



Via Email

23 November 2017

Dear Mr Swinney,

Our sincerest thanks for taking so much time this morning to hear from some of the Midlothian Head Teachers about their experiences of implementing STEP. I am sure you recognised from their testimony that STEP is having an impact, not only on the specific children taking part but also on the entire classroom, and the whole school including the teaching staff and learning assistants. You have heard stories about pupils whose inclusion in mainstream education was questionable prior to their enrolment on STEP and how they are now actively taking part in and benefitting from classroom learning.

We have continued to meet with schools across Scotland this term and in addition to the 13 Midlothian schools taking part, the STEP Programme is now running in schools in South Ayrshire, Stirling, West Lothian, Edinburgh and South Lanarkshire. The first Glasgow and North Ayrshire schools will begin in January.

From our contact with schools to date, there are over 2000 children that have been identified by head teachers in schools across Scotland as learners who would benefit by taking part in the STEP Programme. However, as we touched upon today there are in some regions barriers to these children's enrolment and your offer to help us overcome these challenges to ensure that head teachers can confidently choose to implement STEP in their schools is much appreciated.

When we met in the spring you kindly agreed to write to all the local education authorities to ask them to engage with us and facilitate introductions to their head teachers. We understand that this letter has been drafted and would be most appreciative if it could be issued soon as we would be keen for the head teachers of our current schools to be able to share their STEP experiences with their colleagues in the other authorities.

It is our position that there are now sufficient schools across Scotland interested in taking part in STEP to warrant a nationwide study of the impact that the Programme can have towards the Attainment Challenge with results that can be shared internationally and would like the Scottish Government to take an active lead in the commission of such a trial. We have been fortunate enough to attract the interest of several generous philanthropists whom we believe could be joined up to provide a share of the funding necessary for such an initiative. A national trial of 3000 pupils would impact on over 900 classrooms and over 20,000 learners across the country.

We would further like to take your advice regarding the situations we have come across where Authorities have not supported a school's desire to implement STEP and declined to engage with us as an organisation. We believe this may be linked to communication from Education Scotland to the authorities actively discouraging them from considering STEP.

Whilst we are very aware of how busy your diary is we hope you understand that just as you, we at STEP are passionate about our ability to make a measurable difference to the outcomes of today's struggling pupils and hope that we could meet before Christmas to address some of the points we have raised. We are keen to enter the new term confident that head teachers across Scotland are aware of the tools available to them to help with the transformation of their schools and make an informed choice as to whether STEP is something they wish to include. Our vision remains consistent, to bring STEP to the 30,000 children in Scotland whose attainment could be significantly improved by having access to personalised physical literacy.

Once again, thank you for giving the Midlothian head teachers and STEP the opportunity to showcase the work delivered to date and we look forward to your continued interest.

Yours,

[Redacted s.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted s.38(1)(b)]

