



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Gillian Keagan MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

9<sup>th</sup> April 2024

*Dear Secretary of State,*

**SEND FUNDING FOR NEW SCHOOL IN BOURNEMOUTH**

I am writing in the wake of the recent Spring 2024 Budget announcement, in which you unveiled a pivotal £105 million allocation for the establishment of 15 new special free schools. This commendable initiative, aimed at creating over 2,000 additional places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), marks a significant stride towards inclusivity and support for our most vulnerable pupils.

Considering this step, I wish to draw attention to a pressing need within my constituency of Bournemouth East. We are grappling with a substantial increase in the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) - a figure that has doubled since 2015. This surge underscores a growing demand for specialised educational provisions that the current infrastructure is ill-equipped to meet. Moreover, there is a shortage of teaching assistants and non-teaching staff available to meet this challenge.

Between 8,500 and 13,600 children aged 0-24 currently living in Dorset are living with long-term health problems or disabilities that significantly limit their day-to-day activities. This stark reality accentuates the urgency for enhanced educational support structures that can cater to such diverse needs.

In view of these compelling circumstances, I request that a portion of the allocated £105 million funding be directed towards the establishment of a new special needs school in Bournemouth East. This institution would not only alleviate the current strain on existing resources but also ensure that all children receive the education and care they rightfully deserve.

*Yours,*