



department for
children, schools and families

BIS | Department for
Business Innovation & Skills

Sir Mark Walport
Wellcome Trust
Gibbs Building
215 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE, UK

16 November 2009

Dear Sir Mark,

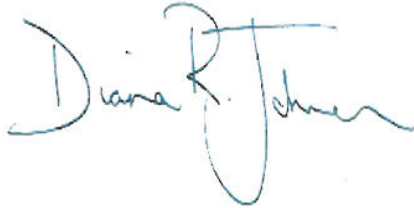
Thank you for your letter updating us on the progress of the Science and Learning Expert Group. We are pleased to hear that you have been consulting widely and that the science, mathematics and education communities are engaged with this important work.

The five areas that you have identified as priorities are insightful and cover a wide range of complex issues, which take us into some quite challenging terrain. We look forward to discussing this and your emerging recommendations in detail at our meeting on 24 November.

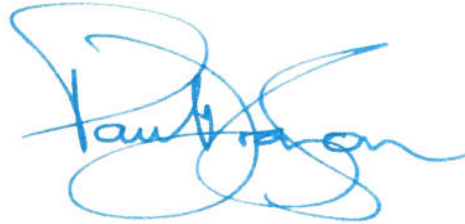
Your letter stresses the importance of assessment as a key driver of what young people are taught and how their learning develops. We agree that any assessment and qualification system should meet the needs of employers and higher education, and that science and mathematics qualifications in particular must provide the underpinning knowledge and skills to support progression to further study in STEM subjects. In your work so far, you will have seen examples of many of the initiatives we have already introduced or which are in train. These include revisions of science and mathematics A levels to include increased stretch and challenge, revisions of science and mathematics GCSEs (in the former case to directly address the concerns identified about the existing qualifications by Ofqual in March), and the development of the new Science Diploma for introduction from 2011. We look forward to hearing your ideas for how we realise maximum value from our efforts to date, and in turn identify how we might make further improvements in science and mathematics education.

We remain committed to positioning science as a priority in schools at all levels, to improving the teaching and learning of science in all schools, and to inspiring more young people to study and work in science. It is imperative we

develop robust ways for every child to have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. As Government takes this vital work forward, we await your final report with interest.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diana R. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'D'.

DIANA JOHNSON

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Drayson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'P'.

LORD DRAYSON