

Professor Graham Hutchings FRS  
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3 January 2012

Dear Professor Hutchings

#### **NATIONAL CURRICULUM REVIEW**

Thank you for your letter of 31 October to Jon Coles, setting out SCORE's concerns about the National Curriculum review process. As you may know, Jon left the Department at Christmas, and has been replaced as acting Director-General for Education Standards by Stephen Meek. I have just taken over from David Russell as acting Director with responsibility for the curriculum review, and Stephen has therefore asked me to respond to your letter on his behalf. I am sorry that it has not been possible for us to send you a formal reply before now, though you may be aware that Jacquie Spatcher spoke to Libby Steele when your letter first arrived.

I welcome SCORE's ongoing support for the aims of the review, and am grateful to you for alerting the Department to your concerns. I recognise, in particular, that the pace of the review has been very challenging for all concerned, and regret that this has meant that at points in the process the Department has been unable to share drafts and sustain the very constructive, collaborative work that I understand had been in progress with SCORE and others earlier in the year.

You will be aware that Ministers have decided to extend the first phase of the review in order to allow more time to debate the potentially far-reaching changes which are suggested by the evidence we have gathered to date - including the report of the Expert Panel and the evidence on the science, mathematics and English curricula of high-performing jurisdictions - which was published on 19 December. This evidence raises real questions about whether we are being sufficiently ambitious for our children in terms of the level of challenge in our National Curriculum. It also raises issues that go well beyond the revision of curriculum content, for example about the way in which we measure pupil attainment, the key stage structure, and the interaction between GCSEs and the National Curriculum.

In order to allow more time for that debate, and to ensure that everyone interested in creating a genuinely world-class curriculum has an opportunity to contribute, the Secretary of State has decided that instead of new Programmes of Study for science, mathematics, English and PE being introduced from 2013, the new curriculum for all subjects will now be introduced in 2014. We plan to start that debate with a period of engagement with key stakeholders on the issues raised by the reports published on 19 December, and I will of course want SCORE to play a key role in that process. My colleagues will be in touch shortly about our plans and I look forward to working with you as we move ahead.

I hope that these developments will go some way to address the issues set out in your letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you have further concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hardip Begol', written over a horizontal line.

Hardip Begol  
Acting Director, Curriculum and General Qualifications Reform