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SK November 2019

During the Lords Queen's Speech debate on Tuesday 22 October you asked what action is being taken to tackle unregistered schools.

In January 2016, we announced funding for Ofsted to establish a dedicated team of specialist inspectors to root out and inspect those suspected of operating unlawfully and take action to bring them into compliance with the law, including closing the school or working with the police and Crown Prosecution Service as necessary.

At the same time, we published policy statements on independent school registration and prosecuting unregistered independent schools which clearly set out the relevant factors in determining whether education provided by an institution is "full time" and when we will take legal action against settings operating unlawfully.

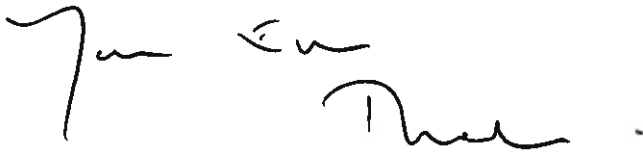
These actions have resulted in a significant escalation in Ofsted investigations of settings suspected of operating without registration which has resulted in the vast majority ceasing to operate unlawfully, and the closure of some altogether. Ofsted's unregistered schools management information, which is published twice yearly, notes that for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018, 307 inspections of suspected unregistered schools have taken place. Of these settings, 71 have been issued with a warning notice and 63 settings have closed or ceased operating illegally. Only four settings remained under active investigation.

The Department and Ofsted are working with the CPS to bring prosecutions of individuals, where appropriate. Those responsible for three settings have now been successfully prosecuted for the offence of conducting an unregistered school.

We have also been supporting local authorities to use their existing powers under safeguarding or health and safety legislation to disrupt and tackle unregistered independent schools. In all cases, the local authority or school who commissions a place in Alternative Provision should assure themselves that the setting is registered where applicable, the provision is delivered by high

quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks.

I hope that 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'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

THEODORE AGNEW

A long, thin, slightly curved horizontal line drawn in black ink, extending from the left towards the right side of the page.