Tavistock Community Primary and Nursery School

Plymouth Road,

TAVISTOCK

PL19 8BX

Thursday 26th April 2018

**School Funding**

Dear Mr Cox,

We are writing to you to highlight the funding challenges facing **Tavistock Primary and Nursery School**, which is in your constituency.

In recent years it has become apparent that current budgets are unsustainable. The governing board and senior leadership team at this school have been grappling with the funding challenges, leading to a number of tough decisions being made. For example, following recent years of making savings, we are regrettably now having to lose experienced staff from September 2018.

The move to a national funding formula for schools will not bring the benefits to our school that we had hoped to see.

Our school is not alone. Each year the National Governors’ Association, the representative organisation for school governors and trustees, conducts a large-scale survey in conjunction with the TES. In 2016 just over a quarter of the 5000 respondents said they had made posts redundant in the last academic year. 60% of respondents predicted that they would need to do likewise this year. Sadly, one third of schools had already reduced the offer to pupils in order to make savings; nearly a third had increased class sizes.

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) has shown that more than half (55%) of school leaders in a recent survey felt that their school’s deficit would be untenable by 2018/19, which is mirrored by the annual survey of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and BrowneJacobson in which 95% of respondents said that managing a stagnant or reduced budget would be a priority over the next twelve months. Funding pressures are being felt across all phases and in all schools, not just our own.

We understand that the country is in a time of austerity, and that the overall schools budget has been ‘protected’ by Government. But the reality is that schools have had to manage rising costs over the same period, not least significant increases to national insurance and pension contributions, as well as more general inflationary pressures. Services previously provided by the local authority have been curtailed or stopped as a result of very significant cuts to local authority budgets, and the £600 million reduction in the Education Services Grant (funding paid to local authorities to provide support services to schools and directly to academies) will exacerbate this further. The apprenticeship levy will, from April, impact on a significant number of schools, including maintained schools in which the local authority is the employer. Consequently, there has been a real-terms funding cut: the National Audit Office estimate that schools will see an 8.0% real-terms reduction in per-pupil funding between 2014-15 and 2019-20 due to cost pressures.

While this school works hard to ensure that financial pressures have as little impact on pupils as possible, rising costs and having to do more with the same amount of money means that many tough decisions have been made.

The Department for Education now claim that schools can find £3 billion further savings by 2019/20. It has not set out how it envisions schools will achieve this. In the future, we cannot guarantee that such measures will not impact on the quality of the education provided to pupils, despite doing our upmost to prevent this.

As our MP, we ask that you fight on our behalf for the overall schools budget to be increased in order to combat the impact rising costs. To that effect, please write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in time for the autumn budget.

As this is an issue which affects us all, we will of course keep the wider school community informed about your action in response.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Name:

Parent of a pupil at Tavistock Community Primary and Nursery School