

2026 - 2027

SCHOOL FUNDING REPORT



Find out how much schools in
your constituency have lost:

schoolcuts.org.uk



Foreword

We have witnessed a generation of cuts. 15+ years of chronic underfunding have decimated our schools.

The data is clear – funding for English schools has hit rock bottom. As this report shows, our schools have £4.5 billion less in real-terms funding than they did in 2010.

As a result, we have a crisis in staffing in the school estate, in classrooms across England. Schools are running on empty and are having to make cuts to essentials simply to survive.

Educators, parents and pupils see the results of this every day. It's the mum and dad jumping hurdle after hurdle to try to get their child SEND support. The teacher reaching into their own pocket for supplies to cover the gaps. The children trying to concentrate in ever-larger classes.

It didn't have to be this way. This is the result of years of political choices made by successive Prime Ministers and Chancellors. With schools on the brink, the time is coming when someone will have to make a better choice.

When the Labour government took office in 2024, it inherited a difficult situation. Two years on, the Prime Minister may have changed but not much else in our education system has. PM Andy Burnham and Chancellor John Healey are facing tough choices but school funding has to be a priority.

This new Government has the opportunity to do what those before have not: take a clear-eyed look at the costs of continuing with business as usual. They can choose a future of crumbling buildings, inadequate SEND provision, educators leaving the profession and fewer opportunities for children. Or begin reversing the decline, properly funding our education system so it can do what it does best: give pupils the tools to thrive.

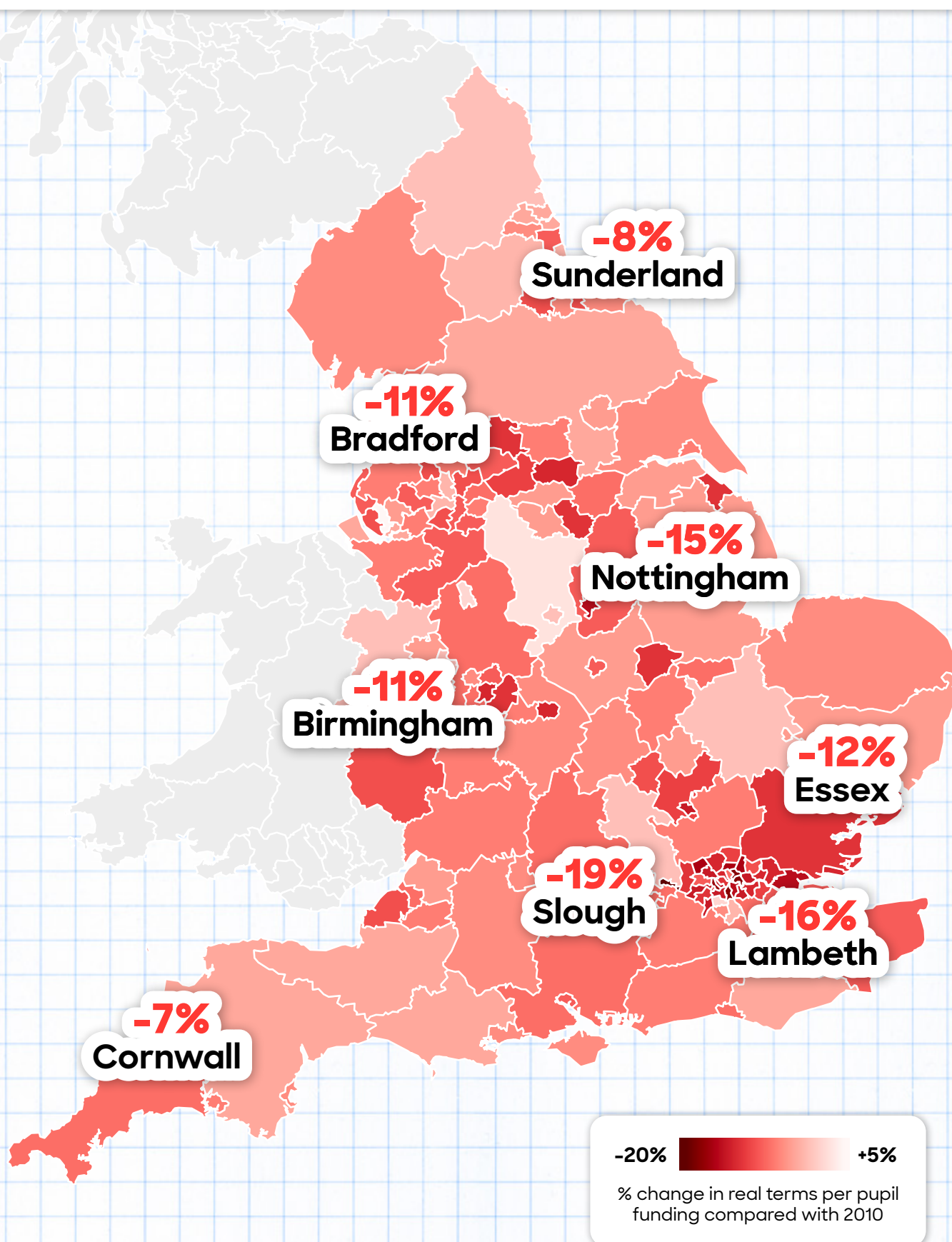
This is a chance for a new start. A chance for a Prime Minister who is willing to prioritise our schools and give children of this generation the same opportunities that their parents had.

