



Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Extremism in schools](#), HC 473

Wednesday 15 October 2014

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Ofsted \(EIS0001\)](#)

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Members present: Mr Graham Stuart (Chair); Alex Cunningham; Bill Esterson; Pat Glass; Siobhain McDonagh; Caroline Nokes; Mr Dominic Raab; Mr David Ward

Questions 308 - 471

Witness: **Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP**, Secretary of State for Education, gave evidence.

Q308 Chair: Good morning and welcome, Secretary of State.

Nicky Morgan: Morning.

Chair: Congratulations on your appointment.

Nicky Morgan: Thank you.

Chair: It is a pleasure to have you here before the Committee for the first time. I am sure we will manage further engagements with you between now and the General Election.

Nicky Morgan: You have got next week to look forward to as well, so yes.

Chair: Indeed. How well do you think the “Trojan Horse” affair—if we can call it that—has been handled?

Nicky Morgan: This has been a long-standing issue. The evidence has shown that the concerns were being raised by head teachers with Birmingham City Council for quite some time before the letter reached the Department for Education under my predecessor. Since then, there has been concerted action in terms of discussions with the City Council, then Ofsted inspections, and then there were both the Peter Clarke and the Ian Kershaw reports. I gave a statement to Parliament on 22 July. There has been activity before then and since in relation to the schools and the management of the schools, and of course Ofsted went back in in September and their reports were published yesterday. There has been a lot of action, and I think it has been handled well.

Q309 Chair: So you think that collectively all that activity, by all these different agencies, much of it not co-ordinated, has been a good and sensible case study in how to respond to a problem like this. You would say that is the way in future that agencies should work together; that is the way reports should be commissioned; that is a really good and effective way of ensuring that children are given the best possible education.

Nicky Morgan: In anything like this we are always learning lessons. What we have found—what Peter Clarke and others have established—in the schools has been a shock to the system, to the schools, to the council and to the Department, and it has taught us some very serious lessons, which will be ongoing. With any issue like this there will always be things that can be done differently, or you will start from a higher point, if you like, when something like this happens again—should it happen again.

Q310 Chair: Ofsted wrote to you yesterday to say that insufficient progress was being made at all five of the schools currently in special measures as a result of the Trojan Horse investigations. Is it unrealistic to expect schools to turn around so soon when the problems are so deep-seated? What more needs to be done? Have the children in those schools right now had a fair crack?

Nicky Morgan: You are absolutely right, Mr Chairman, to take it back to the children at the schools, because that is who we are all in the business of looking after, safeguarding and wanting to educate to prepare them for life in modern Britain. It is also important to remember that the vast majority of parents, whether in Birmingham or elsewhere, want their children to get the best possible education. That is why we are doing all of this. The Ofsted reports were snapshots. The schools were visited right at the start of the autumn term, in some cases only four days after term had started. Progress had been made. I am sure we will come on to discuss specific progress, but things like new trusts have been appointed; interim executive boards; new principals, or in one case an old principal returning to the school. But you are right to draw a distinction. There are immediate actions that can be taken—I can publish guidance and we can have reports and everything else—but there is also a need for cultural change and a need for people who are trying, as Peter Clarke identified, to promote a particular ideology to be identified and to be removed from the system. As we have seen subsequently, there will be further attempts by those people and others, sadly.

Q311 Chair: Both Kershaw and Clarke pointed out that a fear of being perceived as racist lay behind the inaction by some members of Birmingham City Council—staff members there—and similar comments have been made about Rotherham and the sexual abuse problem in that area. Are there common lessons to be learned? How do we create appropriately self-confident organisations that can deal with communities from which they themselves may not spring?

