

The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Councillor Jonathan Pryor
Executive Member for Learning,
Skills & Employment

Civic Hall
Leeds
LS1 1UR

0113 378 8007
jonathan.pryor@leeds.gov.uk

Monday 21st January 2019

Dear Mr Hinds

In September last year I wrote to you outlining the desperate situation a number of Leeds schools are in with regard to maintenance, most notably Benton Park, Royds and Wetherby High schools.

Since the then Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government shut down the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme in 2010, the conditions of a number of our schools in Leeds has significantly worsened, to the point where three high schools are in urgent need of rebuild.

On top of the ending of this school repair programme, the Government also provides Leeds City Council within the region of £260 million a year less than the then Government did 9 years ago.

In addition to these three high schools in need of a rebuild, we also have a backlog of repair work totalling approximately £100 million.

Population increases in Leeds also mean a significant number of new high school places are needed and new high schools built.

Leeds schools are at breaking point.

In September I asked you for an urgent meeting to discuss these issues and copied in the two MPs who represent the constituencies where the three named schools are located – Alec Shelbrooke and Stuart Andrew.

It is extremely disappointing that not only has a meeting not been arranged to discuss what funding the Government can offer to bring these schools up to scratch, but no reply or acknowledgement was received from you, nor the local MPs Mr Shelbrooke or Mr Andrew.

If the points in this letter continue to be ignored by the Government, we may find ourselves in a position where schools in Leeds could face closure, or a move to temporary modular accommodation, on health and safety grounds.

My original letter was not made public out of the hope that we could work across the political divide, hoping that the educational needs of Leeds' young people would transcend partisan difference, it would appear I was wrong.

By making this letter public I hope that a response and the offer of a meeting will be forthcoming, I would also like to invite you to Leeds to see the state of these some of these schools for yourself.

Leeds City Council's Children's Services were recently found to be Outstanding by Ofsted, the only city in the country to achieve this – and the educational attainment of Leeds' children is improving at a significantly faster rate than national. It is clear that Leeds can deliver for its children but that we are being held back and let down by the Government.

I have also copied in all Members of Parliament representing Leeds, and the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Angela Rayner, so that they may raise both this issue and your non-acknowledgement of my request in Parliament.

The young people of Leeds deserve schools that are not falling down.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Pryor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Jonathan Pryor

cc.

Angela Rayner MP

Stuart Andrew MP

Hilary Benn MP

Richard Burgon MP

Fabian Hamilton MP

Andrea Jenkins MP

Rachel Reeves MP

Alec Shelbrooke MP

Alex Sobel MP

Yorkshire Evening Post

Times Educational Supplement