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Lord Watson of Invergowrie
House of Lords
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11A March 2019

Thank you for attending the Oral Statement on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education on Monday 25th February. I would also like to thank you for your supportive and insightful questions. I would like to clarify a small number of points that were made.

Firstly, the noble Lord Watson of Invergowrie asked a number of questions, including how many schools we expect to be teaching these subjects by September 2020. These subjects will be compulsory for all schools in England from this date – as mentioned during the Oral Questions, we are encouraging as many schools as possible to begin this teaching from this September. The lessons we learn from these early adopter schools will be used to share best practice and support all schools to deliver these subjects to a high quality from September 2020.

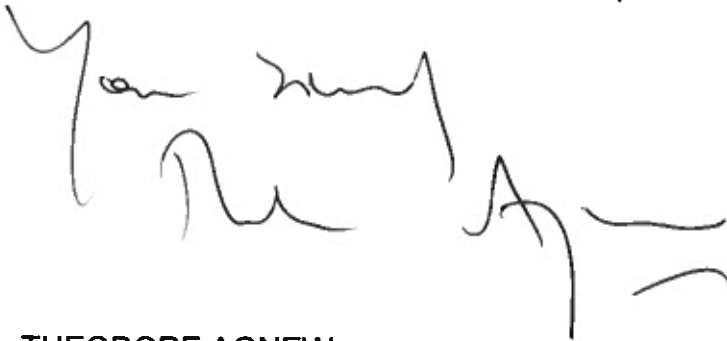
The noble Lord also asked whether there are any circumstances under which a school should be allowed to simply not teach the topic of LGBT relationships. As the Secretary of State for Education stated during his statement to the house, pupils should receive teaching on LGBT relationships during their school years. We expect secondary schools to include LGBT content and whilst there is no specific requirement to teach about LGBT in primary schools, they can cover LGBT content if they consider it age appropriate to do so.

Secondly, the noble Lord Cormack asked for assurance that at all stages, the leaders of all major faiths will be consulted to ensure that they have an opportunity to input. Further to my answer, which confirmed that schools will be required to take into account the religious background of their pupils when teaching these subjects, I would like to confirm for the noble Lord that the major faiths have been involved throughout the development of these subjects. Organisations such as the Church of England, the Catholic Education Service (CES) and Association for Muslim Schools were consulted during the development of the draft regulations and guidance, and were part of the 11,000 responses we received to the public consultation. On 25th February, the updated guidance was welcomed by those such as CES, the Church of England and the Board of Deputies for British Jews. These organisations welcome the flexibility given to religious schools to build on the core content to

reflect their beliefs in their teaching.

Lastly, I would like to clarify an answer to a question asked by the noble Baroness Watkins of Tavistock, and referenced by the noble Lord Lexden, regarding the application of this curriculum to independent schools. Further to my answer, it should be made clear that all three of these subjects will be compulsory for every school in England from September 2020. Relationships Education and RSE are part of a basic curriculum that is a requirement of every school irrespective of its status, alongside Religious Education. With regards to Health Education, the regulations will make this subject compulsory in all state-funded schools – Health Education is already compulsory in independent schools through the PSHE curriculum. From September 2020 every child in England will benefit from this teaching intended to support them to be healthy, happy and safe.

I hope this answer has been useful and will place a copy in the House libraries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore Agnew', written in a cursive style.

THEODORE AGNEW