Nicky Morgan: You are absolutely right. When teachers and others identify problems, whether we are talking about Birmingham or Rotherham—which is a different set of circumstances—the lessons are similar. We should not hesitate to take action. This is not about Islamophobia; this was about, as Peter Clarke identifies, a concerted, co-ordinated attempt to promote a particular ideology. There were some behaviours that we

saw at the schools, and also conversations on things like WhatsApp, that we would not want our children to be exposed to. What this has shown is that we must not be shy in this country about talking about fundamental British values and about promoting them. I am sure, again, we will come on to discuss the way those British values should be woven throughout our curriculum. I am going to talk particularly about education, but there will be other colleagues in Government looking at other parts of local and national Government and other institutions where those British values have got to be woven through, and we should not be shy about talking about them. If we do not talk about them, then other people will, as we have seen, attempt to get their ideology across.

Q312 Chair: Are you confident that that is going to work? Is getting people to talk about British values and to be confident to do so going to change the culture among officials to avoid conflict with communities when they know they are often facing people who are well organised? The more difficult the people, probably the better organised they are. The Trojan Horse letter may or may not be genuine, but it is quite good on tactics—on how to destabilise people, on how to write letters to MPs and get them onside, on how to talk to councillors, and on how to generally make allegations, force people on to the defensive and make people think, “I would rather not have to deal with this.” Are you confident that we are going to be able to get the cultural change we need within the organisations that deal with these communities?

Nicky Morgan: I am confident that eventually we will be able to get the cultural change. Part of that is about knowing that there are proper whistleblowing procedures when people raise concerns. One of the tragedies of this case was the fact that there were heads and others who were raising concerns and they were not listened to. In some cases, as I said in my statement to Parliament and as was identified in both the Clarke and the Kershaw reports, compromise agreements were entered into and these heads were removed or moved on to other schools rather than the issues being dealt with. You are right; this will require strong leadership at all levels, both from national Government—from my Department—and in local government. That is why we have appointed Sir Mike Tomlinson as the Education Commissioner to work with Birmingham City Council’s education department. It will require, not just in Birmingham but, as I say, in Rotherham and other places as well, a cultural change, which is that we should not be shy about talking about our own values, we should not turn a blind eye when concerns are raised, and we should know that there are people who do not subscribe to our values and who, as you say, will attempt some sort of entryism, whether it is in relation to a particular faith or to any other extremist views.

Q313 Bill Esterson: You made the point that the sense of urgency is because of the impact on children: every day that passes is a lost day for their ability to learn and to thrive. You also made the reasonable point that the inspections were carried out right at the start of the new term. It is now 15 October, many weeks later. Can you tell us what progress has been made since those inspections? I know you have only just had the advice note, but presumably you have been working on the points in the four recommendations that are in the advice note.

Nicky Morgan: The inspection visits were held at the beginning of term. Since then, my officials went back into the schools with the Education Funding Agency on 1

October. There is a letter that Park View School has sent home to parents and carers following the publication of the reports yesterday, and one of the things it talks about is that within 48 hours of the Ofsted monitoring visit, the Park View Trust had created a new interim improvement plan, which was put in place immediately to replace the previous ones. There was also mention in the Ofsted report of one school where there was religious studies going on and children were having to teach themselves if the religious studies were not in relation to Islam. That has been tackled by the head teacher of Golden Hillock, and support has now been put in place so that is not the case. The Ofsted reports have been very helpful in terms of immediate action points, and there has been progress. As you say, we are now heading into October—we are now six or seven weeks into term—and further action has been taken and more appointments have been made.

Q314 Bill Esterson: So, the changes to governance and leadership have happened, the concerns about leadership by staff have been removed, and the concerns about the unbalanced curriculum and the issues about information sharing have been dealt with. Those have all been dealt with and improvements have been made. Is that what you are saying?

Nicky Morgan: Improvements have been made. I would not like to say that everything has been dealt with. Certainly in terms of appointments, there are new trusts. By the time Ofsted went in to certainly Park View and Oldknow, the trustees had already been replaced—in fact, the trustees resigned in the summer term. There are also disciplinary proceedings against teachers that are still being worked through, but any teachers involved in this matter have been removed. But it will take time. It is taking time to work its way through. There is also the issue of Birmingham City Council’s overall improvement plan, which Sir Mike Tomlinson, as Education Commissioner, is working with Birmingham on. They are not yet there in terms of having that improvement plan in place and ready to go. I spoke to Sir Mike Tomlinson yesterday having seen Sir Michael Wilshaw’s report and letter to me.

