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**Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP**

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*Dear Vanni*

**NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP (NCSL) PRIORITIES: 2006-07**

The Government's White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, makes clear the importance we place on having effective leadership at the heart of every school. The NCSL has a pivotal role to play in equipping our school leaders with the skills and support they need in order to achieve our ambition of having a world class education system.

I have been pleased by the progress the College has made since I last wrote to you about my priorities for it. Since taking up his post as Chief Executive, Steve Munby has ensured that the College has become more outward-looking, actively seeking the views of school leaders on what they expect from the College, and ensuring that it is working towards clear success criteria through its balanced scorecard. I know also that the College is currently going through a period of restructuring of its senior management levels to make it better equipped to meet the expectations and challenges placed on it. This restructuring needs to be reinforced and complemented by making strong appointments to the Governing Council to fill expected vacancies.

All that I said in my letter last year about my expectations for the College and the contribution it makes to the wider reform agenda still holds good. To recap, the College needs to be:

- i. the driving force of world-class leadership and management practice; and
- ii. an intelligent commissioner and funding agent of activity to spread this practice system-wide across our schools

department for

**education and skills**

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As before, this letter should form the starting point for your reflections with the Governing Council about your next Corporate Plan, which should be submitted to me in March 2006 for approval, and published in April 2006. The remit letter and the balanced scorecard will form the basis of assessing the success of the College in meeting its objectives. I look to the College to agree with me the numerical targets for the balanced scorecard which will be included in the 2006-07 Corporate Plan.

In an increasingly complex landscape, the importance of interdependencies cannot be understated. The College will need to continue to develop and maintain close engagement and excellent relations with a range of stakeholders, most especially of course with school leaders, but also with school governors, providers, higher education institutions, local authorities, a wide range of national bodies, including TDA, SSAT, the National Strategies, GTC, Becta, CEL, agencies concerned with services for children, young people and families, and social partners. The College should consider ways in which effective strategic alliances might be formed with other parties on specific issues.

NCSL and TDA between them are responsible for the full range of school workforce professional development from support staff through to the senior leadership team. A coherent approach on the part of the two organisations, particularly when addressing the challenges of the modernisation agenda and the increasingly complex nature of the school system, will be essential to provide the much needed clarity the system requires.

### ***Commissioning***

I look to the College to continue with the process it has already begun for commissioning out the design, development and delivery of its programmes, in order to increase choice for school leaders, to create personalised leadership development provision to meet their particular needs, and to address targeted priorities. As agreed, the focus of the first phase of commissioning includes programmes for middle leaders, personalised provision for newly-appointed headteachers and advanced leadership, with the commissioning-out of NPQH being undertaken in 2007. As part of the commissioning project, the College should put detailed proposals to the Department for the development of a policy for charging and subsidy of its programmes to come into effect in the 2007-08 financial year.

### ***Strategic Initiatives***

I want the College to engage in a small number of strategic initiatives this year. I know that Jacqui Smith has discussed these in recent meetings with you and Steve Munby. Details on appropriate targets and milestones in respect of individual activities will need to be agreed with the Department to the dates set out below.

### **Succession Planning**

A significant number of headteachers will reach 60 within the next 8 years. I should therefore like the College to consider how more people can be encouraged and developed to take on school leadership roles. I look to the College to provide me

with advice, by May 2006, on how succession planning can be addressed, and to work with the governor associations and other key partners, including local authorities, to develop advice to chairs of governors on recruitment, selection and succession planning. I also want the College to provide, by February 2006, advice on the feasibility of a small-scale pilot to bring new leaders into schools.

### **National Leaders of Education**

I look to the College not only to help raise the quality of leadership and management within schools, but also to develop the skills of our best school leaders, so that their leadership impacts upon and enhances the wider school system. Building on the helpful advice that it has already provided to me about leadership of complex schools, I would like more detailed proposals from the College by March 2006 on how it intends to make progress on the accreditation of National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and involving other key stakeholders, such as SSAT, on the identification of suitable candidates to take on this role, with a view to announcing the names of the first of them by April 2006. From these accredited NLEs, the College should create a national register of potential executive headteachers. The College should also consider what training and support will need to be provided to these leaders to enable them to be an effective source of advice and guidance to schools nationally. Their role will also include the opportunity to advise Ministers on the future direction of education policy on the basis of their expert experience.

