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**Nadhim Zahawi MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Lucy Powell MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Lucy,

8 October 2018

Thank you for your letter of 21 September, to me and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, on behalf of the Cross-Party Group of MPs, about funding for maintained nursery schools (MNS). I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

As you know, this government has committed to supporting MNS, as they play an important role in supporting some of our most disadvantaged children, and they have a reputation for delivering high quality early years provision.

I appreciate the concerns expressed by the Cross Party Group and others in the sector I have met. As you say, we have recognised that MNS incur higher costs than other early years providers, and we are therefore providing £60 million a year of supplementary funding to local authorities (LAs) to enable them to maintain MNS funding rates until 2019-20. This gives MNS stability and allows us time to develop a long-term solution.

We need to make sure that decisions about the future of MNS are based on evidence. While there are several local studies on the value added by MNS, we do not currently have good evidence at national level, which is why we are undertaking research to explore the value that nursery schools offer. The results of the research will be published once it is complete. Any decisions about future funding will necessarily be part of Spending Review discussions. You will know that we are working closely with the MNS sector on this research, not least through the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nursery Schools, Nursery and Reception Classes.

I am also conscious that many LAs have started to plan the 2019-20 financial year, and that the future of their nursery schools will be one of the issues they consider. I am clear that it would be premature for LAs to make decisions about the future of their nursery schools now, ahead of both the publication of our research and decisions from the Spending Review.

I hope that my response has provided you and your constituents with assurance that this government is committed to supporting nursery schools in the most effective way possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a small flourish at the end.

**Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families**