Q315 Chair: The single integrated plan has not been produced, then.

Nicky Morgan: It has been produced, but Sir Mike Tomlinson is still working on it with Birmingham City Council.

Q316 Chair: Has it been shared with Ofsted yet?

Nicky Morgan: No, I do not think it has, because it is not yet ready.

Q317 Pat Glass: Minister, I found this letter yesterday from Michael Wilshaw truly shocking. It is full of delays; improvement plans not fit for purpose; staff still holding roles that they are not qualified or experienced for; staff still segregating themselves into groups according to religious beliefs; little changes to an unbalanced curriculum—which is devastating for young people. Delays, delays, delays. Are you really satisfied with what is happening? Is there not an urgency for more to happen? Ofsted went in in early spring. We are now in October.

Nicky Morgan: Ofsted went in in early spring at the request of my predecessor, having seen the evidence and had discussions with the City Council. As a result of the Ofsted spring inspections, Peter Clarke was appointed to do what I think is a very rigorous, thorough and good report, and Birmingham City Council also appointed Ian Kershaw to do their own report. I agree with you. I read the Clarke report; it is shocking. As I say, it has opened all of our eyes to the fact that these things may well happen—have happened—in our schools and that children’s education is being affected. But, as I say, these monitoring visits happened at the beginning of September. We are now seven weeks on.

Q318 Pat Glass: So, you are convinced that since the beginning of September this situation has changed radically: there is a balanced curriculum; these teachers who were not qualified or experienced have been removed and replaced by teachers who are experienced; and staff are no longer organising themselves into groups according to religious belief—that there are plans fit for purpose.

Nicky Morgan: There will be plans that are fit for purpose, and definitely improvements have been made and things have changed. My officials have been into the schools on 1 October and have checked all these things out. Huge improvements have definitely been made. I could not honestly sit here without having visited the schools myself and say, “Everything has been addressed,” but, yes, those things in particular I think you are absolutely right to identify—the broad and balanced curriculum—and we have particularly looked at the point in Sir Michael Wilshaw’s letter about the religious studies curriculum to make sure that that is not happening, and we are satisfied that is not now the case.

Q319 Mr Raab: Good morning, Secretary of State. I think everyone is agreed that violent extremism has no place in schools. You alluded to an example of showing a jihadi video, which was one of the incidents we heard evidence of. It is much more difficult defining what non-violent extremism means in the context of academic school surroundings. I can think of issues around segregation of pupils according to gender, which would be wrong. Can you give us some examples, either from the Birmingham scenario or concerns that you have that might arise in the future, of non-violent extremism that need to be really watched very carefully in schools across the board?

Nicky Morgan: Thank you. Firstly, in the Peter Clarke report, he talked about the particular behaviours. There were irregularities in employment practices—so, the hiring of people who particularly were not qualified.

Mr Raab: I will just stop you there. To be honest with you, that is wrong under any existing secular or non-secular set of criteria.

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Mr Raab: I am trying to just narrow down—because I know the Committee is short on time—examples of non-violent extremism that we really need to be on our guard against in the school environment.

Nicky Morgan: It is particularly things like unequal treatment of girls; segregation, which you have mentioned; being dismissive of other faiths and cultures; anti-western assemblies; and assemblies encouraging anti-Christian chanting. In one of the reports, it became clear that there were worksheets that had been hidden when the Ofsted inspectors visited the schools that talked about what would happen to girls if they did not behave in accordance with a particular ideology—they would be condemned to hell for eternity. I do not think that is the sort of language that we want in our schools; I do not think it is the language that most parents want, including most Muslim parents.

