

# Slough Schools Forum

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31 March 2021

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith St  
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Mr Williamson

## **Maintained Nursery School (MNS) Funding**

I write on behalf of Slough Schools' Forum, representing maintained schools and academies across the phases in Slough, to bring to your attention the urgency of reforming funding for maintained nursery schools and providing additional support to address the impact of the pandemic.

As you will be aware, the MNS supplementary funding was introduced in 2017 as a temporary measure, crucial to the survival of this vital part of the sector, while a long term solution was sought.

We are extremely concerned for the financial viability of our five maintained nursery schools in Slough. The MNS supplement has reduced from £1,131,000 in 2017 - 2018 to £772,350 (total confirmed and conditional amount) for 2021 – 2022. Of this total figure, £300,979 has been confirmed for April 2021 to August 2021 with the conditional (unconfirmed, September 2021 – March 2022) amount being £421,371.

In addition, the restrictions of the single funding formula guidance prevents the local authority from finding local solutions and providing our own additional funding.

Slough Schools' Forum members cannot stress enough how this situation has added to the financial insecurity for the long term viability of these schools.

Of the five maintained nursery schools in Slough, three were facing financial pressures prior to the first wave of the pandemic, as noted by Slough Schools Forum at the end of the financial year 2019-2020. However, the additional financial impact of the pandemic has further deepened the pressures for these nursery schools.

In the absence of any certainty about the funding allocations for the next financial year and beyond, our maintained nursery schools cannot plan a route to recovery.

Without an immediate prospect of long-term viable funding, the local authority and governors will have to make hard decisions about the future operation of the schools which provide a vital service to some of our most disadvantaged communities in Slough.

We are extremely concerned that a long-term solution has not been put in place for 2021 – 2022 and beyond.

Given the gravity of these concerns which have been deepened because of the impact of the pandemic we would ask for an update on the current funding position.

If maintained nursery schools are forced to close, the cost of looking after children in great need will fall upon other services at a time when they are already under severe pressure.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JD Constable". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first letters of "JD" and "Constable" being capitalized and prominent. A horizontal line is drawn under the word "Constable".

John Constable

Chair of Slough Schools Forum

Copies to:

Vicky Ford MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

Tan Dhesi MP, Member of Parliament for Slough

Councillor Martin Carter, Cabinet member for Children and Education, Slough Borough Council

Eleni Ioannides, Interim Director of Children's Services, Slough Borough Council / Interim Chief Executive, Slough Children First