



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education

5th October 2023

Dear Gillian,

I visited Clevedon School last week following the identification of HACC (High Alumina Cement Concrete). This has made a large part of the school unusable. The Department for Education is well aware of the situation and David Burford and his team have been terrific in liaising with the Headteacher, Jim Smith, and staff.

The degree of disruption is such that 22 classrooms and associated offices and storage spaces are currently unusable, including all the specialist food technology rooms needed to deliver the curriculum, including GCSE and City and Guilds qualifications.

Students are being taught in a range of creative spaces including offices, meeting rooms, squash courts and storage huts. They are also being taught in large, multi-subject groups, in the main hall and the sports hall. This results in such combinations as GCSE English, KS3 Spanish and KS3 Food Tech all being taught in the same space.

There are currently no sixth form facilities (such as a common room, study centre or library) as these are now being used to house classes. There are no bookable IT suites for pupils and an outdoor seating area has had to be built to replace lost "wet weather" capacity, meaning that there is now no playground space at all.

The net result, as I am sure you can readily imagine, is an overall inability to deliver the required curriculum, including exam specifications, EHCP requirements and SEND needs.



I have no doubt that the best outcome here would be to build a new school. Some of the buildings date back to the 1950s and the piecemeal building that has occurred over the years means that there is an unnecessary fragmentation of facilities and a suboptimal use of available space.

While some might see this as a huge problem, I see it as a huge opportunity, a feeling shared by the Headteacher and Governors. Clevedon is a vibrant community, and the school facilities are well used by a range community groups. Money has already been allocated by the Department for a new performing arts block which will be enormously well used and a great boost to the town given that the main centre currently used for this purpose is old and in need of complete refurbishment.

I think that there is a great chance here for a change of concept that seeks to establish a community centre of which the school is an integral part, rather than simply the school buildings being used for other purposes.

The Prime Minister talked about the need for the Conservative Party to take long-term decisions and move away from the short termism that has bedeviled the country in the past and I think that this would be a great beacon project for that concept.

I am happy to talk to you or David Burford and his team at any time as, I know, are either Headteacher, Governors, and staff at Clevedon School.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam Fox', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP