

House of Commons
Education and Skills Committee

**APPOINTMENT OF NEW HMCI
Responses from Government and Ofsted to
the Fourth Report from the Education and
Skills Committee, Session 2001-02**

Fifth Special Report of Session
2001–02

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EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

The Education and Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and Skills and its associated public bodies.

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FIFTH SPECIAL REPORT

The Education and Skills Committee has agreed to the following Special Report:

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HMCI

RESPONSES FROM GOVERNMENT AND OFSTED TO THE FOURTH REPORT FROM THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, SESSION 2001–02

The Education and Skills Committee reported to the House on *Appointment of New HMCI* in its Fourth Report of Session 2001–02, published on 2 July 2002 as HC 830. The Government's response was received on 31 July 2002 and OFSTED's response was received on 24 July 2002. The responses are reproduced as Appendices 1 and 2 to this Special Report.

APPENDIX 1

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HMCI

RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT TO THE FOURTH REPORT FROM THE
EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, SESSION 2001-02**Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from
the Minister for School Standards**

I am responding to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2001-02, Appointment of New HMCI, which was published on 2 July.

I am grateful for the Committee's comments about David Bell and the appointment process. As you know the Government has welcomed the recommendation of the Modernisation Committee regarding major appointments. We take seriously the contribution of your Committee to all aspects of education. We have not closed our minds to further change but we are not persuaded by your proposal for involvement in the appointment of HMCI.

The process by which David Bell was selected for appointment as HM Chief Inspector of Schools reflected the twin principles of Ministerial accountability and selection on merit which apply across Government. The Secretary of State is responsible for the recommendation that she made, on behalf of the Government, to Her Majesty in Council and she is accountable to Parliament for her decision. In reaching that decision, she took advice from a selection panel. The selection process, including the work of the panel, was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

We continue to believe that the appropriate role for Parliament in the appointment of HMCI is that of scrutiny, holding the Secretary of State accountable for her decision. To involve the Select Committee directly in the process leading to that decision would raise issues about the lines of accountability which are currently very clear.

I would like to correct a statement in paragraph 15 of your report. While we are concerned that disclosing the names of unsuccessful applicants might dissuade some people from applying for the post of HMCI, we have neither expressed nor formed a similar view about the likely effects of Parliamentary involvement in the selection process.

In that context, I note the comments in paragraph 14 of the report about the membership of the selection panel. In selecting the panel, we need to strike a balance between keeping it to a reasonable size and the desirability of having various interest groups represented on it. I can assure you that we will look closely at this, and at the Committee's other comments, when we next come to determine the detailed arrangements for the selection of HMCI.

David Miliband

31 July 2002

APPENDIX 2

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HMCI
RESPONSE FROM OFSTED TO THE FOURTH REPORT FROM THE
EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE, SESSION 2001–02

Letter to the Chairman of the Committee from
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Thank you for the copy of your Committee's Report on the above subject.

The Report sets out the detail of the appointment process followed by the DfES which led to my appointment as HMCI from 1 May 2002. We note that the Committee has re-iterated its view that the Select Committee should play a part in the HMCI appointment process and the recommendation that any Order in Council appointing (or re-appointing) HMCI should be subject to the approval of the House of Commons. We believe that it is for the DfES to respond to these points.

The summary of our evidence session on Wednesday 8 May highlights some of the key issues of interest to us all at the present time. We look forward to discussing these and other issues with the Committee on future occasions.

David Bell

24 July 2002