



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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DS Vanni

The National College for School Leadership works to develop and inspire great leaders of schools, early years settings and children's services so that they can make a positive difference to children's lives.

This letter sets out my priorities for the coming year.

As my White Paper, *'The Importance of Teaching'* makes clear, I see a very important role for the College in helping me to deliver further improvements in our schools. I expect you to lead the College's contribution successfully, and in doing so to have regard to the need to secure the very best value for money from the investment that I am making in the work of the College and in school and Children's Centre leadership development.

As the College's work has demonstrated, it is schools themselves and our best school leaders who are ideally placed to drive improvement in other schools. I look to you to continue your work in supporting them.

Teaching Schools

I want to see a new cadre of Teaching Schools emerge – schools where great leaders bring together excellence in teaching and learning with excellence in professional development. I want each Teaching School to be part of a local network of schools, so that excellence is shared across local areas and so that, over time, all schools and all of their staff benefit.

I expect the National College to lead the development of these schools and their networks – working closely with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) on

Initial Teacher Training - and to ensure that all schools are able to access excellent practice, from initial teacher training through to leadership development. 2011-12 will be a critical development year.

School leaders

My programme of school reform rests on the supply, the quality and the deployment of head teachers.

I want you to continue your programmes to secure the expansion of both **National and Local Leaders of Education** – the programme which encourages our best school leaders to work beyond their own school - and to refine and begin to implement your proposals for **Specialist Leaders of Education**, which will bring a new focus on spreading the very practice in fields such as behaviour management.

I recognise it will take some years to establish fully a school-led system, and in the meantime we must not lose sight of our focus on transforming the quality of education for every pupil through effective leadership in every school.

I expect the National College to continue to invest in work that will secure the future supply of high quality school leaders. This means having arrangements in place to meet, for example, the various needs of faith schools, rural primaries and challenging urban secondary schools. I do not expect you to deliver all of this – but I do expect you to ensure there is a coherent, value-for-money offer in place for aspiring school leaders. This should include potential leaders of free schools, and make the best use of existing school leaders who have the capacity and capability to run more than one school. The onus is on you to manage successfully the potential contribution represented by approaches such as Teaching and Future Leaders (the organisation focused on providing leaders specifically for secondary schools in challenging areas).

National Professional Qualification for Headship

As I mention above, the supply of leaders needs to be complemented – or reinforced – by the quality of those leaders. As such, I will expect you to provide me with advice on how we best adapt the content, design and delivery model for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). NPQH should be a qualification that, over time, is widely recognised by school leaders as both excellent preparation for headship and for continued development in post, it should be acknowledged by the profession as key to ensuring the quality of head teachers.

In conjunction with the development of the revised NPQH, I would like the College to consider how to identify and develop talented individuals in the primary sector who have the potential over time to take on headship and executive headship roles. I would also like you to consider how provision currently delivered by Future Leaders can be extended to the North East.

Free Schools

I invite the College to develop an understanding of the skills which Free School Principals will need to enable them to meet the unique challenges involved in running a Free School. I would also ask you to consider how best to support Free School Academy Trusts in recruiting, training and developing potential leaders of Free Schools (*Principals Designate*). This area of work should be in addition to ensuring that the College's other leadership programmes are open to Free School staff and address their needs.

School Governors

I see a very strong relationship between governorship and leadership and expect the College to take a key role in supporting chairs of governing bodies to make sure that they have the skills, knowledge and confidence to undertake their role. Chairs of governing bodies must be able to provide strategic direction; as a 'critical friend' to the head teacher and ensure accountability. I expect you to work with my officials to agree a set of learning opportunities to help them to fulfil their role effectively.

As my White Paper made clear, all schools should be working to make savings to maximise the resources they have to invest in teaching and learning. Improving school efficiency is essential and I see this as an important element running through all of the College's work supporting school leaders and governing bodies.

Schools to lead improvement

In all of your work, I expect to see an approach that builds schools' capacity to take increasing ownership of leadership development. Over time, I would expect your role in providing direct support to diminish. I expect to see increasing evidence of schools leading improvement and the College accrediting or licensing other providers. I expect your work on School Business Managers, for example, to move quickly down this path, making sure that capacity is developed within the system as your existing funded programmes wind down.

Leaders of early years education

I expect you to continue to support the leadership of early years' education. I look to you in particular to support Children's Centre leaders to drive reform – and to encourage them to play an increasingly significant role in supporting each other and the wider early years' sector through review and delivery of the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL), and developing the Children's Centre Leader Network (CCLN).

Directors of Children's Services

In line with my priorities, I do not want the College to extend its work in respect of Directors of Children's Services (DCSs). I expect you to honour existing

commitments, which will include starting the fifth DCS and second Aspirant DCS programmes, but not enter any new commitments. Rather, you should work with my Department and the sector to ensure that the excellent work you have developed migrates successfully to another organisation or lead by March 2012 at the latest.

Managing your funding

I am pleased to make available to the National College up to £88.58m for the financial year 2011-12 for programme expenditure and £18.75m for administrative costs. My officials will work with you to understand your detailed proposals for taking forward all of the work I set out here. I urge you to be as efficient and cost-effective as possible in all of your planning. To that end I want to draw your attention to the corporate information at the end of this letter which is integral to your remit and that you will need to take into account and implement as you take this work forward.

