



HOUSE OF LORDS

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1 April 2026

Georgia Gould OBE MP
Minister of State (Minister for School Standards)
Department for Education
By email

Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee

Dear Ms Gould,

The House of Lords Select Committee on Education for 11–16 Year Olds produced its report, *Requires improvement: urgent change for 11–16 education*, on 12 December 2023 (Session 2023–24, House of Lords Paper 17).¹ The Government response was published on 19 February 2024² and the report was subsequently debated in the House of Lords on 26 July 2024.³

The Select Committee was a special inquiry committee and as a result ceased to exist on the agreement of its report. The House of Lords Liaison Committee carries out follow-up work on the recommendations of such special inquiry committee reports. I am therefore writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Liaison Committee to request that you provide a written update on the progress made regarding the recommendations of the Select Committee. The former Chair of the Committee, the Rt Hon. the Lord Johnson of Marylebone, has been consulted on the terms of this letter.

The Committee called for “urgent action” and concluded that “major change” was needed to 11–16 year-old education.⁴ The landscape has changed substantially since the Committee reported, with a change in Government, the decision not to proceed with the Advanced British Standard⁵ and, the week before the Committee’s report was debated, the announcement of the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review.⁶

The Labour Government’s Manifesto set out that “every child should have a broad curriculum with an excellent foundation in reading, writing and maths, and support to develop essential digital, speaking, and creative skills”, and committed to “support children

¹ Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee, [Requires improvement: urgent change for 11–16 education](#) (Report of Session 2023–24, HL Paper 17)

² Department for Education, *Education for 11 to 16 year olds: Government response to the report of the House of Lords Committee*, February 2024, [CP 1026](#)

³ HL Deb, 26 July 2024, [cols 728–767](#)

⁴ Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee, [Requires improvement: urgent change for 11–16 education](#) (Report of Session 2023–24, HL Paper 17), pp 3–4

⁵ HC Deb, 29 July 2024, [col 1036](#)

⁶ Department for Education, [Press release: Government launches Curriculum and Assessment Review](#), 19 July 2024

to study a creative or vocational subject until they are 16”.⁷ In March 2025 the Government subsequently announced a new National Centre for Arts and Music Education to launch in September 2026, the development of an Enrichment Framework which will cover extra-curricular activities including sport, debating and volunteering, and a new Digital, AI and Technology Task and Finish Group to advise the Government on how to better prepare children and young people for the future job market.⁸ The Government latterly announced £8.2 million in funding as part of the revised Advanced Maths Support Programme to enable girls to study advanced maths and continue onto AI-related careers.⁹ The Government’s Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill¹⁰ will ensure that academies, alongside state-funded schools, will be required to teach the revised national curriculum, with a focus on the need for equality and consistency. In February 2026, the Government published a white paper, *Every child achieving and thriving*,¹¹ accompanied by a consultation on proposals to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system¹² and a commitment to increase the number of teachers working in secondary schools, special schools, and colleges by at least 6,500 by the end of this Parliament.¹³

In the report debate several Members expressed their hope that the recommendations of the Committee would be considered in the course of the Curriculum and Assessment Review’s work, and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Baroness Twycross, noted that: “Many of its aims, terms of reference and working principles are very relevant to the committee’s recommendations”.¹⁴ The Review’s final report, published on 5 November 2025, has taken forward several of the Committee’s recommendations including the introduction of an oracy framework, replacing the Computer Science GCSE with a Computing GCSE to better reflect the breadth of digital skills needed and ensuring where digital skills have become integral to subject disciplines that they are better incorporated into the curriculum. In addition, it includes steps to better incorporate climate change and sustainability into existing subjects, notes the importance and challenges of languages education, highlights the importance of Technical Awards and the need for review, and calls for a reduction in time spent on exams at GCSE level and the removal of the EBacc performance measure.¹⁵

The current timeline for implementing changes is for a revised national curriculum to be published in spring 2027, to be first taught in 2028, with subsequent changes to GCSEs, to be taught from 2029 onwards. Corresponding changes needed for AS and A Levels will be subsequently introduced in 2031–32.¹⁶ Whilst we understand the time needed to enable full consultation on the changes and to give schools enough time to implement them, full

⁷ Labour Party, [Change: Labour Party Manifesto 2024](#), 13 June 2024, pp 83, 86

⁸ Department for Education, [Press Release: Young people to benefit from creative education boost](#), 18 March 2025