### **Complex Schools**

Also arising from the advice on leadership of complex settings, I want the College, to develop provision for leaders who work in our most complex and challenging schools. In particular, and in partnership with the SSAT, I look to the College to trial the bespoke provision for principals designate, serving principals, and leadership teams in Academies. We need to ensure that as the number of Academies grows, there are sufficient, highly effective people to lead them. Working with other partners, such as the National Strategies, I want the College to address leadership developments in other challenging environments, such as urban schools.

### ***Funding***

The indicative figure for grant in aid to the College for 2006-07 is **£74 million**. Where additional funding is being made available for specific areas of work, these are identified separately in the annex to this letter. Details of the notional breakdown of total funding will be set out in a separate letter from my officials in the new year.

### **Conclusion**

The Department or the College can propose amendments to this remit letter in-year provided that both organisations are in agreement. The College should seek the prior agreement of the NDPB Sponsor Unit in the Department's School Workforce Group before taking on any significant new work during the year.

I look forward to agreeing the Corporate Plan in March and to subsequently hearing about the College's further progress on these activities.

Best wishes  
Ruth

**Ruth Kelly**

## **Annex**

### ***Core Priorities***

I look to the College to set out, in its Corporate Plan for 2006-07, the details of its core provision next year. The Corporate Plan should also reflect the College's role as a leader of research into school leadership and leadership development, as well as the major part it plays in the development of online learning. The College should consider ways in which its leadership programmes might be further developed in order to support more minority ethnic teachers to become school leaders.

The College has flexibility to change current provision in agreement with DfES, but I expect to see some common themes running through the core programmes, such as increased personalisation of learning, adherence to the *Every Child Matters* and Schools White Paper agendas, and commissioning-out of the College's programmes. While I welcome new proposals in the Corporate Plan about how the core programmes can be provided, I expect to see the following as a minimum.

#### **National Professional Qualification for Headship**

I look to the College to maintain the good reputation of this key programme, and develop it in such a way as to ensure it keeps pace with the evolving needs of future headteachers. I look to the College to include in its next Corporate Plan, a target for the number of candidates to be recruited on to the NPQH programme in 2006-07. Funding for this programme is incorporated in the College's core grant-in aid. During 2006-07 it will be important for the College to begin redesigning the programme.

#### **National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership**

The NPQICL programme has a key part to play in achieving effective leadership of Sure Start Children's Centres. Evaluating effectively the national roll-out of NPQICL will be important in developing the programme and ensuring it becomes an established leadership programme for the early years' sector. We expect the College to continue to work closely with DfES, the Pen Green Leadership Centre and other partners in successfully meeting these challenges. In 2006-07, the College should be aiming to deliver approximately **600** places for the NPQICL programme. The indicative grant funding for this programme is **£7,000,000**. Negotiations on the specific details of the programme will take place between the College and the DfES in the new year.

#### **London Challenge**

The College will continue to offer training and development opportunities in London as part of national initiatives. In addition to that work, the Department will continue to fund the College to work with London Challenge to offer training, development and support that is tailored to the specific needs of leaders in London. In **2006-07**, the College should be giving training and development opportunities through the programme to approximately **2,600** individuals. The indicative funding for this work is **£3,500,000**. Negotiations on the specific activities, support and training to be undertaken will take place between DfES and the College in due course.

### **School Improvement**

The National Strategies fund NCSL directly to carry out some specific areas of this work. It is crucial for the College and the National Strategies to continue to build a strong working relationship. They will need to have key plans and funding agreed in time for NCSL to include details in its Corporate Plan for 2006-07. I look to the College to further develop and strengthen its partnership with the National Strategies and work with them specifically on training, assessment and accreditation for the SIPs pilot programme and subsequent national programmes, collaborative approaches to school improvement particularly involving complex schools and the continuation of the Primary Leadership Programme, including the specific programme on Sustaining Success. I also look to the College to ensure that the lessons learned in its work in recent years on developing school networks suitably informs the support needed for Primary Strategy Learning Networks.

