



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 March 1981

Dear Jonathan

Micros in Schools

The Prime Minister has read your letter of 27 March and the draft message which you enclosed with it. She is content that a message in her name should be included in the proposed brochure, but she would like it to be amended as follows:-

"Britain's greatest natural asset has always been the inventive genius of our people. This is the asset which we must tap if we are to profit from advances in technology. In microelectronics and information technology, we must do everything to encourage and train people with the ability and skills needed to design systems, write software and develop new businesses and products.

We must start in our schools. The microcomputer is the basic tool of Information Technology. The sooner children become familiar with its enormous potential the better. That is why the Department of Industry has introduced its 'Micros in Schools' scheme. This scheme is the first in a series of initiatives which the Government is taking to ensure that Britain stays with the leaders in the rapidly growing Information Technology market.

I urge schools, Local Education Authorities and Parent Teacher Associations to take advantage of the DOI scheme

Margaret Thatcher"

I have warned the Prime Minister that Mr. Carlisle is likely to have some amendments of his own. I hope these can be taken into account without any major change in the Prime Minister's redraft. If there are to be any major changes in the draft, please could you let me know before it is finalised.

/I am

I am sending a copy of this letter to Peter Shaw (Department of Education and Science).

Yours ever

T P LANKESTER

J.C. Hudson, Esq.,

MM

cc Ingham



*told Hudson Education
that this
is O.K.*

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
ELIZABETH HOUSE, YORK ROAD, LONDON SE1 7PH
TELEPHONE 01-928 9222
FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

T P Lankester Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

30 March 1981

*IL
S/P*

Dear Sir,

MICROS IN SCHOOLS

My Secretary of State has seen the letter Jonathon Hudson sent you on 27 March, enclosing a draft foreword for the Department of Industry brochure, and your reply of 30 March.

Mr Carlisle is content with the redrafted first paragraph. He feels strongly that the absence of a reference to the Education Departments' Microelectronics in Education Programme makes the Government appear less active than it already is. He also believes that the foreword should avoid the implication that parent/teacher associations have a direct responsibility for providing schools with equipment. He would prefer the second and third paragraph to be altered, as attached, to reflect these points.

A copy of this letter and its attachment goes to Jonathon Hudson (DOI).

Yours sincerely

Peter Shaw

P A SHAW
Private Secretary



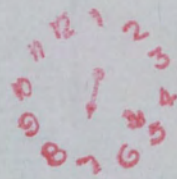
MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER: 2nd and 3rd paragraphs

We must start in our schools. The microcomputer is the basic tool of Information Technology. The sooner children become familiar with its enormous potential the better. At present only some schools have microcomputers. That is why the Department of Industry has introduced its "Micros in Schools" scheme. This scheme, closely linked with the Education Departments' Microelectronics in Education Programme, is the first in a series of initiatives which the Government is taking to ensure that Britain stays with the leaders in the rapidly growing Information Technology market.

I urge schools and local education authorities to take advantage of the DOI scheme. I hope that schools who are willing to do so will be supported by their parent/teacher associations.



30 MAR 1981



cc Mr. Ingham ²



10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

You have agreed to launch the Department of Industry's Micros in Schools scheme. The Department are producing a brochure on this, and would like to include a short message from you. Are you content with the draft at Flag A?

*@
Duty Clerk
for*

*As amended
mt*

T.P. LANKESTER

27 March 1981

PS I have just heard that Mr. Carlisle has some comments, which he will let DOI have direct on Monday.

cc Press



FROM THE
MINISTER OF STATE
FOR INDUSTRY AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

PS/Kenneth Baker MP

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY
ASHDOWN HOUSE
123 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1E 6RB

TELEPHONE DIRECT LINE 01-212 6401
SWITCHBOARD 01-212 7676

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary to
the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

27 March 1981

Dear Mike,

MICROS IN SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister has kindly agreed to attend a Press Conference on 6 April to launch the DoI Micros in Schools Scheme. Arrangements are well under way and I shall shortly be putting to you some notes for the Prime Minister's speech.

We will be producing a brochure which sets out details of the scheme; it will also include a short note entitled 'Schools and Information Technology' which will draw attention to the importance of micro-computers and to the opportunities they offer in the teaching and learning process. This note will link in with the Microelectronics in Education Programme already announced by the Education Department.

We intend that in addition to sending the brochures to all schools and LEAs they should be displayed prominently at the various Information Technology events and exhibitions where DoI or DES will have a presence over the next year or so. As the first in the series of IT initiatives which will be taken by Government this scheme will arouse considerable interest in the UK and overseas. Our longer term hope for a phased extension of the scheme to all secondary schools, and to the further education, primary school and special school sectors over the next 1-3 years should also ensure that the scheme will gather momentum and attention over that period.