⁹ Department for Education, [Press Release: More girls to study maths under plans to improve pathway into AI careers](#), 6 May 2025

¹⁰ [Explanatory Notes to the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) [Bill 151 (2024–26)-EN]

¹¹ Department for Education, [Every child achieving and thriving](#), 23 February 2026

¹² Department for Education, [SEND reform: putting children and young people first](#), 23 February 2026

¹³ Department for Education, [6,500 additional teachers delivery plan](#), 23 February 2026

¹⁴ HL Deb, 26 July 2024, [col 763](#)

¹⁵ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#), 5 November 2025

¹⁶ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: government response](#), 5 November 2025, p 52

implementation of the changes will take place almost seven years after the Review reported, and almost nine years since the Committee reported.

- Does the Government believe this is sufficiently timely to ensure that future generations are equipped with the skills they need for future jobs?
- Could the Government confirm the mechanisms by which they will assess the impact of these changes and along what timelines? Or, is it anticipated that this will form part of the next holistic curriculum review recommended by the Review to be undertaken in a decade's time?

The Government response to the Review committed to consider possible qualifications to recognise languages achievements prior to GCSE level, in order to provide motivation to continue studying languages.¹⁷

- How is this work being built into the implementation process?
- The Committee called for more to be done to promote language learning and the Review's reference to programmes like the Hackney model is welcome;¹⁸ however, what further work is the Government doing to encourage languages take up?

The Review did not agree with the Committee's recommendation for a "greater proportion of non-exam assessment at key stage 4",¹⁹ concluding that there should not be an increase in the use of written coursework as this should only be used where appropriate for certain subjects. However, the Review did encourage the Department for Education and Ofqual to continue working together in this area to consider assessment methods available "whilst balancing the risks presented by AI".²⁰

- Can the Government share the progress and form of this work, and how any outcomes will be built into the national curriculum reforms?

The Committee called for a review of the headline accountability measures, in particular Progress 8.²¹ The Review did not recommend any changes to the Progress 8 structure or the 'buckets' of qualifications. The Review recognised that Progress 8 and Attainment 8 do not acknowledge the achievements of, and progress made by, those students with the highest need levels; it did not, however, make recommendations on any further measures which could be added to account for this.²² The Review noted the Government response to the consultation on school accountability reform and the digital service that would enable schools to compare their achievement with similar schools.²³ The Government response to

¹⁷ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: government response](#), 5 November 2025, p 33

¹⁸ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#), 5 November 2025, pp 90–91

¹⁹ Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee, [Requires improvement: urgent change for 11–16 education](#) (Report of Session 2023–24, HL Paper 17), para 198

²⁰ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#), 5 November 2025, p 136

²¹ Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee, [Requires improvement: urgent change for 11–16 education](#) (Report of Session 2023–24, HL Paper 17), para 291

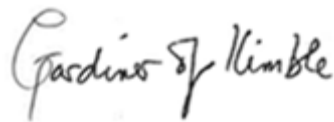
²² Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#), 5 November 2025, pp 125–26

²³ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: Building a world-class curriculum for all](#), 5 November 2025, p 126; Department for Education, [School accountability reform – school profiles, improvement and intervention: Government consultation response](#), 9 September 2025

the Review committed to “develop and consult on an improved version of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 that balances a strong academic core with breadth and student choice.”²⁴ On 23 February 2026, the Government published a consultation on key stage 4 academic performance measures, including proposals to recognise the progress of pupils with low prior attainment and to extend targeted Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) support to low-attaining schools.²⁵

- The consultation closes on 4 May 2026 and the Government states that the results of the consultation will be published in the summer term of 2026;²⁶ is there a time frame for the implementation of the measures proposed in the consultation?

I would be most grateful if you could address the questions set out above and provide any additional information relevant to the Committee’s report. In agreeing this letter the Liaison Committee has asked me to emphasise that a full and timely response to the important matters raised, and within the standard two-month deadline, would be much appreciated.



Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Senior Deputy Speaker
Chair of the House of Lords Liaison Committee
House of Lords

²⁴ Department for Education, [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report: government response](#), 5 November 2025, p 45

²⁵ Department for Education, [Key stage 4 performance measures and targeted RISE extension](#), 23 February 2026

²⁶ Department for Education, [Key stage 4 performance measures and targeted RISE extension](#), 23 February 2026, p 8