

to Dugald Sandeman
Head of Maintained Schools Division
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
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date 16 October 2012

your ref
my ref AR823/JAM
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Dear Mr Sandeman

WIRRAL EARLY YEARS CENSUS ERROR

I am the Chair of the Schools Forum and members have asked that I write to you on their behalf. The Early Years Census error was discussed at length at the Schools Forum on 25 September 2012, the report is attached to this letter.

As a group of headteachers and governors representing all schools on Wirral we are disappointed that the issue described has not progressed since first raised with us in July. Our hope was that a different approach would be taken by the Department, one which would ensure that Wirral receives an accurate and correct level of funding and that despite the error, young people are not disadvantaged.

You will know that the size of the budgeted error (£1.4m) and the amount of grant involved would make this loss very difficult at any time, but it is even more so in the current climate. That children on Wirral will not benefit from the funding intended is unfair. This seems to be in part because of an error in data provided but also because of a policy that lacks the flexibility needed to ensure that funding can be directed where needed. Does the department not have contingency or reserve funds which could be used in this instance?

My colleagues and I believe that the EFA should not withhold funding, but instead release the level of grant to support all children as intended. I would be grateful for your response to report to our next meeting.

Yours sincerely

Richard Longster
On behalf of Wirral Schools Forum