



# Petitions and Women and Equalities Committees

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP  
Minister of State for School Standards  
Department for Education  
20 Great Smith Street  
Westminster  
London SW1P 3BT

9 March 2021

Dear Nick,

Thank you for giving evidence to our Committees last month, as part of our joint work on black history and cultural diversity of the national curriculum. This was a useful opportunity for us to put the views of petitioners and our previous witnesses to you and explore what you see as the Government's role with regard to promoting cultural diversity of the curriculum.

Following our session, we wanted to ask for some additional information on a number of your answers, and we also hoped you would be able to update us on the publication of the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. We have set out our requests for additional information below.

## **1. Review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum**

When asked whether there was a need to review how black history and cultural diversity are reflected in the national curriculum, you said there was a case for "looking at the Key Stage 3 curriculum to make sure that it is as rigorous as it can be", because it is not as detailed for history and geography as it is for other subjects [Q6]. What, if any, plans does your Department have to review the Key Stage 3 curriculum? If there are any such plans, how will these address cultural diversity of the Key Stage 3 curriculum?

## **2. Teacher training reform**

When asked how the Government was supporting teachers to teach a diverse curriculum, you said that the Government was reforming teacher training to provide “more support for newly qualified teachers when they start in the profession about how to manage a curriculum, how to manage pupil behaviour in schools, and so on” [Q3]. Can you provide some more detail on how these reforms will better prepare teachers to confidently teach a diverse curriculum and manage difficult conversations about race with fellow teachers and their students?

## **3. Review of RSE guidance**

You said that the Government would be “looking at the wording” of existing Relationships, Sex and Health Education guidance [Q24], which we have been told is unhelpful and causing confusion. It would be helpful if you could set out how you are looking at the current language and update us on any changes that are made to this guidance.

## **4. Funding for anti-racist bullying work in schools**

When asked what the Government was doing to tackle bullying and racism in schools, you said: “We give grants to a number of anti-bullying organisations so that they can come into schools and use their teaching methods to demonstrate how harmful racist bullying is in schools and, indeed, bullying based on other protected characteristics as well” [Q11]. Please can you provide details of any grants the Department for Education, or other departments, provide to fund initiatives specifically aimed at tackling racism and bullying on the grounds of race.

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

You told us that there is already “the flexibility within the national curriculum for teachers to teach a very diverse curriculum” and that “there are plenty of organisations that will be able to supply high-quality materials to help teachers to do that” [Q4]. Can you provide us with details of any funding or other support your Department provides to organisations to produce teaching resources on black history or other culturally diverse curriculum content, and also any support or funding your Department provides to enable schools to access this content?

## 6. Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities had been due to report by the end of 2020, and education was one of the areas the Commission said it would focus on. Can you tell us when this report will be published?

We'd be grateful if you could respond to the above points by the end of March, so we can consider these alongside the outcome of our deliberative sessions with students, which will be taking place when schools reopen.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine McKinnell MP  
Chair of the Petitions Committee



Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP  
Chair of the Women and Equalities  
Committee