Daniel Kebede,
NEU General Secretary

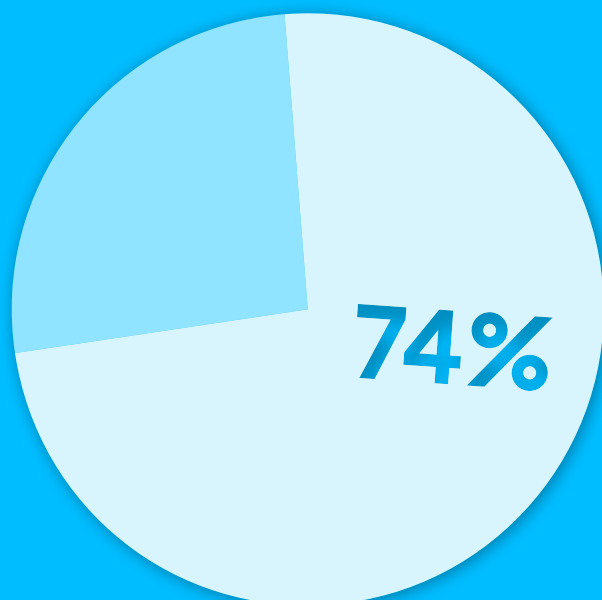




278 local authorities have less funding for schools in real terms than in 2010.



Nearly **three-quarters** of schools have less funding in real terms than in 2010



That's 14,053 schools.

Cut to school spending power since 2010:

£4.5bn

Did you know?

- **1,323 schools** have lost more than £1 million in real terms since 2010
- **772 schools** have lost more than £2,000 in real terms per-pupil funding
- **3,773 schools** have lost more than £1,000 in real terms per-pupil funding

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Teachers and teaching assistants chose their careers because they want to make a positive impact on the lives of children. Decreasing funding is putting strain and pressure on everyone. It is getting harder and harder to meet the needs of our precious pupils.

Izzy,
Parent in Watford

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Schools are literally falling apart and there's no money for anything. I have to buy my own glue sticks for art classes.

Helen Byrom,
Teacher in Liverpool

Mainstream schools' core funding has fallen from £7,708 per pupil in 2010 to £7,110 per pupil in 2026, in real terms.

