



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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Baroness Sue Campbell
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Dear Sue,

Since my appointment as Secretary of State for Education, I have been reviewing the Department's existing programmes in the context of the Coalition Government's schools policies. This includes the various programmes relating to physical education (PE) and sport.

I know that the Youth Sport Trust has advised successive Governments and that, funded by the Department for Education, the Trust has built up a network of school sport partnerships and has supported schools in meeting previous Governments' priorities on PE and sport. I am grateful to you, to Steve Grainger, and to the staff of the Youth Sport Trust for the hard work you have done for school pupils.

The Coalition Government will encourage more competitive sport, which should be a vibrant part of the life and ethos of all schools. We are committed to doing this through the creation of an annual Olympic-style school sport competition. The best way to create a lasting Olympic legacy in schools is to give them the freedom and incentives to organise it themselves, for themselves, rather than imposing a

centralised government blueprint.

Over the next year, my Department will work closely with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to develop a model to assist an Olympic-style approach to school sport. I firmly believe that the ideals of the Olympic and Paralympic Games can be an inspiration to all young people, not only to our most promising young athletes. Indeed, they embody the ethos of achievement and self-improvement which the best schools manifest in their sports provision for all pupils.

Our approach differs fundamentally from that of the last Government. As part of this change of approach, I have concluded that the existing network of school sport partnerships is neither affordable nor likely to be the best way to help schools achieve their potential in improving competitive sport. While the network helped schools to increase participation rates in the areas targeted by the previous Government, the fact remains that the proportion of pupils playing competitive sport regularly has remained disappointingly low. Only around two in every five pupils play competitive sport regularly within their own school, and only one in five plays regularly against other schools.

I can confirm therefore that the Department will not continue to provide ring-fenced funding for school sport partnerships. I am also announcing that the Department is lifting, immediately, the many requirements of the previous Government's PE and Sport Strategy, so giving schools the clarity and freedom to concentrate on competitive school sport. I am removing the need for schools to:

- plan and implement their part of a "five hour offer";
- collect information about every pupil for an annual survey;
- deliver a range of new Government sport initiatives each year;
- report termly to the Youth Sport Trust on various performance indicators;
- conform to a national blueprint for how to deliver PE and sport, and how to

use their staff and resources; and

- get permission from the Youth Sport Trust and the Department to use their funding flexibly or to vary how they do things.

In giving schools this freedom, we are trusting school leaders to take decisions in the best interests of the pupils and parents they serve. I would expect every school to want to maintain, as a minimum, the current levels of provision for PE and sport each week for every pupil. Primary, secondary and special schools have enjoyed between them some £2.4 billion of Exchequer and Lottery investment since 2003, and parents and the public will expect them to have embedded the good practice and collaboration developed over the last seven years. I should also clarify that the Department is not closing down school sport partnerships. Rather, they are being entrusted to schools, who can decide whether and how to use them in the future.

Earlier this month, the Department paid £71 million grant to school sport partnerships, part of the funding for the final year of the previous spending period, 2008-2011. The Department's officials will ensure that the relevant final payments are made to partnerships, and will write shortly about the exact transitional arrangements and revised terms and conditions.

I have also considered the future of the **specialist schools programme**. The Youth Sport Trust has been instrumental in creating a national network of specialist sports colleges, and I know that many school leaders attest to the value of the sport specialism as a catalyst for school improvement and as a means of developing a distinct character and ethos for their schools.

Now that specialism is so firmly established, I believe that the time has come to remove the prescription that has built up around the programme and to give school leaders greater freedom to make use of the opportunities offered by specialism and the associated funding. This is part of my wider commitment to trust school leaders to take decisions in the best interests of the pupils and parents they serve. Of course, Academies are already freed from centralised control and are not

constrained in their choice of specialism or required to undergo designation or re-designation. I look forward to the number of schools enjoying these and other Academy freedoms increasing.

In particular, I have decided that, from April 2011, funding for specialism should no longer take the form of a dedicated grant, so that all schools can decide how to develop their specialisms in the light of the total resources available to them.

Schools will not be required to re-designate. I should stress that funding is not being removed from schools: money currently paid as specialist schools' grant will continue to be routed to schools through the DSG. This is in line with the approach set out in the Department's consultation on the Pupil Premium, which envisaged the mainstreaming of dedicated grants wherever possible.

I have also decided not to fund the current range of HPSS options after March 2011. Again, the funding will remain with the frontline. Our best schools will continue to be able to take on system leadership roles and support others to improve, and I am looking to expand the opportunities available to them. Academy status already offers a route for outstanding schools to support others as does becoming a National or Local Leader of Education. I intend to set out further plans in the White Paper which is due to be published later in the autumn. Of course, I would expect locally driven collaborations to continue to develop and flourish.

The Department's grant funding agreement with the Youth Sport Trust, which covers its role as a Government delivery partner for PE and sport and funding for a range of national programmes and support to schools - including support for specialist schools - expires at the end of this financial year. I can also confirm that, at this point, I have no plans to commission further work from the Youth Sport Trust in these areas beyond March 2011. Officials will discuss shortly with the Trust how best to manage the grant-funded activities over the remainder of the current financial year in the light of the changes outlined above.

Again, I am grateful to the Youth Sport Trust and its staff for the work that has been done over the last decade and more. I am making this letter public and copying it to

school sport partnerships. I have also written to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust about the specialist schools programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

MICHAEL GOVE