

BORIS JOHNSON AS PM: WHAT CAN SCHOOLS EXPECT?



Freddie Whittaker

Boris Johnson, the former mayor of London and foreign secretary, has been named as the new leader of the Conservative Party and has become prime minister.

The Uxbridge and South Ruislip MP beat the health secretary Jeremy Hunt by 92,153 votes to 46,656 in the Tory leadership election to replace Theresa May.

1. More money for schools

A big cash injection for schools is now all but inevitable. Johnson's predecessor may not have been able to get one past the Treasury in her final weeks in office, but a Johnson is reported to be preparing an early announcement on the subject to prove he's not just all about Brexit.

Initially, Johnson's campaign announced a measly £50 million extra funding – equivalent to a 0.1 per cent rise in the schools budget.

However, the next pledge was a lot more generous. In late June, Johnson pledged an extra £4.6 billion per year for schools by 2022, just short of the £4.9 million the Institute for Fiscal Studies reckons schools need to reverse the cuts of the last decade and protect school budgets to 2023.

2. Continuing support for grammar schools

Johnson backed the expansion of grammar schools shortly before becoming an MP for the second time in 2015.

The decision to ban new ones was, he said, “a real tragedy for this country.”

While the parliamentary arithmetic for lifting the ban is even more hopeless than it was when Theresa May last tried, we may see the expansion-by-the-back-door approach of the current government continue in one form or another.

3. Increased focus on knowledge rich curriculum

Munira Mirza, Johnson's former deputy mayor for education, has been named as Johnson's Number 10 policy lead-in-waiting.

Mirza is a member of the advisory council of Parents and Teachers for Excellence, a lobbying group which promotes a knowledge-rich curriculum and school autonomy.

The appointment could give PTE, which already enjoys a close relationship with the Department for Education, more influence over government policy.