



The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Office of the Leader

Cllr Jas Athwal

Leader of Redbridge Council

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6th September 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Concerns surrounding RAAC in Redbridge schools

The government failure to address systemic underinvestment in school estates across the country has led to a national crisis impacting untold numbers of students, schools, and wider school communities.

As the Leader of Redbridge Council, and a parent of children who all attended schools in my borough, I share the deep frustration of families across Redbridge who this week face uncertainty over their children's education.

Our council has stepped up support for local schools, and we are doing all we can to guide them through this incredibly challenging period. However, this crisis necessitates an immediate and proportionate government response, which so far has been lacking.

Schools cannot be expected to conduct visual inspections of their sites and report accurate assessments to the Department for Education, this process is unreliable by its very nature – concrete can be painted over or otherwise disguised - and school staff do not, and should not be expected to, have the expertise to determine what is RAAC purely by sight. It is vital government announce funding for professional surveys to be conducted at schools as soon as possible.

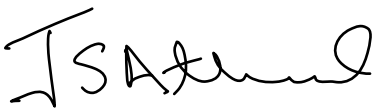
The safety of children, young people, and school staff must be treated as a government priority, and not delegated either to schools themselves or to local authorities who, following over a decade of austerity, face our own funding crises.

Concerns around RAAC in schools has already caused significant disruption, necessitating emergency visual inspections and in some cases, alternative provision. Delays to professional surveys, caused by lack of government funding, will cause further unacceptable disruption to the education of children and young people across the country.

In the meantime, in Redbridge we are continuing to work closely with the senior leadership teams of our affected schools to reduce and mitigate any disruption to their teaching and learning on-site.

I await your urgent response.

Yours sincerely

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

Cllr Jas Athwal
Leader, London Borough of Redbridge