



2020-0061724VFPO

Vicky Ford MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP

By email: theresa@theresavilliers.co.uk

Your ref: TV115577

18 December 2020

Dear Theresa,

Thank you for your letter of 2 November, addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and copied to the Secretary of State, about the future funding of maintained nursery schools (MNS). Your letter has been passed to this department and I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area. I apologise for the delay in responding and would be grateful if you could share a copy of my reply with the officers of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception Classes, as well as your other co-signatories.

May I begin by wishing you and your co-signatories well in these challenging times.

MNS are invaluable to the early years sector, not only in looking after some of our most vulnerable children but also in sharing their knowledge and expertise in local areas in order to raise standards. You are quite right to highlight the contribution that MNS have made during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The government immensely values the crucial support provided by many MNS, the majority of whom, as you say, stayed open, and often took in children from other providers that had closed. I am very grateful for their dedication during such a difficult period.

As you note, we have committed to the long-term funding of MNS, and that commitment has not changed. Since you originally wrote, the Spending Review has been published and you will have seen that we secured a continuation of around £60 million of supplementary funding for MNS in the financial year 2021 to 2022, as part of this Spending Review. Early Education's submission to us in September on MNS was a helpful contribution to the discussion.

The department continues to consider what is required to ensure a clear, long-term picture of funding for MNS, and will say more about this soon. We look forward to working further with the sector on this important issue, and I thank you for re-stating the case for MNS.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Vicky Ford MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families