Q320 Mr Raab: Can I just pick you up on that? I can see exactly where you are going with this, but in practice it is very difficult. You mentioned tolerance of other faiths and at the same time banning anti-western chanting. I think we would all agree on that in principle. What about, for example, a debate organised in a school between someone espousing very strong liberal democratic, secular values and someone advocating either Sharia law or Talmudic law? I remember at school a debate between Richard Dawkins and a very senior rabbi. That would seem to me a wonderful thing to have. It may be a sixth-form thing rather than a primary school thing. Where does that sit on the balance between what is acceptable and what is not? You could quite easily see how that would impinge on some of the values you are talking about. It would be anti-western—Sharia law. It would be anti-democratic. Is it wrong or right to encourage those kinds of debates?

Nicky Morgan: Firstly, you are certainly right to talk about handling things in an age-appropriate way. You are right; one of the fundamental British values that we talk about in the Prevent strategy is tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. “Tolerance” is an important word. It is about understanding and accepting that other people will have different views. But what we saw—as I say, what is identified in the Peter Clarke report—and what would cross the line would be where there is deep intolerance or dismissal of other views and faiths and beliefs. That is something we do not tend to see in the majority of schools, regardless of how they are run, but that is one of the behaviours that Peter Clarke and others identified.

Q321 Mr Raab: Let me press you on this. If you were in a debate—and you believe strongly in liberal democracy, as I do—and you were faced with someone who thought there was a place for Sharia law but was not going to violently go about it, and those views may be expressed strongly, would they be regarded as dismissive of each other’s views? Is that really where the law should be and where public policy should be? I understand what you mean if, for example, you are talking about banning anyone from expressing that view, but is being dismissive of another view that is non-violently expressed really supposed to be where we draw the line?

Nicky Morgan: It would depend very much on the view that was being expressed. We have a definition, for example, of Islamist extremism that is used in the extremism task force. It talks about “rejecting liberal values” and also that “their ideology includes the uncompromising belief that people cannot be Muslim and British, and insists that those who do not agree with them are not true Muslims”. You are right to say that it is about degrees. We do very much have free speech in this country, and that is something very much to be jealously guarded, but there is a line to be crossed there.

Q322 Mr Raab: Can I just test this? If a cleric, of whatever faith, argued for theocracy in a debate, would that cross the line for you?

Nicky Morgan: It would depend on whether they were being dismissive, saying: “Mine is the only true view. Nobody else in this room can have another view worth listening to. If you espouse that view, then you are in the wrong.” I do not think that is the way that debates in our schools—or in our society—tend to be conducted. People tend to have strong vocal discussions—we see that in the House of Commons—but we do not dismiss each other’s views.

Q323 Mr Raab: Let’s just test this. If a cleric in a debate very strongly argues for some kind of—let’s say—quasi-democracy or quasi-theocracy, as they have got in Iran, and tries to explain why he thinks that is better than the decadent Western liberal democracy, and they have a debate about it and it is fairly strong but each side is listening to each other’s side, you would not regard that as crossing the line.

Nicky Morgan: Your crucial sentence there was “tries to explain” rather than “has an absolutely fundamental belief”.

Q324 Mr Raab: What is the difference between feeling very passionately that something is right but being prepared to listen to others, as we do in a democracy, and saying, at the end of the day, “I believe liberal democracy is the right way forward”? I would be, I suppose, in your definition dismissive of any attempts to produce theocracy in this country. Would I therefore come on the wrong side of your definition?

Nicky Morgan: The point is about being dismissive but then taking it slightly further and saying, “It is absolutely wrong and I will do all I can to oppose it.” We tend in this country—rightly—to respect other people’s views when there is an argument and to accept that, although we believe our view is right, other people are entitled to hold other beliefs.

Q325 Mr Raab: And you would agree, for example, with the proposals that we have heard announced recently for extremist disruption orders that would say, in the context that we are talking about, that debates such as the one I have mentioned, if they somehow impinged upon the line you have discussed, would be banned.

