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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove**

Angela Rayner MP  
(via email)

17 December 2018

Dear Ms Rayner,

Thank you for your letter of 23 November 2018.

You asked about Government statements on the number of children attending good or outstanding schools.

These statements are factually correct. However in October we suggested to the Department for Education that the figures should be placed in context, and without attributing causality in order to reduce the risk that their use could be misleading. Our review suggests that the Department has followed this advice, bearing in mind that in the course of debate or when providing statistical quotes Ministers have necessarily to be concise. We do not consider the statements you mention to be misleading.

You also asked about a statement by the Prime Minister on 10 October that "*in fact, there are more teachers in our schools now and we see more people applying to be teachers*".<sup>1</sup> This statement was subsequently clarified by the Minister of State for Schools Standards, and its sources explained in a written response to a Parliamentary Question.<sup>2</sup>

As the Schools Minister explained, the statement used two different base years. The first part of the statement compared the number of teachers in 2017 with the numbers in 2010 and 2011. The second compare the number of applications in 2017 with those made in 2016. It would have been preferable to have put the figures on the same basis or to explain that the statement on applications covered a more recent time period than the statement on the number of teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of State for School Standards.

Yours sincerely



**Sir David Norgrove**

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<sup>1</sup> [Prime Minister's Questions \(10 October 2018\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Response to Parliamentary Question 179234 \(18 October 2018\)](#)