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To Chairs of Governors and Headteachers of LDBS Primary Schools

### **The Government's White Paper: educational excellence everywhere**

The Secretary of State for Education set out her vision, yesterday, for education for the next four years. I was invited to the launch of the White Paper and Nicky Morgan spoke with conviction about the changes that she thinks will help to give every child an excellent education. The paper is, however, short on how the strategy is to be implemented.

The Education & Adoption Act received royal assent this week and today the National Society has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Lord Nash which protects the interests of the Church of England in the event that your school is judged to be inadequate or coasting.

There are several positive points in the White Paper such as setting up an independent college of teaching but the main question you have been seeking an answer to is what about the requirement for all schools to become academies?

The LDBS wants to reassure you that there is no need to panic. Decisions need to be carefully considered and probably should be taken in conjunction with the move to the fairer funding of schools. This change in funding will have a greater impact on schools than conversion to academy status.

We already have experience of operating multi-academy trusts and the schools within those trusts are beginning to reap the benefits from working together. We are confident that we can provide a suitable model which will benefit all our schools as they convert to academies.

We do not want to rush into the process as the Department for Education has yet to publish detailed plans as to how such a large number of schools can convert in such a short space of time as the current process is based on Regional Headteacher Boards giving advice to the Regional Schools Commissioners on a school by school basis; there may also be grants available to help with the transition and this might be important especially for some schools where budget constraints are beginning to bite.



I can assure you that every Church of England School in the Diocese will be able to join the LDBS Academies Trust. In developing our plans we also need to remember that several schools have close links with community schools and we shall ensure that such links can continue and where community schools want to join Church Trusts they will be able to do so and their community school status will be protected.

At the LDBS Board on Wednesday night, I was asked about the impact on the land and buildings owned by the LDBS, Vicars and Churchwardens and Foundations. The answer is that we have considerable experience from the 26 schools that have become academies and there is no impact. The land continues to be held by the trustees and the trusts continue without the need to enter into a lease. There is a benefit for academies in that for maintenance and capital works VAT is recoverable and Governors no longer have to fund a 10% contribution.

Clearly exciting times lie ahead. We will be providing support and a plan.

Yours sincerely

Inigo Woolf, BEM, FCIB  
Chief Executive

Copies: Headteachers of LDBS secondary schools