



2018-00POSoS

Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State

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Angela Rayner MP
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19 October 2018

Dear Angela,

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister about the use of statistics at Prime Minister's Questions. The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

Ensuring the integrity of education statistics is very important. Any statements should be presented in a way that is both factually accurate and placed in the right context. I can confirm that the statement made by the Prime Minister at PMQs passes both of those tests.

The proportion of children in schools whose most recent Ofsted judgement was Good or Outstanding has risen from 66% in 2010 to 86% in March 2018. We want that excellent progress to be as well understood as possible, and so we tend to express it in terms of the number of children rather than a percentage figure. It remains correct to say there are 1.9m more children in Good or Outstanding schools compared to 2010.

We made our methodology clear and publicly available here some time ago: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-in-good-or-outstanding-schools-august-2018>.

As the school age population is rising we have invested in creating more school places. It is our deliberate policy to balance the expansion we are making in school capacity towards good and outstanding schools.

Naturally, as the Prime Minister said, we are proud of this achievement, which we consider to be in part the result of reforms we have made to education. It is also credit to hard working teachers and school leaders across the country, and having received this response I hope you will join us in celebrating this improvement rather than questioning and talking down the successes of our schools.

Standards in our schools are rising. 163,000 more 6 year olds are now on track to be fluent readers than in 2012. The attainment gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers, measured by the attainment gap index, narrowed by 10% in both primary and secondary school compared to 2011. Record rates of 18 year olds are going on to higher education, and the number of 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training in the UK is down by 286,000 compared to 2010.

I also wanted to reiterate the findings from the OECD's report, which shows that, as a percentage of GDP the UK had the highest state spending on primary and secondary education in the G7. In terms of per-pupil spend, the UK was lower than the US but at a level similar to or above the other G7 countries.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damian Hinds". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Damian Hinds
Secretary of State for Education