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Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

Prime Minister (4) *cc/no*
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24 June 1985

Mark Addison Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Dear Mark

Thank you for copying to us your note of the Prime Minister's meeting with industrialists on 21 May.

On page 6 of that minute the Prime Minister is quoted as saying that

"The Government have already done a great deal, however, and nearly every school, including primary schools, now had a micro computer".

The Prime Minister may be interested to hear of our latest assessment of the extent of use of micro-computers in schools.

We now estimate the number of micros in secondary schools at an average of about 11. This is based on a projection of the last reliable figure from a survey in early 1984 which gave an average of 8.6. In primary schools, the average in early 1984 was 1.2 when the Government scheme of support under which primary schools were given a grant towards half the price of a micro was only half way through. We would expect the primary school average, therefore, to be now about 2. In our own briefing, we also no longer feel constrained about saying that every secondary and primary school has a computer rather than "nearly every school". We cannot be entirely sure that every single school in the country took advantage of the various Government offers but we are not aware of any schools which did not. It has to be recognised, however, that the vast majority of the additional micros have been bought, as had always been intended, within the education system as the DTI support has been limited to only half a micro per school plus related equipment.



I should also mention that this considerable increase in the use of micros has been supported through the Microelectronics Education Programme of the DES which is estimated to have provided training for some 80,000 teachers as well as producing about 1,400 programmes of educational software. This is mirrored, though the figures are somewhat smaller, by the work of the Scottish Microelectronics Development Programme in Scotland. The combined effect of these programmes suggest that we are still ahead of our competitors in this particular area and no other country, to the best of our knowledge, has yet managed to introduce computers to all schools.

Copies of this letter go to Elizabeth Hodgkinson at DES and to Andrew Rinning (Scottish Office).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Yours ever' followed by a stylized signature.

EDWARD BLADES
Private Secretary

Science & Tech : Budget #3.