Nicky Morgan: We have a very clear definition of extremism in the Prevent strategy and we have a definition of Islamist extremism that says Islamist extremists have a “distorted interpretation of Islam”, deem “western intervention in Muslim-majority countries as ‘a war on Islam’, creating a narrative of ‘them’ and ‘us’” and “seek to impose a global Islamic state”. It very much depends on the term.

Q326 Mr Raab: Do you accept that in the context in which we have discussed it—we have only been at it five minutes and I do not want to flog this horse until it is dead—enforcing it in practice is going to be incredibly contentious and raises really legitimate issues

around free speech and particularly academic freedom in, let's say, a sixth-form college or a school?

Nicky Morgan: I do not think any of us are saying that any of this is particularly easy. The behaviours identified in the Peter Clarke report are, as I said, behaviours that no parent would want to see in a school. I also think—it goes back to the question from the Chairman at the start—if we say this is all in the too-difficult box or it is not really happening in our schools, we are letting people down. Education is about opening young minds to all possibilities and preparing, as I say, our young people for life in modern Britain. What this whole situation has shown us is that there are some people in this country who do not want that to happen and will seek to make sure that does not happen.

Q327 Mr Raab: Can I gently suggest to you that, if we have extremist disruption orders banning peaceable clerics who are devout, you may fuel the very thing you are seeking to avoid?

Nicky Morgan: I am sure, Mr Raab, you will take that up with the Home Secretary.

Q328 Mr Raab: I will indeed. Can I just ask a couple of very brief questions? Have you seen any evidence that extremism as defined in the Prevent strategy is entering the school system beyond what we have heard in relation to Birmingham?

Nicky Morgan: We are not aware of anything on the scale of Birmingham—no evidence has been brought to the attention of the Department. There are sometimes individual schools where concerns are raised either with the local authority or with the Department and then those issues have been followed up, but nothing on the scale of the number of schools involved in Birmingham so far.

Q329 Mr Raab: Yet there is a very real and serious concern about this, because we have introduced national measures in our response to the Trojan Horse affair to try to address this. Is it your view that we do not face a parochial local problem in a few isolated instances but a nationwide issue?

Nicky Morgan: It could be a nationwide issue, but, as I say, we have not got evidence of something on the scale of Birmingham. I go back to the answer I have just given you, which is that there is no complacency, and if we dismiss this and try to say that this is a one-off, we will be letting down a generation of children and families across the country.

Q330 Chair: What about Tower Hamlets?

Nicky Morgan: Ofsted have been into Tower Hamlets, particularly in relation to the Marner Primary School. They inspected them in September and they found that there were no matters requiring further measures.

Q331 Pat Glass: In relation to the earlier question that I asked about follow-up, would you be able, or would your Department be able, to let us have details of what has changed since September, so we can be satisfied that the things that Michael Wilshaw has raised and that we were truly shocked about have changed?

Nicky Morgan: I am sure we can do that, yes.

Q332 Pat Glass: Thank you. Sir Michael Wilshaw said in his report in July that he did not see extremism in Birmingham schools, and you said the same in July when you spoke to the House of Commons about the Clarke report, but we have subsequently had Ian Kershaw's report and he did find at least one incident that could be classified as extremism under the Prevent definition. Currently, what is your assessment of extremism in Birmingham schools?

Nicky Morgan: This Committee has taken evidence from both Ian Kershaw and Peter Clarke, as I understand it, so no doubt you will have asked them. In terms of the actual strict definition of extremism, Peter Clarke was right—and I would agree with him—to say there was no evidence of terrorism, radicalisation or violent extremism, but there was compelling evidence, as he put it, of “a determined effort” by people with a shared ideology to gain control of a small number of schools in the city. Extremism is defined as “vocal or active opposition to” any of the fundamental British values that we have already talked about: democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance. There is a spectrum of behaviours and we are heading towards the non-violent extremism end of the spectrum.

Q333 Pat Glass: Given that Michael Wilshaw has said that Ofsted did not find examples of extremism in Birmingham schools, do you think he is right to have raised wider concerns about organisational infiltration and the manipulation of governing bodies?