It would greatly assist in maximising the impact on a wider basis of the initial launch of the scheme if the Prime Minister would agree to the inclusion in the brochure of a short message commending the scheme to schools and LEAs. I attach a draft. We will also include her photograph.



Given the printing constraints which have been laid upon us
I should be grateful for comments by close of play on 30 March.

I am copying this to June Nisbet (DES).

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Hudson

JONATHAN HUDSON
Private Secretary



A

DRAFT

MICROS IN SCHOOLS: MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

Britain's greatest natural asset has always been the inventive genius of our people. This is the asset which we must ~~continue to tap~~ if we are to ~~take full advantage of~~ ^{profit from} advances in technology.

In microelectronics and information technology, we must ^{do everything} ~~concentrate on producing~~ ^{to encourage and train} people with the ~~(skills and expertise)~~ ^{skills and} needed to design systems, write software and develop new businesses and products. ~~(Therefore we must ensure that this is available to everyone who requires it - and that means almost all of us. Its needed both at home and at work.)~~

^{We must start}
~~The starting point for this must be in our schools. The microcomputer is the basic work tool of the Information Technology era and That is why the Department of Industry has introduced its 'Micros in Schools' Scheme. This scheme is the first in a series of initiatives which the Government is taking to ensure that Britain stays with the leaders in the rapidly growing Information Technology market.~~
^{The sooner children become familiar with its enormous potential the better.}

I urge schools, Local Education Authorities and Parent Teacher Associations to take advantage of the DoI scheme.

Margaret Thatcher

Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-233 7172 (Linell Union)



✓
MR

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
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Tel. 01-233 3000 (Switchboard)
01-233 7172 (Direct Line)

Oddi wrth yr Is-Ysgrifennydd Seneddol

From The Parliamentary Under-Secretary

26 March 1981

Dear Kenneth,

a Jackson

I have read with interest your minute of 19 March setting out proposals to fund microcomputers for schools. I very much welcome the initiative you are putting forward but there are a couple of points I would like to raise.

It is important, not least from an educational point of view, that the success of the scheme is properly evaluated. One measure will be the degree of takeup by schools. But more fundamentally success must be evaluated by reference to the use schools make of microcomputers. I therefore share Leon Brittan's view that it is important that thought should be given at an early stage to arrangements for follow up.

The selection of the RML and ACORN machines for the scheme is bound to give rise to expressions of concern by other manufacturers at their exclusion. Indeed the Welsh Office has already received one such representation from Clwyd County Council regarding a microcomputer being developed by the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education which is shortly to go into commercial production. Schools are seen as one of the main markets for the machine and there is concern that the Government scheme could lead to failure of the project. I accept that the selection of the two machines proposed has been very fully considered and I do not want to re-open the subject. At the same time I think we should avoid giving the impression that the selection of these machines at this point in time precludes Government backing of other machines for use in schools at a future date or for different

Kenneth Baker Esq MP
Minister of State
Department of Industry
123 Victoria Street
LONDON



purposes. There has, I know, been some discussion of the possibility of extending the scheme in due course to primary and special schools and it would be important at that stage, if not before, to review the models of microcomputer available. The microelectronics field is a very fast developing one and it would be singularly unfortunate if a Government scheme were to stultify initiatives in the education field.

I think that the proposals for a press conference launch will command a good deal of interest and provide good publicity for the scheme. Since the scheme is to cover the whole of the United Kingdom I would welcome the opportunity to attend along with Alex Fletcher.

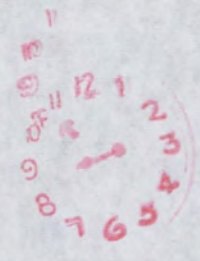
I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and other recipients of your minute.

*Yours ever,
Michael*

MICHAEL ROBERTS

27 M'

APR 1981





Handwritten initials

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Kenneth Baker Esq MP
Minister of State
Department of Industry
Ashdown House
123 Victoria Street
London SW1

23 March 1981

2 Kenneth

MICROCOMPUTERS IN SCHOOLS

I was interested to see your minute to the Prime Minister of 19 March.

I share your view about the desirability of spreading the use of microcomputers in schools more widely. But I do think it is important to make sure that the computers are going to be used properly.

One sometimes reads or hears alarming tales of expensive equipment being obtained by schools and then neglected and I have myself known of this happening in the case of computers. No doubt some such tales are exaggerated; and no doubt I shall be told that this does not happen now because resources are so short; or that if only the schools had more resources they could do more with computers. But the fact remains that to be worthwhile, your scheme requires some way of ensuring proper use of the equipment and not just its purchase.