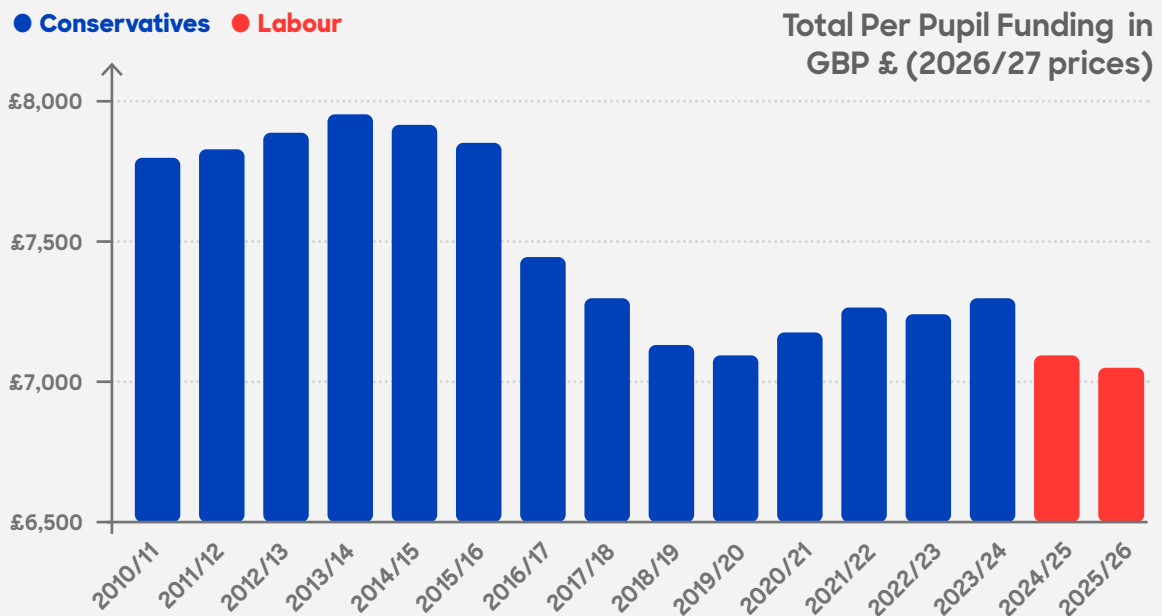
£7,708

2010/11



£7,110

2025/26



£4.5bn is needed to restore the core schools budget to 2010 levels. Cuts since 2010 are equivalent to:

32,484 + **33,396** + **1,710,786**
teachers support staff laptops

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As a parent and a teacher serving over 25 years I have seen first hand how badly cuts year on year have affected students and how the country is hemorrhaging good teachers who cannot do their jobs effectively because of the current climate.

**Tara Chavda,
Teacher, Bedfordshire**

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How can this Government create generation upon generation of future workers for this country and economy if they aren't prepared to properly fund it from the ground up?

**Elizabeth Boyles,
Teaching Assistant, Ollerton and Boughton**

A generation of Government funding cuts have left English schools in a desperate condition.

School funding is at crisis levels and continues to only get worse. Over a decade of **Government funding cuts mean that English schools are in a dire situation.**

In 2025/26 (the latest year that we have data for) 74 per cent of schools in England had less funding in real terms than in 2010.

As cuts deepen, children are paying the price. Heads, teachers and school staff have done everything they can to shield pupils from the damage. But they can only stretch so far. Years of underfunding are pushing schools to breaking point, and the system is now creaking under the pressure.

A majority of teachers say (66 per cent) their setting is reliant on donations and fundraising to supplement funding. This is used to cover basic running costs as well as toward building repair, new equipment and school trips.

The effect that cuts are having on schools are clear for all to see with a £4.5 billion real terms gap between how schools were funded in 2010 compared to now. Were this money to be restored to school budgets it would be equivalent to the salaries of 32,484 teachers, 33,396 support staff, and the cost of 1,710,786 laptops.

On top of this, the Government announced that the pay award for teachers for the coming year will not be fully funded, leaving another £460 million deficit in school budgets. When funding has already been cut to the bone, there are no more efficiencies for schools to find. Any further cuts will inevitably lead to staff redundancies and a loss of provision.



↑ We've collected hundreds of messages from all over the country highlighting the impact of school funding cuts.

