

E. R. -

cc Bys

PRIME MINISTER

PROGRESS MEETING WITH KENNETH BAKER ON EDUCATION REFORM

Earlier in the year it was agreed that Kenneth Baker would have bilateral discussions with you, roughly every six months, to discuss progress with the implementation of the Education Reform Act. The first one is scheduled for next Monday.

You may like to take a first look at the papers over the weekend.

Kenneth Baker's minute at flag A provides a brief summary of the action in hand which you might like to use as an annotated agenda for the meeting.

But his minute also indicates that he wants to use the meeting to discuss with you the proposals for attainment targets in English now that the first report is available from the English Working Group chaired by Brian Cox. DES were not proposing to send this until next week, but I have insisted that you have a copy of the report for the weekend.

The DES Private Secretary letter at flag B indicates that Mr. Baker will be writing formally to you on Monday with his and Peter Walker's reactions to the report. But the letter sets out some of the key points <sup>he</sup> you will be making - eg that reading, writing and grammar should be given greater importance and prominence than the Cox report recommends.

The report itself, together with an initial assessment that Brian Griffiths has quickly prepared today, is at flag C. You will see that Brian picks up more forcefully some of the same points as Kenneth Baker. Brian's overall conclusion is that, if implemented, the Cox report would make very little difference to the way English is taught in the average school. Brian has also highlighted some key passages in the report itself.

Brian will be letting you have a fuller assessment early next week. I have suggested to him that there might be some merit in his seeking to talk to Brian Cox before your meeting with Kenneth Baker. Richard Wilson will also be putting together some briefing before the meeting.

You will also want to consider the arrangements for settling how the English report is to be handled. I gather Kenneth Baker does not want to bring the issue to a larger group of colleagues, and we have no arrangements for an E(EP) discussion on this subject.

*Paul*

PAUL GRAY

21 October 1988

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