Nicky Morgan: I do. Clearly, as I say, there is a spectrum of behaviours, and it depends on what time you inspect or reports are conducted as to when you catch the behaviours. Also, what we have seen in the various reports is that sometimes it is quite difficult to capture the behaviours, whether it is in terms of teaching or in terms of behaviours, and it requires quite determined efforts to continue to look to see what is happening, whether it is in schools or in governing bodies or elsewhere.

Q334 Pat Glass: When Sir Michael Wilshaw came to speak to us, he spoke at great length about how, although he did not find extremism, what he was most concerned about was that there was the creation of a culture in which children could be exposed to extremism in other areas.

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Pat Glass: So, that is your Department's view. Is that the kind of thing that you are looking at and asking Ofsted to look at in other schools—not just extremism but the creation of a culture in which children can be radicalised?

Nicky Morgan: Yes, that is right. The behaviours that were identified in the Peter Clarke report were things like segregation, anti-western lessons and the way that some lessons have been conducted about issues. There was a case very recently about parents and others appearing to be unhappy about the teaching of what appeared to be verging on homophobia, which is an unacceptable behaviour to see in our schools. You have mentioned a broad and balanced curriculum, and that is part of it. Our education system is about preparing our young people for life in modern Britain, and it is not about picking and choosing.

Q335 Pat Glass: There are many parents up and down the country who choose single-sex education for their children, and there are very good reasons for that, but has the Department given any thought in the light of this to asking schools that have single-sex pupils what they are going to do about making sure that pupils are allowed to mix together?

Nicky Morgan: No, it is not something that I have thought about. I went to an all-girls school, and you are right that single-sex schools provide excellent education. We should be careful, though; there is a difference between a single-sex education and deliberate segregation in a mixed-sex environment. You will be aware that as well as being Secretary of State for Education I am also Minister for Women, and I am passionate about making sure that girls have their aspirations raised. We have talked about opening young minds in terms of education. That is why deliberate segregation within a mixed-sex environment falls down. I can think of one single-sex school in my own constituency that will offer lessons, particularly in the sixth-form, on a mixed-sex basis.

Q336 Pat Glass: Is that not something that you think the Department should be encouraging?

Nicky Morgan: Mixed-sex education?

Pat Glass: No. I agree with you; single-sex education is very good, particularly for girls, but many schools will bring together lessons with other single-sex schools. Is it not something that the Department should look at encouraging?

Nicky Morgan: It is a very good point; I am very happy to look at it. I know that we are going to be discussing academies and free schools next week, so I do not want to veer on to that territory, but one of the things we have seen with the academies and free schools programme is the amount of collaboration that is going on between those schools and other schools in particular local areas. I am sure that does include joint teaching of certain subjects.

Q337 Chair: Philosophically, there are some problems with that, aren't there? Somehow segregated schools are fine, but apparently if you segregate within a mixed environment, philosophically that is suddenly awful. I am struggling with that. Are we not in a dangerous area? It is a bit like when you talk about the co-ordination and organisation to try to drive certain people out. People do organise and co-ordinate to influence their schools. That is why we have governors and community representatives. If they think there are people

in a school who are not good for their children, they express that and convey that, and doubtless if they really care a great deal they do that in a fairly sustained and maybe concerted manner. It is quite hard with quite a number of these issues to work out how in one circumstance it would appear to be legitimate and suddenly in a post-Trojan Horse Birmingham everything looks a little suspicious. Then there is the real danger that Muslim communities feel as if they are being treated with very different standards from communities elsewhere. How do we make sure that we do not do that? Dominic's questions, I understand, are difficult to answer; there are some real issues there.

Nicky Morgan: I do not think anyone ever said that education was easy. You are right. Most parents, if they are involved in concerted action, in terms of involvement in a PTA or on a governing body, are doing it for very positive reasons and want the best, and they are wanting, as I say, to follow our plan for education in terms of preparing their young people for life in modern Britain and opening minds and exposing children to lots of different views and encouraging British values without even thinking of them, perhaps, as British values. Things like mutual respect and tolerance are things that I think we all take as something we want to see in our schools.