It will be important that you work with my officials to establish a shared understanding about how you plan to use your funding in relation to the priorities set out in this letter. While the College will need flexibility to manage funding across programmes and to respond to pressures that emerge during the course of the year expect you to inform us in a timely fashion where you find that spending will deviate significantly from what has been agreed. This will be a challenging financial year for the DfE and our agencies, so it will be important that you work with my officials to ensure that any money that might not be spent and/or any possible savings are detected early and can be deployed in line with my priorities. You may not spend your programme budget on administration costs.

ALB Reform Programme

The Coalition Government is committed to the Arms Length Body (ALB) Reform Programme as a means of radically increasing the transparency and accountability of all public services. The reform process, which covers all of HM Government's Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) as well as other public bodies, is designed to help reinvigorate the public's trust in democracy and also to ensure that the Government operates in a more efficient and business-like way. The programme will ensure we have the right organisations in place to implement Government policy and it will play a major part in delivering savings over the next four years.

As you know, in the DfE we are in the process of reducing the number of ALBs and improving accountability by bringing some of the work previously done by ALBs back in to the Department and creating Executive Agencies which are more directly within the Department's control; removing duplication; looking for ways to achieve efficiencies and cost reductions through the sharing of services; and better aligning our ALB sector with the rest of the Education system. The National College has a significant role to play in making this vision a reality and we expect to work with you over the coming year to implement any planned changes to your organisation or reforms we are making to all our ALBs.

Transparency

The Government remains committed to greater transparency so that the public can hold politicians and public bodies to account. As part of this you are already publishing information on spending on salaries, organisational costs and services you buy. In line with all Government departments and Arms Length Bodies you have already published individual salary information for your senior staff earning over £100K, along with organisation charts to demonstrate the groups of people your senior staff are responsible for, and the costs of these groups.

We expect you to continue to publish this data and to continue to co-operate with transparency requests, ensuring data is submitted to deadline and in the required format.

Efficiency controls remain in place

The Efficiency Reform Group was established by the Cabinet Office in 2010. It has brought together expertise from across Government: from different parts of Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, and the Office of Government Commerce. It aims to make Government more efficient (by reducing operational overheads to give taxpayers better value and allow resources to be focused on key priorities); and to reform radically the way public services are provided (to ensure they meet rising public expectations, improving transparency and accountability and shifting power to people and creating the Big Society).

The Efficiency Reform Group has introduced a series of financial and management controls to make sure that only essential recruitment and procurement activity is undertaken by Government Departments and organisations like the National College which are funded by Government. These controls include:

- a freeze on all external recruitment;
- Treasury approval for appointments with salary packages which total more than the Prime Minister's salary of £142,500;
- a freeze on new advertising and spending on marketing;
- a freeze on new contracts and contract extensions; and changes to ICT projects of over £1 million and a review of all existing ICT projects;
- a freeze on any new spending on consultancy services from outside bodies;
- a ban on new property acquisitions, property leases and lease extensions; and
- all other procurement subject to stringent Value For Money appraisal and reporting of all spend to HM Treasury on a monthly basis.

In certain specific circumstances exemptions can be sought by your Chief Executive.

Exemptions need to be cleared by the Department, HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office depending on the nature of the exemption. The details of the various exemption processes were sent to your organisation in July 2010.

New treatment of administration budgets

You will be aware that there are changes to the administration budget for the Department's Arms Length Bodies (ALBs), which include the National College, starting in the 2011-12 financial year. Most significantly, the administration budgets for ALBs are being met from the Department's own overall administration allocation.

Administration budgets cover the costs of all activities not related to direct frontline service provision or in support of frontline service delivery. The Department has provided the National College with detailed guidance on the types of spending which are considered as administrative activity; for the National College this will include items such as staff salaries, pensions, accommodation and office services (eg: stationery, telephone charges and computer maintenance). It is important that the National College works closely with the Department's Sponsorship and Finance teams to make sure this guidance is followed.

Governance and risk

It is vital that the National College has in place robust processes which can help it identify difficulties which might arise which could hamper delivery. We expect to see both robust processes for spotting such difficulties early and dealing with them effectively so that service delivery is maintained. The National College should also continue to work with the Department to make sure there are appropriate external checks on the work it delivers, as required by the Permanent Secretary. I expect the National College to raise immediately with the Department any potential problems related to delivery including any arising from organisations with which you are working.

Education White Paper

The schools White Paper, 'The Importance of Teaching', sets out a radical reform programme for the schools system, with schools freed from the constraints of central Government direction and teachers placed firmly at the heart of school improvement. It offers freedoms to all schools in a way that encourages them to work with each other to improve.

The White Paper signals a radical reform of our schools and I look to the National College to work collaboratively with the Department to support the implementation of these reforms, which are absolutely essential if our children are to get the education they deserve.

Reducing bureaucracy and red tape in schools

In addition, we will require the National College to support the Coalition

Government's drive to reduce bureaucracy in schools by streamlining communications, removing central prescription and minimising data collections.

I am grateful to you for your work and for your engagement with my officials as we take forward the outcomes of the cross-Government review of Arms Length Bodies. The College is highly regarded amongst school leaders and I look forward to an ongoing relationship with you and with this community of school leaders whose trust and confidence you have.

I am copying this letter to the Chief Executive, Steve Munby.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Gove', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

MICHAEL GOVE