At the last spending review then-Chancellor Rachel Reeves committed £5bn over the course of the Parliament, but this is all based on a bet that inflation stays near 2 per cent. Even if that figure holds, investment would just keep school funding levels steady, rather than investing to undo any historic cuts to schools.

With a new Prime Minister in office, this is a chance for a reset. Prime Minister Andy Burnham has already stated that he wants to ensure “our education system leaves no dead ends for our young people.” This will only be possible if schools have the resources they need to support every pupil.

If the Prime Minister wants to rebuild the country, he has to start with its foundations – and that means restoring school funding.

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We can no longer provide the high quality education our children deserve.

Julie Simpson,
Teacher, Thornbury and Yate

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Last academic year we lost the equivalent of 6 full time teaching staff because we couldn't afford to replace them.

George Buchanan,
Headteacher, Oxford East

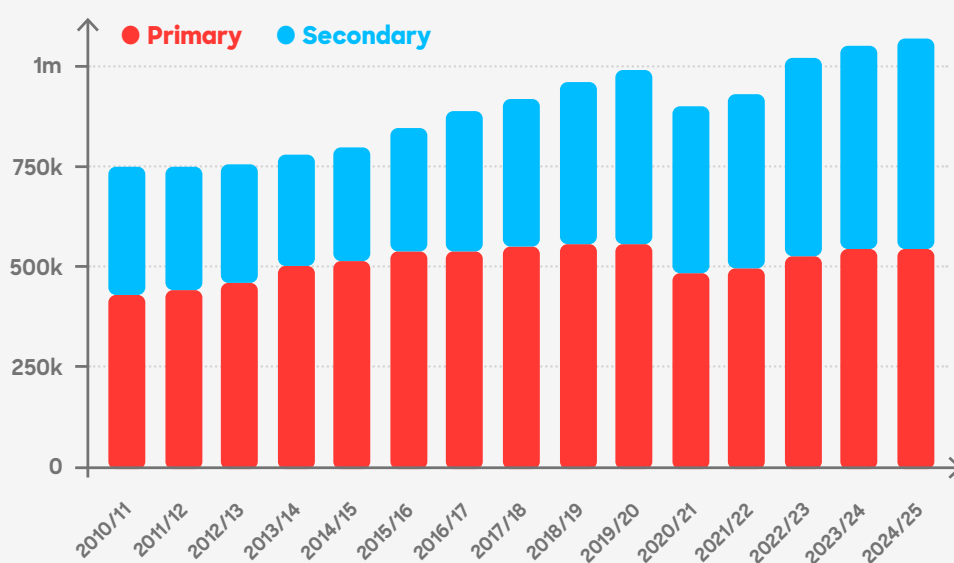
1. Why is funding so important?

Growing class sizes

Our class sizes in the UK are among the highest in Europe. A million children are taught in classes of 30 or more.

Class sizes have a huge impact on the learning that pupils receive as they are not able to access as much one-to-one and personalised support. 9 out of 10 teachers say class sizes are having a negative impact on pupil progress, attainment and behaviour.¹

FIGURE 1: Number of pupils in classes with more than 30 pupils



A recruitment and retention crisis

School staff are being driven to burnout. One in four teachers leave the profession within three years of qualification; and a third within five years.

Government pay freezes and below-inflation pay awards resulted in the value of teacher and school leader pay being cut by some 23% against RPI inflation since 2010. This is a major driver behind the recruitment and retention crisis. Parents see the impact of this problem through the turnover of teachers in their children's classrooms.

53 per cent of teachers think there is 'definitely not enough' money in their school budget for staffing levels to meet basic provision. Just 1 per cent of teachers working in primary schools, nurseries, special schools and PRUs said they had 'definitely enough' funding for staffing.

The 3.5% increase for teachers and leaders in September 2026 was once again not fully-funded by the Government. It leaves the vast majority of schools facing more impossible choices – cut staff, cut resources or both.

Crumbling buildings

Classrooms are crumbling – it’s a national scandal. The current state of school buildings presents a very real ‘risk to life’ as was recognised by the DfE.