In terms of single-sex education and segregation, it is about where you have a mixed-sex environment and then there is a deliberate segregation—not because “we are going to allow people to choose whether they want to go and do design and technology this afternoon or to go and do a geography field trip” but because “you are a girl, and therefore you are going to go and sit in this classroom, and you are a boy”.

Q338 Chair: But if single-sex education can be good, particularly for girls, in a single-sex school—and we are supposed to be fairly permissive about freedoms, curriculum design and organisation in schools to innovate and do what is best for their pupils—it is perfectly conceivable that someone would segregate because they think girls in this particular design and technology class seem to be being overly dominated by the boys and they are not coming on; “We think it will be better for them”. I am just trying to work out whether there could be a practice like that around the country that suddenly we are going to stamp on when it has gone on for ages and everybody is entirely happy with it, and the last thing it was doing was being prejudiced against the girls in the class; it was actually designed to boost and help them.

Mr Ward: Chair, can I chip in and ask whether that should be extended, say, to homosexuals, who could be then relieved from bullying and taunting and be in a safe environment? Should that be allowable as well?

Nicky Morgan: I understand why you are asking this question, Chair. I am not entirely sure I understand why Mr Ward is asking the question. But the answer is no. People are much better being taught together. Parents will choose. They will choose a single-sex school for their child or they will choose a mixed-sex school for their child. If they choose a mixed-sex school for their child, I think they mainly expect them to be taught in a mixed-sex environment, and it is up to the children choosing options.

You are right, though, Mr Chairman, to talk about the impact that this has had on the wider Muslim communities. I go back to my own constituency experiences, where I work closely with my Muslim community. I reassure them, and I know that the MPs in Birmingham also have sought to reassure them, of the fact that this is in no way against

the Muslim communities. This is an issue where the majority of Muslim parents want their children to get a very good education in modern Britain and there were a concerted set of behaviours that all came together, as Peter Clarke identified, in relation to a shared ideology. This is not about saying, “Well, girls might do well in this lesson or that lesson”; this is about saying that girls are to be set aside, to be educated differently and to be taught different things. That is unacceptable, and there is no place for any kind of extremist views like that in our education system in England.

Q339 Pat Glass: This is linked very closely to what Dominic was saying earlier. I am a very strong supporter of Catholic education, but is there not a justification now for the Department for Education looking more closely at how schools—whether they are single-sex schools or Catholic schools or Church of England schools or Muslim schools—integrate better with one another? I am not suggesting we change the current system, but should there not be a much more formalised look at how schools integrate with one another?

Nicky Morgan: I will point you to my earlier answer. What we are seeing as a result of the academies and free schools programme is massive collaboration between schools in local areas. I am a huge defender and supporter of faith schools.

Q340 Pat Glass: Rather than leaving that to individual schools, should the Department not be doing something more formalised?

Nicky Morgan: We are going to come on to discuss autonomy next week, but I am a firm believer in school autonomy. I am not going to start telling schools from Whitehall what they should and should not be doing, other than in cases like this, where we have seen there needs to be some emphasis on a nationwide basis on the fundamental British values.

Q341 Pat Glass: So we will just wait until it all goes wrong.

Nicky Morgan: No. We are tackling both this issue and others. We have an excellent education system in this country. I will emphasise the point that I made in my statement to the House in July: this was a small number of parents and governors at a small number of schools who wanted to promote a particular ideology. Overall, we have more “good” and “outstanding” schools in this country after four and a half years.

Q342 Pat Glass: But these were “outstanding” schools.

Nicky Morgan: They were “outstanding” schools, but, as Michael Wilshaw said in evidence to the Committee, they slid very quickly.

Q343 Mr Ward: This is fascinating stuff, because what we seem to be saying is that we believe that schools should have autonomy—should have greater freedoms—providing they do what we want them to do.

Nicky Morgan: No.

