Dear Graham,

TEACHERS' STANDARDS REVIEW

I am writing to inform you that I am today announcing the details of a Review of Teachers' Standards, which will be chaired by Sally Coates, Principal of Burlington Danes Academy, and supported by excellent practitioners, including outstanding head teachers and teachers, and other experts including an ITT provider, Teach First, the National Education Trust and an independent observer from Ofsted. I have asked Mrs Coates to consider all existing measures of teacher standards, including the standards of professional competence drafted by the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the General Teaching Council for England's Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers. I have made it clear that I expect her to recommend a clear and concise set of standards that cover both professional competence and conduct, and I have asked her to consider how the standards align with Ofsted inspection criteria. The first part of the Review will concentrate solely on the standards for teachers to acquire Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and to pass induction (Core), which are the foundations that underpin all classroom teachers.

As I set out in our White Paper, The Importance of Teaching, raising the quality of our teachers is the most vital reform if our education system is to become truly world-class. We need to free up teachers to make the right decisions based on their professional judgement. In order to do that, we must have a simple and clear set of standards they must meet. Over the past decade, the proliferation of teacher standards has been confusing. It has been difficult for teachers to map their own professional development and even more difficult for schools to manage performance effectively.
We know that teachers want clear standards that uphold the credibility of the profession\(^1\) and there is international evidence that professional standards impact on outcomes\(^2\). The best performing education systems ensure that they put in place the necessary foundational conditions, such as rigorous standards and assessments and clear expectations for teachers and students\(^3\). Teachers have told us that the standards are difficult to use and to understand. In a recent survey of teachers, over a third of respondents did not feel the professional standards provided a good definition of teacher competence and 41 per cent of teachers believed that professional standards did not make any difference to the way they taught\(^4\).

I have asked Mrs Coates to submit an interim report to me by July 2011 making recommendations about the QTS and Core standards, and to report in full recommendations for the full suite of teacher standards by the autumn term. I will arrange for copies of this letter, the letter of appointment I have sent to Mrs Coates, and the Review’s Terms of Reference to be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

I hope the Committee will welcome this development and appreciate that this is just one of the many steps the Government is taking to improve the quality of the teaching workforce and to support all teachers.

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MICHAEL GOVE

Annex: Terms of Reference for the Review of Teachers’ Standards.

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\(^1\) Morrell, G; Tennant, R; Kotecha, M, Newmark, T and O’Connor, W (2010) Factors contributing to the referral and non-referral of incompetence cases to the GTC, A NatCen paper prepared for the GTC and DCSF.

\(^2\) US Department of Education (2008)


\(^4\) Poet, H, Rudd, P and Kelly, J (November 2010), Survey of Teachers 2010, Support to improve teaching practice, National Foundation for Educational Research, GTC