



**Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP**  
Minister of State for School Standards

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Catherine McKinnell MP and Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

20 April 2021

Dear Catherine and Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 9 March 2021 following my appearance last month on black history and cultural diversity at the Women and Equalities Committee and Petitions Committee. I am pleased to provide the additional information that you have requested.

### **Review of KS3 curriculum**

I recognise the importance to the academic, social, and personal development of children and young people of schools and colleges teaching a broad and balanced curriculum. The national curriculum was reviewed in 2011 and the final draft, published in September 2014. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) was revised and made statutory for all schools in September 2020. There is currently no plan to review the national curriculum as such but we are considering how we can support schools with curriculum planning and resources more broadly and in the context of education recovery. We have recently published a prior information notice regarding a potential open procurement to create and host a range of free in-class resources to support teachers with their curriculum and education recovery for the 2021-22 academic year onwards. Further information will be available in due course.

The government will continue to explore what more we can do to enable teachers to embed diversity throughout the curriculum and welcome the perspectives of committed individuals and groups, building on previous discussions. We have not ruled out whether there is a need for high quality, well sequenced curriculum resources for teachers to use, particularly in relation to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) report.

## **Teacher training reform**

With regard to teacher training reform, evidence shows that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in improving outcomes for all children and young people. Reforms to teacher training are key to our plan to ensure teachers have the best possible start to their careers. From September 2020 onwards, new trainee teachers will be entitled to at least three years of evidence based professional development and support, starting with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) based on the new ITT Core Content Framework (2019) and followed by a new two-year induction based on the Early Career Framework (ECF).

The new ITT Core Content Framework sets out a core minimum entitlement for all trainees describing the fundamental knowledge and skills that new entrants to the profession need to effectively teach and support children. To be awarded QTS, trainees must demonstrate that they satisfy all the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level. This includes: 'Demonstrate a critical understanding of developments in the subject and curriculum areas,'; 'Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils'; and 'Set goals that stretch and challenge young people of all backgrounds and abilities'.

Following on from their training, early career teachers will continue their development by completing a new two-year induction based on the Early Career Framework (ECF) from September 2021.

The ECF sets out what teachers should learn about and learn how to do when they start their careers and is designed to support all teachers regardless of setting. Whilst the ECF underpins what early career teachers should be entitled to learn, it is not a curriculum. Providers and schools will be able to design a curriculum that is based on the ECF, and which is responsive to the needs of the participants and individual school settings.

In addition to the ECF, teachers need to meet the Teachers' Standards. The Teachers' Standards set a clear baseline of expectation for professional practice and conduct. Part two of the Teachers' Standards define the behaviours and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career including showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.

The Headteachers' Standards were updated in 2020 and make clearer that headteachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct. This includes showing 'tolerance and respect for the rights of others, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain'.

Alongside the introduction of an ECF based induction from September 2021, the Department will also be rolling out reformed National Professional Qualifications (NPQ). The NPQs have been reformed to ensure they reflect the new Headteachers' Standards.

## **RSHE guidance**

This government is still in the process of considering whether any technical changes are required to the RSHE implementation guidance. We would be happy to inform you when and if any amendments are published.

## **Anti-bullying work**

The government expects schools to take a strong stand against all forms of bullying and discrimination. Schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent bullying. They have the discretion to develop their own anti-bullying strategies appropriate to their circumstances and are held to account by Ofsted. The Department for Education has issued guidance to schools on how to prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy. We have also strengthened teachers' powers to enforce discipline and promote good behaviour, including giving teachers powers to discipline pupils for poor behaviour which takes place outside of the school gates and extending their searching powers. Where bullying outside of school is reported to teachers, it should be investigated and acted on.

The department has also provided over £2.8m of funding, between September 2016 and March 2020, to four anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying. On 7 June 2020, the department announced an additional £750k funding to three of these organisations (The Diana Award, the Anti-Bullying-Alliance, and The Anne Frank Trust). This work has included projects targeting bullying of certain groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying. These grants are due to end in March 2021.

The department has considered next steps for anti-bullying support in schools from March 2021. We will shortly be running a procurement exercise to fund activity in 2021/22 in support of our aim that schools have the right support in place to prevent bullying of all pupils including those with protected characteristics. Further details will follow shortly.

The department is investing £10m through Behaviour Hubs so that schools with exemplary positive behaviour cultures can work closely with schools that need and want to turn around their behaviour, alongside a central offer of support and a taskforce of advisers led by Tom Bennett, to improve their culture, and spread good practice across the country.

## **Access to resources to teach a diverse curriculum**

Curriculum design and resources are the responsibility of schools, who have the freedom to determine topics of teaching within the framework of a broad and balanced curriculum. There is already a wide range of high-quality teaching resources on black history or other culturally diverse curriculum content throughout the curriculum. Many are produced by teachers, and through education publishers and voluntary organisations, including remote education resources

from the Oak National Academy which will remain a free optional resource for the 2020/21 academic year.

In relation to history, it does appear that teachers and schools are responding directly to the renewed attention on history teaching and to ensure knowledge-based subject teaching. More history teachers reflected commitments in the most recent survey of history teachers by the Historical Association to develop more content in their teaching on Black and diverse histories. This change at the school level will assist pupils to have more breadth and depth in their understanding of history. We will continue to engage with those in the teaching profession on the provision of high quality, well sequenced curriculum resources, and monitor whether there is any new evidence of a gap in curriculum resources in key subjects.

### **Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities**

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities was launched to conduct a detailed, data-led examination of inequality across the population, and to set out a positive agenda for change. We will consider their recommendations on education in detail and assess the implications for future government policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Gibb', is centered below the text 'Yours sincerely,'.

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**Minister of State for School Standards**