The Committee asked about press reports concerning a letter from Lord Agnew about a “fundamental British values curriculum”. The background to this is that the Department for Education is currently considering how we can further support schools in meeting the requirement to promote fundamental British values (FBVs) by embedding teaching about values in the mainstream curriculum. This will involve analysing the existing programmes of study to highlight opportunities to promote FBVs through the teaching of mainstream subjects; identifying what resources exist to enable teachers to do so; and where necessary commissioning additional resources. Any resources and guidance would be designed to reduce teacher workload and provide material that could be adapted to the needs of individual schools. The Committee should note that this work will not involve imposing any additional requirements on schools: it is about providing support to schools rather than creating a dedicated curriculum or specifying what action they should take to promote FBVs. The Department firmly believes that individual schools are best placed to decide how to meet their responsibilities to promote FBVs in the light of their specific circumstances. DfE already makes a range of resources and guidance available to school via our Educate Against Hate website and the aim of this exercise is to enhance that support.

We want to develop our approach in partnership with practitioners and stakeholders. As a first step, Lord Agnew wrote to a small number of practitioners with an interest in this area to take part in an informal discussion about scoping the work. We will engage with other interested parties, such as the subject associations, following this initial discussion.