



2023-0036967SoSPO

**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP**  
Secretary of State for Education

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe](http://www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe)

The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP  
By email: [liam.fox.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:liam.fox.mp@parliament.uk)

10 November 2023

*Dear Liam,*

Thank you so much for your email of 10 October, enclosing correspondence from Mr Jim Smith, headteacher of Clevedon School, about High Alumina Cement Concrete (HACC).

I appreciate the concerns Mr Smith has raised. I know you are aware that department officials have been working closely with the responsible body, Futura Learning Trust, since the Complex Projects Team were notified of the structural issues identified at the school on 13 September. I understand that school representatives meet with department officials on a weekly basis to discuss the impact of the partial school closure and what support the school and trust requires from the department.

I understand that the trust has re-purposed existing space to allow face-to-face learning to continue and that a 19-classroom marquee structure is now fully operational, which will provide teaching facilities in the short term. We recognise that this is not a long-term solution. I am also appreciative of the school's proactive approach in commissioning their own structural engineers, JDL, to provide advice on short term mitigation works and the long-term future of the building.

I know that you met with the Minister for the School System and Student Finance, Baroness Barran, together with the school, trust and department officials on 19 October 2023 and that the following issues were discussed:

1. Use of the marquee classroom facility and re-purposed spaces as a short-term solution.
2. The condition of the building that contains HACC and agreeing short- and long-term plans based on the technical advisor's reports (from both JDL and Mott MacDonald).
3. Whether the building that contains HACC can be brought back into use, through mitigation (propping or similar), to provide additional teaching space.
4. The long-term use of the building and whether it can be remediated in a cost-effective way to secure its future.
5. Whether the school meets the criteria for the DfE School Rebuilding Programme.
6. Possible funding and management of the mitigation, remediation or rebuilding works.

The department's appointed technical advisor Mott MacDonald, shared the following provisional verbal feedback, with the school and the trust on 26 October:

- The structural condition of the building is of concern and technical advisors recommend not to fully occupy the building until some form of mitigation or remediation work has been considered.
- It may be possible to use the building with no mitigation, but capacity would be severely reduced. To allow this to happen, a load test would need to be undertaken.
- The food technology room could be brought back into use if mitigation is provided in the IT suite below (i.e. through some form of propping).

From the verbal feedback from Mott MacDonald, we conclude that the school, and officials, should remain concerned about the structural condition of the tower. Once the department receives the more detailed and written findings, I assure you we will work closely with the school, trust and both technical advisors to agree how best to progress.

I recognise the disruption that the school building closure has caused to pupils, the teaching staff, and the local community. Please pass my sincere thanks to them while we consider the trust's circumstances.

Please be assured that the teams are working at pace to reach a solution and to provide the trust with an outcome as quickly as possible. I want to personally thank the staff at Futura Learning Trust and Clevedon School for continuing to engage with the department on this matter.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me. I hope my response is useful for you and all at Clevedon School and Futura Learning Trust.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP  
Secretary of State for Education**