Teachers report ‘severe’ issues with their school buildings, including overheating in summer for one in three (33 per cent), poor ventilation for 54 per cent, and leaks from the rain for 66 per cent.

An NAO report from last year estimates that there is a school maintenance backlog of £13.8bn.² The RAAC crisis is just one symptom. Asbestos is an even greater concern – present in an estimated 80% of schools.³

Narrowing the curriculum

As whole subjects are lost to cuts, children are missing out on life-changing opportunities to study arts, sports, and music. Between 2010 and 2023 there was a 42% drop in entries to GCSE and A-level arts subjects – with fewer arts teachers recruited some subjects are no longer taught in all schools.

The failure to recruit and retain teachers over the long-term means teachers frequently have to take classes in subjects outside their specialism. One in five maths teachers does not have a post A-level qualification in the subject, and two in five physics teachers.

“

Experienced staff members are leaving at an alarming rate, creating a significant knowledge gap for new trainees due to the lack of seasoned mentors. Furthermore, replacing these teachers has proven extremely difficult due to low salaries and overwhelming workloads.

Ahad Ali, Teacher in London



Case study: Wood End Infant & Pre-school

“It's hard to motivate yourself to come to work each day and stay in a job with so many hurdles and daily pressures that prevent you from doing what you trained to do: care for children, teach them and provide them with a high quality education and love of learning. No wonder teachers and leaders are leaving the profession in droves.

There is a lack of funding for buildings and facilities, as well as a **lack of funding for SEND** and many other areas of education. **Each area that is poorly funded has a knock-on effect to something else.** Unless there is a massive overhaul, and education is properly funded the state of our schools and education system will just get worse and worse.

The Government needs to stop school cuts now in order to protect our children's education and futures. If we carry on as we are, and pretend everything is okay, nothing will ever change.

We need to see a commitment to **restoring school funding to the same level that was left by the previous Labour government in 2010.** Our children deserve the best chance to secure a bright future. ”

Claire Wilson
Headteacher
Wood End Infant & Pre-school
Milton Keynes

2. What has happened since 2010?

Current picture

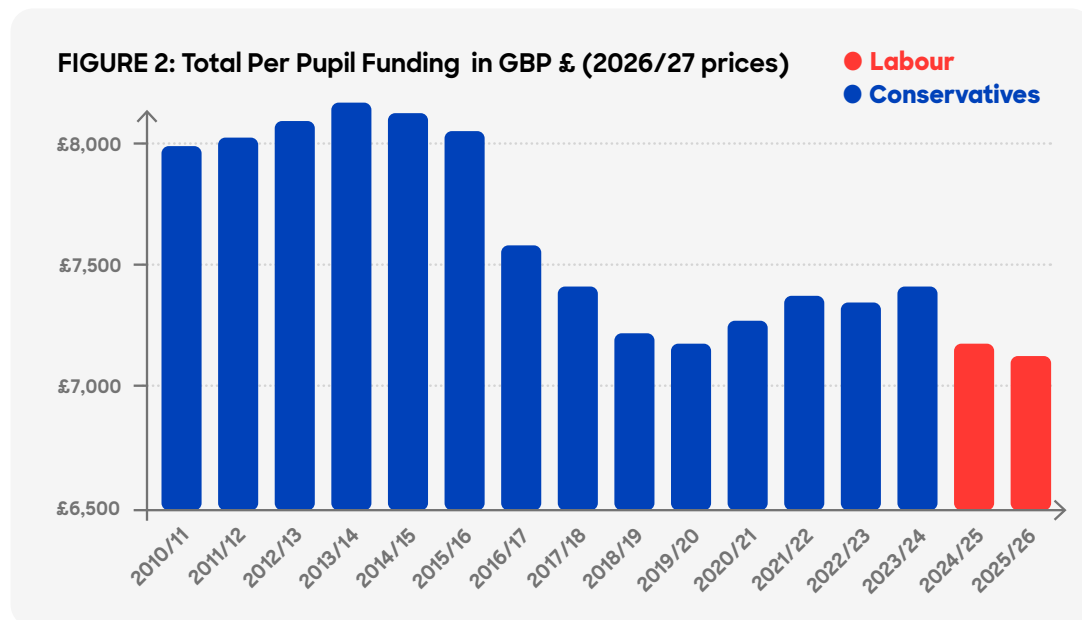
Mainstream schools' core funding has fallen from £7,708 per pupil in 2010-11 (2026/27 prices) to £7,110 in 2025/26, a reduction of 8 per cent.

