

View from the House

There have been contradictory messages and policy disarray from the Government recently such as the astonishing announcement by the Prime Minister that Muslim women need to learn English or be deported. It is in every woman's interest to speak English well irrespective of their cultural background. Why then has David Cameron's government been cutting the funding of teaching English?

I met with service users and providers at Walsall Adult Community College - Ofsted rated Outstanding – and wrote to Ministers who confirmed funding cuts. So when the PM announced there was an extra £20million for such a service, I had to stand up in the House of Commons and ask the Leader of the House for the money back! He said the Minister would hear my representations. I hope so because the success stories from WACC are inspiring. I have also written to the PM.

And at Joseph Leckie Academy we are struggling to recover the money allocated to the School under Building Schools for the Future. I was delighted to welcome the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb MP to Joseph Leckie Academy. It is unfair that £17m for a rebuild was withdrawn in 2010.

The Minister saw water damage in the library and in the Languages classrooms. The toilet block's disrepair makes it completely out of use. The Education Funding Agency could also see how hard it is for children to learn in this environment. And yet results are better than a nearby School rebuilt complete with Atrium.

More contradictions as the Culture Minister wrote to MPs to visit our libraries on 6th February. But government and local cuts threaten our libraries with closure. Short-sighted decisions which will affect the education attainment of Walsall children. I called a demonstration outside Pleck Library. I was delighted that many people of all ages demonstrated how valued our libraries are and once lost won't be recovered.

Earlier this week I attended and read at the funeral of former Walsall Mayor, Bill Madeley MBE. Bill dedicated his life to serving the people of Walsall. A councillor for 40 years, he was known as "Mr Darlaston". He won the affection and improved the lives of people in Walsall. His legacy can be seen every day. He was instrumental in bringing the Library to Darlaston and the new swimming pool. I shall miss walking with him through Darlaston on Remembrance Day and his friendship and loyalty. Bill embodied public service.

Valerie Vaz MP