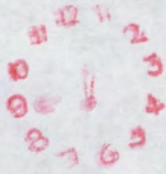
I hope therefore that it will be possible to contrive some means of ensuring this.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Neil Macfarlane, Alex Fletcher, Barney Heyhoe, Michael Roberts, Rodney Elton, Robin Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Handwritten signature

LEON BRITTAN

24 MAR 1981



notes
bc press
Defectives

jfh

23 March 1981

The Prime Minister has seen Mr. Baker's minute of 19 March about microcomputers in schools. As Caroline Stephens has already agreed with you, the Prime Minister would be prepared to attend the proposed launching at 12 noon on Monday 6 April.

I hope that you can let us have details of the arrangements, with the necessary briefing, by close of play on Wednesday 1 April.

I am sending a copy of this letter to June Nisbet (Department of Education and Science).

M A PATTISON

Jonathan Hudson, Esq.,
Department of Industry.

BK



10 DOWNING STREET

Monday 6th April
at 12.00 Noon.

E.P.

23/3.

Press

Prime Minister (through CS)



Yes
no

Would you be willing to devote $\frac{3}{4}$ hr to launch this scheme early next month? Your diary will be tight in the run-up to India.

Prime Minister

MAP 19/

The diary is very, very bad and I ed fit it in if I take the 45 mins out of time allotted for Cobra briefings. et.

MICROCOMPUTERS IN SCHOOLS

As you know, we are working up a proposal with DES and the other UK Education Departments, to try to help secondary schools to purchase microcomputers. When I mentioned this to you the other day you indicated that you would be willing to launch such a scheme early in April. In this minute I am seeking your formal agreement to a proposal I have agreed with Neil MacFarlane.

The main thrust of the microcomputers in schools project will be to provide £ for £ funding from DoI to match local funds obtained from the Local Education Authority, Parent Teacher Associations or from local businesses. We believe that such an offer will be received with widespread enthusiasm by schools and by local authorities. The objective would be to ensure that by the end of 1982 - and possibly earlier - all secondary schools will have at least one microcomputer. The main initial thrust therefore will be to get a microcomputer into those schools which do not currently have them. I understand that the DES calculate that about 50% of schools in England and Wales have a microcomputer of one sort or another.

We would propose to restrict the offer to two UK manufactured machines; a Research Machines microcomputer costing about £1,600 or alternatively, for those who cannot afford that much, an ACORN machine (costing about £400) which is an improved version of the one that the BBC are proposing to use for their programme on computers, beginning this Autumn. Some schools have already invested in PET and APPLE machines which are of US origin and which, until recently, held the field. After the initial thrust in schools presently without a machine we would propose to follow up to encourage schools with foreign machines to try the UK models. We shall find the funds required (about £3/4m) from within the present DoI financial provisions, including some of the public purchasing funds. We believe the scheme will not only be an important development in education but will also give major encouragement to the UK companies concerned, and to the software developments to follow.

If you agree, we suggest that we should arrange a press launch at the Cinema in Millbank Tower. We would also arrange that several groups of children, drawn from all parts of the country, should be present to demonstrate how they are using the microcomputers which they won in the DoI Schools



Essay Competition last year. The prizes for this competition were the Research Machines microcomputers which would be available under the new scheme. We suggest that if you could spare half an hour you might first of all talk to the children about the work they are demonstrating, to be followed by a short press launch. After that, if you wished, you would be able to get away and leave the more detailed press questioning to Neil MacFarlane and myself.

On that date you would not only be able to announce the launch of the microcomputer in schools scheme but also refer to the DES strategy on the microelectronic education programme (MEP) which is being published at the same time. This would then link the provision of hardware through the DoI scheme with the initiatives launched last year by the education departments which support the provision of training and curriculum development. The MEP and a complementary programme in Scotland was, as you will recall, a four year programme with a total cost of £10m. In addition you could announce that we are again running an essay competition this year for which the prize will be Research Machine microcomputers. Corresponding arrangements are available in Scotland.

Since we shall need to make arrangements to bring children from various parts of the country I should be grateful if you could give your early confirmation of your willingness to launch the scheme. Our offices can agree a suitable date.

I am copying this minute to Leon Brittan, Neil MacFarlane, Alex Fletcher, who might like to join us at the launch to represent the Scottish interest, Barney Heyhoe, Michael Roberts, Rodney Elton, Robin Ibbs and Sir Robert Armstrong.

K.S.

KENNETH BAKER

19 MARCH 1981



19 MAR 1981
12 11 59
76 24 22

19 MAR 1981

On this day, I have received from you a letter of the 11th March 1981, in which you inform me that you have received a letter from the Director of the [unclear] dated 10th March 1981, in which he has informed you that the [unclear] has been approved by the [unclear] and that you are to proceed with the [unclear] in accordance with the [unclear].

I am pleased to hear that the [unclear] has been approved and that you are proceeding with the [unclear]. I am sure that the [unclear] will be of great benefit to the [unclear] and that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner. I am sure that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner and that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner.

I am sure that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner and that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner. I am sure that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner and that you will be able to complete the [unclear] in a timely manner.