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Nick Gibb MP

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Professor Graham Hutchings
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Dear Professor Hutchings

3 July 2012

Thank you for your letter of 12 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, regarding the primary science draft programme of study and the process of the National Curriculum Review. I am replying as the Minister of State for Schools.

I understand the concerns you raise regarding the pace and transparency of the work to date. The process and timetable for the Review has evolved significantly to take account of the report from the Expert Panel which was published in December. These phases of work have necessarily been led by the Department with the aim of developing working draft programmes of study as basis for full consultation with the subject communities and our other stakeholders. The drafts as they stand are entirely the responsibility of the Department, rather of any of the individuals who have been involved over the past few months.

I am immensely grateful for the support the Department has already received from representatives of the SCORE member organisations and others in the science and education communities in getting the drafts to this stage. We have been fortunate in being able to draw informally on the expertise and views of a wide range of subject experts without expecting subject bodies to take a public or formal position on the emerging draft programmes of study until we had versions that we felt were fit for purpose.

We have recently published a full list of all those who have helped with the development of the Department's draft programmes of study published on 11 June. You will note that we have worked with a range of people with expertise in science and science education – including head teachers, practising teachers, science education academics and scientists. Indeed many of the people involved came direct from SCORE secretariat or SCORE partners as suggestions of people who would be able to provide valuable input. These individuals have been consulted in various ways and at different stages of the process. It is a credit to their support that we are now ready to move onto

wider engagement with subject communities and our other stakeholders in order to continue to develop the drafts.

I very much want to work with SCORE and your member organisations in an open way during this informal consultation to develop the programmes of study further for full public consultation later this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to provide a detailed response on the primary science draft programme of study on behalf of SCORE.

Equally, I very much recognise your interest in secondary curriculum and qualifications reform. The Secretary of State will set out our proposals shortly, and we will want to work closely with you and others in the science community in taking them forward.

Thank you again for support for the aims of the review and your constructive comments of the material so far.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely 

Nick Gibb MP