



**Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**  
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Neil Carmichael MP  
Chair of Education Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

10 February 2016

Dear Neil,

Every child, no matter what their background, should receive an education that opens doors to their future and prepares them to realise their potential in adult life. Central to achieving this is ensuring that young people develop the body of knowledge and skills that allows them to succeed not just in modern Britain but in the modern world.

Every state-funded school in England must offer a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In doing so, we expect schools to make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and to provide a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to develop their character. We know that the vast majority of schools and teachers recognise the importance of PSHE and want to teach it well.

The Education Select Committee's report in February 2015 highlighted a number of concerns with the teaching of PSHE and made recommendations to improve it, including through making it statutory. I have also received your joint letter, signed by the respective Chairs of the, Health, Home Affairs and Business, Innovation and Skills Committees, supporting the Committee's recommendation to make PSHE and sex and relationships education (SRE) statutory in all schools. I agree with your Committee and the signatories of the letter that PSHE is a crucial part of preparing young people for life.

The vast majority of schools already make provision for PSHE and while the Government agrees that making PSHE statutory would give it equal status with other subjects, the Government is concerned that this would do little to tackle the most pressing problems with the subject, which are to do with the variable quality of its provision, as evidenced by Ofsted's finding that 40% of PSHE teaching is less than good. As such, while we will continue to keep the status of PSHE in the curriculum under review, our immediate focus will be on

improving the quality of PSHE teaching in our schools.

My Department has been working with a group of leading headteachers and practitioners, who are best placed to know what needs to be done within schools to transform and improve PSHE. Over the next few months they will produce an action plan and recommendations for improving PSHE, including publishing a comprehensive PSHE toolkit for schools. This will help schools plan and develop their own PSHE curriculum, help them assess learning and impact and set out how schools can deliver PSHE as part of a broad offer to pupils and parents. I have also received representations about updating the existing SRE guidance which I will carefully consider.

I want PSHE to be at the heart of a whole-school ethos that is about developing the character of young people. I want it to be tailored to the individual needs of the school and for programmes to be based on the best available evidence of what works. I want senior leaders to ensure that it has the time in the curriculum and the status that it deserves within school and I want it to be taught by well-trained and well-supported staff.

We will continue to work with headteachers, PSHE practitioners and other experts to identify further action the Government can take to ensure that all pupils receive high quality, appropriate PSHE and SRE.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the Health, Home Affairs and Business Innovation and Skills Select Committees.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicky Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RT HON NICKY MORGAN MP