This is a huge drop that equates to a total £4.5bn fall in school spending power since 2010⁴. This is the equivalent of 32,484 teachers, 33,396 support staff, and 1,710,786 laptops.

A decade of austerity

Cuts to school funding have varied over the last 15 years. From 2010 to 2015, there was a small increase in the spending power of mainstream schools. This was a result of the introduction of the Pupil Premium which increased funding by £2.2 billion a year and the three-year staff pay freeze, which held down schools' costs.

However, following this there was a sharp fall in school funding announced in the 2015 spending review. Here, David Cameron's Government did not take account of the large rise in pupil numbers, abolished the Education Services Grant and did not compensate schools for the significant increase in employers' National Insurance contributions.



From 2020, there were two years of real growth in school funding. This was the result of Boris Johnson's increased investment announced at the end of August 2019.⁵

Devolution and regional breakdowns

When looking at the data it is clear that some regions have been much harder hit than others.

The new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has pledged aims to give regions more decision-making powers and ensure that education is working for all in all parts of the country. These facts show how hard this challenge will be unless school funding is uplifted for all schools.

London boroughs continue to have a large share of those local authorities that have lost the most on a per pupil basis. 20 out of the 33 local authorities in London have lost more than £1,000 per pupil since 2010.

FIGURE 3: Change in real terms per pupil funding compared with 2010-11

Local Authority	Change In Real Terms Per Pupil Funding
2025-26	
Hackney	-£2,052
Tower Hamlets	-£2,050
Isles Of Scilly	-£2,005
City of London	-£1,923
Hammersmith and Fulham	-£1,733
Lambeth	-£1,669
Slough	-£1,637
Haringey	-£1,620
Southwark	-£1,614
Nottingham	-£1,367

School cuts have hit the poorest hardest

The data is stark. Cuts have hit the least well-off the hardest in real-terms per-pupil funding. The implications for schools and children's educational opportunities are cuts to arts, sports and music, crumbling classrooms and less support for each child.

Despite consistent rhetoric of the need to break down barriers, the Labour Government have done little to make this a reality, with a clearly unequal state in education.

If this Labour Government is serious about addressing that inequality, reversing school cuts is a basic first duty.

FIGURE 4: Current (2024-25) change in real terms per pupil funding compared with 2010-11

Free School Meals Band	Change in Real Terms per Pupil
2025-26	
1. Least	-£915.4m
2. Low	-£842.7m
3. Average	-£825.7m
4. High	-£896.6m
5. Highest	-£938.3m

SEND

SEND funding has been in crisis for a number of years. Since 2017, when it was obvious that the SEND system was in difficulty, the government sought to mitigate this crisis by awarding the High Needs Block a disproportionate share of the core schools budget.

More than 718,000 children and young people are now supported through an EHC plan, and demand grows each year. Fewer than half of new plans were issued within the 20-week statutory timeframe - a further deterioration.

At the latest budget it was confirmed that the reform of SEND funding would involve moving overspend by local authorities onto central government departmental budgets from 2028/29. The OBR currently forecasts that this could add an additional £6 billion of spending pressures per year.

The Government's Schools White Paper that was released earlier this year set out an ambition to reshape the SEND landscape, including through more inclusion in mainstream schools. However the money that was provided through the Inclusion Grant to support this does not even equate to the cost of one full-time equivalent teacher for every school. This is not enough to make schools more inclusive.