### **ECM & Workforce Development**

I look to the College to work in close collaboration with TDA on activity in this area, and to include the details of the leadership aspects of the work that NCSL will focus on in the College's 2006-07 Corporate Plan. The College should ensure that its existing programmes reflect extended schools and multi-agency working issues, in the context of *Every Child Matters*. It should work on leadership development for current and aspirant leaders of extended schools in partnership with the TDA. The two organisations need to ensure that programmes and development opportunities they produce are jointly developed and reviewed and promote a coherent, collaborative, manageable approach for leaders in the field. The College needs to equip current and future school leaders to be able to work in an increasingly complex, accountable, demanding and changing environment.

### **Support for implementation of the 14-19 agenda**

I should like advice from the College, in co-operation with CEL, about how the two organisations will support the 14-19 agenda. This should include: support for DfES and LSC in the successful implementation of 14-19 reform in leadership collaboration and co-operation; providing support and expertise to a wide range of stakeholders in the areas of leadership capabilities, management development, and partnership working; and could include work towards bridging divides between leaders and leadership in schools and in the learning and skills sector.

### **Fast Track**

NCSL will take over operational running of the Fast Track programme from September 2006. The College will work with DfES prior to the handover, to ensure a staged transition of responsibility of work prior to that date. The Fast Track budget for 2006-07 is £11.5 million. The Department expects to spend around £2.5 million of this amount between April and August, and the College will need to pay around £6.5 million to schools to cover salary enhancements for Fast Track teachers. Other commitments for 2006-07 amount to around £2 million. NCSL will take the lead in a procurement exercise to find new suppliers and must make arrangements to ensure

that Fast Track participants receive the financial enhancements to which they are entitled. The College should provide the Department with advice on ways in which the programme might be developed in the future.

### **Innovation**

It is important not only to have effective leadership in every school, but also for school leaders to extend the boundaries of current leadership practice by working beyond a single institution. The College should continue to work in partnership with the Department's Innovation Unit on the development of the Leadership Beyond a Single Institution Next Practice project which aims to develop innovative new solutions to this issue. The College should also take advantage of opportunities to work with the Innovation Unit on other Next Practice projects which impact on Educational and School Leadership. It should also continue to work effectively with others who have an interest and expertise in networks, including the Innovation Unit, in order to help mainstream the lessons learned and good practice derived from networks.

### **Bichard**

The College is to be congratulated on the quality of the online training that it has developed for heads and governors in response to recommendation 16 of the Bichard Inquiry. The momentum needs to be maintained, so that schools are aware of the importance of the training in the context of taking child protection issues into account when employing school staff. The College should work with the Department and other key stakeholders to maximise the numbers of heads and governors taking part in the training.

### **Strategic leadership with ICT**

The effective use of ICT is a major driver for school improvement. I look to the College to build on the success of the Strategic Leadership with ICT (SLICT) programme by developing a coherent package of leadership development that will support delivery of the Department's e-Strategy *Harnessing Technology*. In particular I would like the College, working in partnership with others, to focus on measures that will ensure institutions (and the system as a whole) continue to mature in their use of technology to support improvements in learning, teaching and management. In particular I would like the College to build on the impact of the SLICT programme by delivering development opportunities for more leaders in Primary and Secondary schools while using the next year to integrate the programme into the College's mainstream programmes. I would also like the College to develop a programme to support leaders involved in Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and to consider with others how the models for leadership development in schools could be applied across other phases of the education system. I would expect the College to deliver opportunities for around **1,500** leaders at an indicative cost of **£1.5m**.

### **Aiming High**

The College should continue its bespoke training programme to support lead professionals and local authority representatives involved in the "Aiming High: Black Pupils Achievement" programme. Details of key milestones are to be agreed

between the College and the Department. Funding to the College for this work in 2006-07 will be **£163,000**.

### ***Efficiency Savings***

The College continues to have a vital role to play in helping the Department meet the public commitment to reduce administrative costs in NDPBs and Ofsted by at least 15% in real terms by 2007-08, measured against 2004-05 baselines. We have agreed the following:

- a. a saving of £550,000 in 2006-07
- b. a further saving of £750,000 in 2007-08

Administrative costs mean, in this context, all costs involved in running the College's business as distinct from delivering front-line services.

The monitoring arrangements described in last year's remit letter will continue.