

To Tony Durkin, LSA Express. Monday 19th June 2017

School Cuts had an impact on the Fylde Election outcome

Fylde National Union of Teacher members campaigned strongly before and during the election period. That campaign for increased school funding will now continue under the new hung parliament in order to try and prevent per-pupil funding continuing to fall in real terms.

Joanne Gould, Fylde NUT's Vice-President and its school representative at Carr Hill High School who got the campaign underway said, "It's been an uplifting experience for me - it is a relief to feel like you can do something, no matter how futile it feels. Better to fight than to just roll over, or become apathetic. The Government and their representatives just kept saying that education funding is at record levels. However, that means very little, because with inflation, it always needs to be at record levels to keep up with increased costs. Unfortunately, it is not even doing that. Then take new costs and the increasing number of pupils into account, and you end up with per-pupil funding levels falling badly in real terms. We did our job really well and got that information across to voters for their consideration before voting. We will see what is in the Queen's Speech on school funding because we are not giving up. This is too important an issue."

Nationally TES reports that a post-election survey by Survation found that 750,000 voters switched their vote because of school funding cuts. This reason came ahead of the economy or even tuition fees. The TES report is [here](#) and another TES article [here](#) said that the Conservatives had considered and then rejected protecting per-pupil funding levels in their Manifesto, but are now considering "all the options".

Here in the Fylde, the campaign succeeded in getting a pledge from ALL Fylde candidates. What they signed YES to is "I promise to oppose cutting per-pupil funding in real terms for schools in Fylde compared to 2015/16." It is believed that Fylde is the only constituency in the country where this has happened. However, nationally the figures were Con: 1% | LD: 45% | Green: 55% | Lab: 61% of candidates. The Fylde Labour and Green candidates even attended the public meeting on school cuts as members of the audience.

Voters in Fylde, which has always been a safe Conservative seat, increased the Labour Party vote with a swing of 14.6%, one of the greatest in the UK. The Labour Manifesto promised enough funding to keep the per-pupil funding levels up in real terms. They received a record 33.4% share of the vote in Fylde, even more than during the big swing to Labour in 1997 under Tony Blair. (Fylde voting details are [here](#).)

Ken Cridland, President of the Fylde National Union of Teachers said, "We believe that many voters changed their vote because of cuts to school budgets and that the bigger impact on the election here in the Fylde compared to nationally is down to the effectiveness of our campaign. Our Vice-President, Joanne Gould who teaches at Carr Hill High School had the idea of a personal approach with an advert and leaflet to parents, which also gave details of the cuts in real terms that are hitting local schools. The size of those cuts to their own schools shocked people. Our retired members got the leaflet out to parents at many local primary schools when they came to collect their children after school and the issue had good coverage in the media."

Notes

Full details of the Fylde NUT campaign are given at our website here – <http://www.lancashirenut.org.uk/associations/fylde/>

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