



Department
for Education

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Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

23rd April 2021

Dear Robert,

During the session on 13th April, I committed to write to the Education Select Committee to provide some extra information on a few matters.

I hope it was helpful to hear some practical examples of the work that Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) have done, during the pandemic and more widely, to illustrate the role that they play within the system.

You asked us about what we know about MAT responses during the pandemic. In this vein, I thought this report might be of interest: [The trust in testing times: the role of multi-academy trusts during the pandemic - Ofsted blog: schools, early years, further education and skills](#)

As I said during the session, the academies sector has moved on in the last two years, with no new examples of high profile problems. This independent report from the National Governance Association gives a helpful flavour of sector developments and I attach it for interest: [https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/e32677ee-ce8d-49b8-bc68-356073ea5913/Moving-MATs-30pp-Report-\(March-2021\)-AW.pdf](https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/e32677ee-ce8d-49b8-bc68-356073ea5913/Moving-MATs-30pp-Report-(March-2021)-AW.pdf)

You also asked us about the expertise within RSC teams, particularly financial management. I would like to reiterate that we have people with a range of experience working within our teams, from both the public sector and private sectors, and this includes people who have worked in the school system. The ESFA are responsible for the oversight of financial management of academy trusts. People and teams in the ESFA have a range of relevant skills and experience, including financial and audit qualifications, analytical skills and the ability to interpret and understand trusts' current financial position and likely future position. In addition, the Department works with sector leaders to share financial governance expertise and practice.

If it would be helpful, I would be happy to have a further conversation with you or your clerk about the work we do. Please let me know if you would find this beneficial.

I hope this letter is helpful and clarifies any outstanding points.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Herrington", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dominic Herrington
National Schools Commissioner