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Acting Executive Head Teacher  
Mr Mark McLaughlin B.A. (Hons)

29<sup>th</sup> July 2016

RT Hon Justine Greening MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear RT Hon Justine Greening MP

Can I congratulate you on your appointment to this hugely important ministry, I am sure you don't need me to advise you just how much the delivery of great education transforms peoples lives. Nor do you need me to tell you there is still much work to do and I do wish you well in addressing these issues.

It is with regret that my first communication with you is to raise very serious concerns about the conduct of the minister for schools, Lord Nash and the CEO of the EFA, Peter Lauener.

I have written extensively about our concerns to your predecessor and the former Prime Minister, I guess events overtook them, but I was also concerned that given that we are nothing but a small insignificant school, and Lord Nash and Peter Lauener are hugely powerful and influential people within the establishment, our voice would simply be drowned out and our very real concerns brushed aside.

I have asked Kate Hoey, our hugely supportive MP to hand deliver this letter to you as I lack faith that it would otherwise reach you.

I believe Kate has redelivered the letters sent to your predecessor which outlines some of the concerns we have and of course you might be aware there has been a complaint raised against Peter Lauener in relation to his abusive conduct towards our school. I am afraid to say I have little faith in this complaints procedure as it is being handled by a senior civil servant who is a colleague of Peter Lauener.

However, things as you must be aware, have moved on significantly since I last wrote to your predecessor.

Lord Nash and Peter Lauener took the extraordinary decision to issue a threat to remove our funding formula. Lord Nash quite extraordinarily briefed the media advising them he was doing this to 'safeguard the education of the children'.

Of course nothing could be further from the truth as it is the conduct of Lord Nash and Peter Lauener who poses the greatest threat to the education of the children, as will be shown when they are held to account for their appalling behaviour.

Very briefly, the timeline of this campaign of intimidation by Lord Nash and Peter Lauener is as follows:

The EFA sometime in 2013, wrongly advised the National Audit Office that the Durand Educational Trust had been wrongly set up. Not only is this untrue but Peter Lauener and Lord Nash and the NAO had been made fully aware that this information was false (see legal letter enclosed) but both Lord Nash and Peter Lauener are constantly willing to repeat this falsehood. Bizarrely the NAO don't feel the need to remedy this false information, which has cost both trusts hundreds of thousands of pounds in costs as a consequence of their misreporting.

Lord Nash and Peter Lauener have for reasons which are beyond me, have decided to force the closure of DET. They have set about this task using threat, harassment and intimidation of governors and senior members of our school.

At a meeting with Peter Lauener and Lord Nash in 2014, our lawyers attempted to explain carefully to Lord Nash and Peter Lauener that their actions and demands required of the governors of DAT, were unreasonable and indeed unlawful. Lord Nash casually dismissed the legal position telling us all he had 'no regard for the law'.

He then went on to threaten that if we didn't do as we were told, he would issue a 'notice to financially improve'. There are no financial issues within the school which has been evidenced time and time again. What Lord Nash was doing was weaponising his powers quite wrongly and using them as a stick to beat us with as we dared to disobey him.

He duly served such a notice and of course published it far and wide so as to undermine our reputation, which is one of their favoured techniques. Unfortunately for Lord Nash and Peter Lauener this notice is both irrational and cannot be enforced (see legal letter sent to Peter Lauener).

In order to try to find something/anything to justify their dreadful behaviour, Peter Lauener then, again abusing his powers, directed that we should be subjected to a forensic investigation of our financial management, undertaken by PWC.

This lasted 7 months and produced a 250 page report which cost the tax payer many hundreds of thousands of pounds and this report found no issues of any consequence which of course made Peter Lauener and Lord Nash's position more difficult. I have no doubt this report will be buried and very little will be heard of it again.

My understanding is that we are the only primary school to have such action taken against us and certainly the first where there was no evidence whatsoever to justify such an intrusive investigation.

Of course it did serve one of their other purposes which was to have it made public thus further harming the reputation of those in our school.

Having found nothing to justify their actions or behaviour from this report, they then decided extraordinarily to threaten the removal of our funding contract as you know.

Lord Nash couldn't wait of course to make this public as said earlier making ludicrous claims and professing to have concerns over the education of our children.

Of course as is always the case with Peter Lauener and Lord Nash, the demands they make are entirely unreasonable and simply not lawful.

It is our lawyer's view that they would have a very hard time indeed to try to convince a court that they wished, on the basis of this notice that they intended to cancel the contract between us.

The governors of Durand Academy will of course not be harassed and intimidated by Lord Nash and Peter Lauener and will not be complying with this irrational and unenforceable notice. It seems Lord Nash and Peter Lauener does not learn from their mistakes. They seem to wish to continue with their intimidatory tactics and to take control of the school through regime change, which has long been their aim.

As you must be aware minister, we are a highly effective school offering hope and aspiration to all of our pupils and parents, none of whom have had the advantages enjoyed by Lord Nash and Peter Lauener.

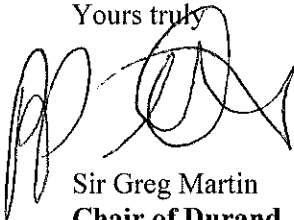
So I ask you as I asked your predecessor and the former Prime Minister, are you going to stand by and let these unaccountable and privileged men continue to abuse the power given by the state, to try to destroy this highly effective and successful school?

There is of course much, much more detail and far more evidence of abusive behaviour perpetrated by the EFA against our school, which the governors would like to share with you.

Therefore we would like an urgent meeting with you so that our case and our evidence can have the opportunity to be seen and heard.

Given that Peter Lauener and Lord Nash have now dug their holes so deep, they can only continue to dig, could I urge you to arrange such a meeting sooner rather than later. We of course can be available anytime to suit your convenience.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Martin', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Sir Greg Martin  
Chair of Durand Academy Trust

Cc **RT Prime Minister Teresa May MP**  
**Ms Kate Hoey, MP**