89 per cent of teachers say that class sizes are too big and hamper the ability of their setting to be properly inclusive. Similarly, 85 per cent of teachers say that being able to afford physical resources for their school would have a positive impact on SEND provision, with 54 per cent believing this would have a 'major' impact. Unless action is carried out to invest in schools and allow them to reduce class sizes, these reforms will not be successful.

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Disabled and SEN children services should be pulling together to put our children on the path to greatness not bringing them down making them struggle and forcing families to go through years of mental trauma just to enable our children to attend school.

Karen Hill, Parent, Handsacre



↑ With less funds, schools like Hitherfield Primary can't recruit the staff they need.

Unfunded pay awards

The outlook for schools continues to look bleak in the coming year. Our research shows that cuts to education funding next year will amount to £460 million, following the Government's announcement that teachers will receive a pay rise of 3.5 per cent. The £460 million amounts to the 1.1% of the pay award that schools will have to find from their existing budgets.

Any further cuts to school funding will inevitably result in schools saving money by cutting leadership and staff. In its evidence to the STRB - submitted late last year - the DfE suggested schools should make 'efficiencies' from existing budgets to fund pay rises.

This cut would be the equivalent of salaries for up to 8,300 school staff - 3,900 teachers and 4,400 support staff - putting at risk the Government's commitment to recruit 6,500 more teachers. Similar situations have occurred over the past decade with schools being asked to fund staff pay awards from their existing budgets, inevitably leading to cuts in provision to accommodate this.



↑ Educators have stretched budgets to breaking point. Funding is urgently needed for schools to recover.

3. Parents and educators expect change

Right now, our schools and colleges are underfunded, understaffed and crumbling.

There's no magic wand to fix the foundations of our education system. Only funding can provide schools and colleges with the resources they need to deliver a world-class education.

Budget report

School funding continues to be in freefall. School cuts are deepening year-on-year, with funding down £300 million just on last year.

Yet another unfunded pay award means that the future projection for school budgets is that they will only get worse. Schools will have to find another £460 million this coming year to afford staff pay rises – in practice this means more cuts.

The limited money that was provided at the Spending Review now looks even less adequate. The Government have chosen to gamble the schooling of yet another generation on a series of high-stakes assumptions.

Schools cannot cope with more cuts – there is no fat left to cut from school budgets. Further cuts will only lead to redundancies and a reduction in provision. The Government must secure school budgets and ensure that schools have the money they need to cope with rising prices.

Time for change

The Government cannot afford to stand by while our schools are pushed further into crisis. It must choose to act now.

Years of cuts have left schools struggling to meet rising costs, recruit and retain staff, support children with SEND, provide essential resources and maintain safe, decent buildings.

The first step is clear: **restore the core schools budget to its 2010 level in real terms.**

Any reforms to the SEND system must be accompanied by sufficient funding to make them successful.

Too many children learning in buildings that are deteriorating around them, the Government must also deliver **a major programme of investment in school buildings and capital funding.**

Over a decade of underinvestment will not be fixed overnight. But unless something is done to turn the tide, schools will remain in a perpetual state of crisis. Before this Parliament ends, there must be a clear route back to properly funded schools, with the first meaningful steps taken in the upcoming Autumn Budget.

Our schools have been asked to do more with less for long enough. Now it is time to stop all school cuts.



Sources:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/17/bigger-classes-harming-pupils-progress-say-9-in-10-uk-teachers>
2. National Audit Office, Maintaining Public Service Facilities, 22 January 2025 <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/maintaining-public-service-facilities.pdf>
3. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f281580d3bf7f1b1593c193/Asbestos_management_in_schools_data_collection_report.pdf
4. Our measurement of school spending power accurately reflects real terms funding by measuring what funding schools would need to be able to afford the same quantity of goods as they could in 2010.
5. DfE, Prime Minister boosts schools with £14 billion package, 30 August 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-boosts-schools-with-14-billion-package>
6. https://neu.org.uk/latest/press-releases/state-education-2026-send?_locale=en



Stop School Cuts is a national campaign coordinated by the National Education Union calling on the Government to take immediate action to protect children's education and stop funding cuts to schools.

Learn more

schoolcuts.org.uk