local MP or councillor to effectively ask for an increase in funding to the grammar schools. I would urge you to contact your MP or local councillor and ask them to seek to support those who are vulnerable, and need our help the most, wherever they might be.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan

Headteacher

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| **Progress 8 2017 & 2018 Provisional** |   |   |   |
| School | Selective | Gen | P8 2016 | P8 2017 | Similar schools (DFE defined) P8 2017 | Compared to similar defined by DFE 2017 | P8 2018 | Similar schools (DFE defined) P8 2018 | Compared to similar defined by DFE 2018 |
| Non-Selective School |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Bebington | NS | Mix | -0.62 | -0.19 | -0.14 | -0.05 | -0.67 | -0.13 | -0.54 |
| Birkenhead Park | NS | Mix | -0.36 | -0.52 | -0.14 | -0.38 | -0.61 | -0.13 | -0.48 |
| Hilbre | NS | Mix | -0.31 | -0.30 | -0.14 | -0.16 | -0.42 | -0.13 | -0.29 |
| Kingsway | NS | Mix | -0.97 | -0.80 | -0.14 | -0.66 | -0.27 | -0.13 | -0.14 |
| Mosslands | NS | B | 0.05 | -0.57 | -0.32 | -0.25 | -0.99 | -0.34 | -0.65 |
| Oldershaw | NS | Mix | -0.03 | -0.10 | -0.14 | 0.04 | -0.67 | -0.13 | -0.54 |
| *Pensby* | *NS* | *Mix* | *-0.01* | *0.14* | -0.14 | 0.28 | *0.18* | -0.13 | 0.31 |
| Prenton | NS | G | 0.09 | -0.02 | 0.04 | -0.06 | 0.28 | 0.08 | 0.20 |
| Ridgeway | NS | Mix | -0.68 | -0.17 | -0.14 | -0.03 | -0.22 | -0.13 | -0.09 |
| South Wirral | NS | Mix | -0.09 | 0.00 | -0.14 | 0.14 | -0.01 | -0.13 | 0.12 |
| St John Plessington | NS | Mix | 0.45 | 0.72 | -0.14 | 0.86 | 0.39 | -0.13 | 0.52 |
| St Mary's | NS | Mix | -0.62 | -0.22 | -0.14 | -0.08 | -0.49 | -0.13 | -0.36 |
| Weatherhead | NS | G | 0.19 | 0.23 | 0.04 | 0.19 | 0.16 | 0.08 | 0.08 |
| Woodchurch | NS | Mix | 0.04 | 0.04 | -0.14 | 0.18 | 0.03 | -0.13 | 0.16 |
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| Selective Schools |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Calday | S | B | 0.36 | -0.08 | 0.29 | -0.37 | 0.59 | 0.42 | 0.17 |
| St Anselms | S | B | -0.24 | -0.09 | 0.29 | -0.38 | 0.26 | 0.42 | -0.16 |
| Upton | S | G | 0.32 | 0.91 | 0.62 | 0.29 | 0.88 | 0.71 | 0.17 |
| West Kirby Grammar | S | G | 0.47 | 0.48 | 0.62 | -0.14 | 0.72 | 0.71 | 0.01 |
| Wirral Boys | S | B | 0.22 | -0.12 | 0.29 | -0.41 | 0.14 | 0.42 | -0.28 |
| Wirral Girls | S | G | 0.42 | 0.48 | 0.62 | -0.14 | 0.78 | 0.71 | 0.07 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |
| Partially Selective Schools | Nationally published comparative data is not available  | 0.00 |
| BHSA - Non | S | G | 0.44 | 0.44 |   |   | 0.24 |   |   |
| BHSA - Sel | S | G | 0.44 | 0.44 |   |   | 0.24 |   |   |
| 2017 outcomes data: national tables SFR57/2017 table 2b |
| <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2016-to-2017-provisional> |
| 2018 outcomes data: national tables 2018 table 2b |
| <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2017-to-2018-provisional> |