



Education Committee

From the Chair
Helen Hayes MP

Susan Acland-Hood

Permanent Secretary, Department for Education
(*Sent via email*)

Tuesday 24 March 2026

Dear Susan,

Review of approach to consolidated academy financial reporting and audit

Thank you for your letter dated 20 January 2026 explaining the proposed changes to the existing approach for assurance over the financial performance and position of the academies sector. The Committee is grateful for the further briefing from Department officials and NAO officials, and the demonstration of tools available for enabling further Parliamentary scrutiny (such as the Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool).

The Committee has considered the proposed changes, with input and advice from the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit. We are content that the changes be made in principle, subject to:

- The Department sharing working papers with the Committee (via the House of Commons Financial Scrutiny Unit), so that the Committee may be given the opportunity to scrutinise the Agreed-Upon Procedures prior to their initial commencement.
- An annual review carried out by an alignment committee made up of Department officials, NAO officials, and Parliamentary representation (such as a member of the House of Commons Financial Scrutiny Unit).

We will publish this exchange of letters on our website in due course, as a public record of the change.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Hayes MP
Chair, Education Committee