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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 November 1985

This is just to confirm that the Prime Minister was content with the text of the Parliamentary Answer proposed by your Secretary of State on midday supervision.

(TIM FLESHER)

R.L. Smith, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science

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cc

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

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FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Ponnie Minister!
The text looks
OK to me. Content?
DLS
6/11

Private Secretary of the Prime Minister
No 10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

6 November 1985

Dear David,

Yes mb

My Secretary of State would like to make an announcement to the House as soon as possible about his proposals for midday supervision, including plans for primary legislation.

I enclose the text of an inspired Parliamentary Question which he would like to arrange for answer on Friday, 8 November. He would therefore be grateful for any comments from colleagues by midday on Thursday 7 November.

I am copying this letter to private secretaries to members of E(PSP), the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the Lord President of the Council, the Leader of the House, the Chief Whip and Sir Robert Armstrong. My Secretary of State is writing separately to the Secretary of State for Wales since the statement will cover England and Wales.

Yours sincerely

Rob Smith

R L SMITH
Private Secretary

DRAFT ARRANGED PQ ON MIDDAY SUPERVISION

Q: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, if he will make a statement about his plans to make available additional resources for the supervision of schools at midday.

Sir Keith Joseph

Nine out of ten teachers are now refusing to supervise at midday, a duty which they deem to be voluntary, and very few schools are unaffected by the disruption. That disruption hits directly at parents and their children and is virtually cost-free to teachers. I have previously made clear to the House the Government's willingness to set aside extra money from within the envelope of £1250m conditionally available for a new pay structure to help the employers with the cost of supervising pupils at midday. The Government has now decided that additional resources should be made available to support expenditure of up to £10m in this financial year and £40m in 1986-87 on new arrangements for midday supervision in England and Wales. Our purpose in making this new money available is to put local education authorities in a position to secure and pay for effective supervision at midday so that schools can continue without disruption.

To that end my right honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I intend to lay before the House amending regulations which will enable us to use our powers under the Education (Grants and Awards) Act 1984 to pay Education Support Grants (ESGs) in respect of approved expenditure by local education authorities on provision for the supervision of school pupils at midday. My right honourable Friends, the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales will be willing to consider sympathetically representations from authorities seeking disregards of additional expenditure in 1985-86 approved for ESG for the purposes of calculating the abatement of Block Grant.

The 1984 Act provides that expenditure approved for ESG should not exceed 0.5% of total planned expenditure on education by authorities. In 1985-86 expenditure already approved for ESG

and planned support for midday supervision will not exceed that figure, but the addition of £40m to the programmes already approved for 1986-87 would cause it to be exceeded next year. The Government therefore intends to introduce a Bill to raise the limit to 1%. We also intend however, pending the outcome of the present review of local government finance, to exercise discretion to keep expenditure approved for ESG in respect of activities other than midday supervision within 0.5% of the planned total.

We shall consult with representatives of the local education authorities as a matter of urgency on the details of the new arrangements. I hope that they will be willing to take action swiftly in the interests of pupils and their parents.