



**Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**  
Secretary of State

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Professor Andrew Pollard

Professor Mary James

8 December 2011

Dear Professor Pollard and Professor James

Thank you for your joint letter of 20 October following our most interesting and constructive discussion on 19 October. Please accept my apologies for the long delay in replying: as you are aware I have been re-considering a number of issues relating to the National Curriculum review and I wanted to be clear about the way forward before responding.

I should first confirm formally that, as I told you at our meeting, I intend to extend the timeline for implementation of phase 1 of the review so that new Programmes of Study for all subjects that will form part of the new National Curriculum are implemented together from 2014. In taking that decision I have taken into account the concerns expressed in your letter of 10 October about the pace of the review, and also the fact that the Expert Panel's advice to date raises the possibility of more radical change than we had envisaged when we embarked on the review, which therefore needs wider debate before decisions are taken. I intend to make my

decision about the timing of the review public shortly: officials will be in touch with you about our detailed plans ahead of that announcement.


In the meantime, I know that you and other panel members have been working on a report summarising the conclusions of your work on issues relating to the framework for the curriculum, and I am very grateful to you for the draft which officials have now shared with me. I can confirm that, as officials have discussed with you, I am happy to publish the final version of the report and propose to do so either alongside, or shortly after, my announcement on the revised timetable for the review. The report will form part of a package of evidence reports published by the Department to demonstrate the progress that has been made on the review and provoke debate about our findings to date, and we intend to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposals the panel has put forward before reaching decisions in the early part of next year.

I can also confirm, with reference to point 2 in your letter, that I do not propose to publish draft Programmes of Study for consultation and discussion until the new year, once the panel's report is in the public domain.

In terms of the future role envisaged at point 7 of your letter, I understand from officials that your thinking has moved on since you wrote and that you are now content to regard the report that the panel has prepared for publication as the culmination of its work. Given that your contracts, and that of Dylan William, have now come to an end, and that your report and the other work you have done fulfils the remit that you were set in January, I hope you will agree that it makes sense to wind up the panel in its current form at this point. I am however still considering what expert advice the Department will need access to, and the appropriate governance arrangements, for the next phase of the review. I will of course be in touch in due course if I conclude that there is a formal role that I would like to offer you as part of that next phase.

In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to offer you my sincere thanks for your work on the panel over the last 10 months, and in particular for the intensive work which I know has gone into preparing a report for publication to tight timescales over recent weeks. I am most grateful to you and other members of the panel for the insights you have been able to offer, particularly into what we can learn from the international evidence, and for drawing those together into a report which provides an excellent basis for further debate and discussion.

As you rightly acknowledge in your letter, ultimately decisions about the form of the new National Curriculum are for Ministers to take, and I do not propose to endorse or reject any of the panel's specific proposals until I have had an opportunity to hear a wider range of views on the issues. Whatever the ultimate outcome, though, you and other panel members have played a very significant role in shaping the debate about the new curriculum, and I am very grateful for your contribution. I hope that, whether or not you are involved in the review in a formal role in future, you will both continue to contribute to that debate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

MICHAEL GOVE