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Lord Nash

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System
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Mrs Anne Main MP
House of Commons
London
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Your ref: SA7674/CM

20th September 2016

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your letter of 3 August, addressed to the Secretary of State, about combatting islamophobia, anti-semitism and racism. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area. I apologise for the delay in providing you with a response.

I assure you that the department is working actively to ensure that schools are equipped to build children's resilience against extremist ideology and prepare them for life in modern, multi-cultural Britain.

Ofsted now inspects schools on the requirement to actively promote the fundamental British values of individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Ofsted have strengthened their inspection frameworks so that inspectors assess how well all schools promote fundamental British values. Indeed, all schools have a public duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that there is no discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinions or background. The Equality Act also introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty. Under this duty, state funded schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and none. Ofsted's inspectors will also consider how effectively a school's leadership and its curriculum promote tolerance and respect for people with protected characteristics.

Schools should be places where we promote community cohesion, and this is happening through the National Curriculum programme for citizenship, which includes teaching about the diverse range of identities in the UK and the importance of respecting others, irrespective of their religion.

In January, the department jointly launched a website with the Home Office called 'Educate Against Hate' and this available at: <http://educateagainsthate.com>. It provides parents, teachers and school leaders with information and advice on fundamental British values, building resilience and critical thinking skills in young people to prepare them for a life in modern Britain.

We continue to work with education professionals and civil society groups to produce high quality resources to assist teachers and school leaders in building pupils' critical thinking skills. We update the website on a regular basis so that it remains a relevant source of support. We will also shortly be producing guidance and resources packs to help teachers lead knowledge-based debates on topics relating to fundamental British values and contemporary political and social issues. If there are resources available that you would like to see on the 'Educate Against Hate' website, I would advise you to contact them by email at: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Nash', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

JOHN NASH