Mr Ward: But we are stipulating what, within the schools, we expect them to do.

Nicky Morgan: There is a national curriculum. The Committee and commentators cannot have it both ways. We cannot have on the one hand, “The Government is not taking any action as a result of serious issues identified in the Clarke and the Kershaw reports and elsewhere,” and on the other hand, “The Government should not be telling schools what to do.” There is an issue here. We have already previously under the Prevent strategy wanted schools to talk about fundamental British values; we have now required them to promote those. We are taking specific action in relation to Birmingham, and we have done other things. Governors are very important in schools—sometimes underrated—and my colleague Lord Nash has done a lot of work in terms of making sure that our governors have the skills to run and to look after schools in the 21st century.

Q344 Mr Ward: All I am referring to is what may be regarded as confusing to some communities who are being told that schools should be given more freedom, but then what they should be doing in those schools—the British values or whatever it may be—being quite strictly defined.

Nicky Morgan: I do not think it is strictly defined, but there are, as I say, these basic values that we do expect schools and other public institutions very much to follow. The Chairman talked about every day of a child’s education that is lost being a day that child is losing out and is being potentially disadvantaged. I think people would think it very strange if we did not take action as a result of the serious issues that were identified in these reports.

Q345 Mr Ward: Do you not think really this has been a real mess for a long, long period of time, and possibly can be described in this way: that not enough people did what they should have done at the time they should have done it, which caused the problem, and then seemingly too many people are now trying to put that right?

Nicky Morgan: I certainly would agree with you that there were issues that went back a long time. As we saw in the reports and what has been identified, there was an issue in relation to the way that the City Council dealt with issues when they were raised. The Trojan Horse letter was received first by the Department for Education, under my predecessor, in December 2013, and then action has been taken. Now it is very clear the Department is very involved; Ofsted, who are the accountability regime for all schools in this country; and then the schools themselves. I do not think that is too many; that is probably the right number.

Q346 Mr Ward: Well, you have got the DfE, you have got the EFA, you have got the council itself, you have Ian Kershaw on behalf of the council and you have had Peter Clarke. There are a lot of cooks making this broth, are there not?

Nicky Morgan: Well, Peter Clarke and Ian Kershaw have done their reports and they have now stood back, and they have made recommendations, which it is incumbent on the Department for Education, the City Council, the schools themselves and others to implement.

Q347 Mr Ward: You referred there to the council—who seem somewhat resentful, I feel, about the comments made by the Chief Inspector—and its shortcomings possibly over a period of time. The DfE itself was aware of issues in the school going back some 10 years or so. Is the DfE responsible in any way for allowing this thing to develop over such a long period of time?

Nicky Morgan: As you will be aware, the Permanent Secretary in the Department for Education has conducted a review. It is about 20 years' worth of paper that he and officials have now looked through, and I am waiting for the report to be published in relation to that.

Q348 Mr Ward: We have come back to the question I should have asked at the beginning, which is that very thing. What form did that investigation take and where is that report?

Nicky Morgan: The review is very nearly there. I have discussed the progress with the Department Permanent Secretary. As I say, he and officials have trawled 20 years' worth of papers in the Department, looking at information that might or might not have been had. He is very nearly there in terms of finalising the report. There are a number of former Ministers who just need to see what is going to be said and then it will be published, and I will, as I said in my statement in July, make that available to the House.

Q349 Chair: Are we days away? Weeks away?

Nicky Morgan: I would say days rather than weeks.

Chair: Super. Thank you.

Q350 Mr Ward: What work was undertaken by the DfE and EFA between December 2013 and March 2014?

Nicky Morgan: I have got a timeline here, because I was not in the Department at the time.

Mr Ward: In March it became public knowledge but in December, we are now informed, they were made aware of that.

Nicky Morgan: The key dates are: on 13 December, officials from the Home Office and the Department for Education discussed the letter with West Midlands Police and then my predecessor was briefed the following day. At the end of January, the National Association of Head Teachers and also the British Humanist Association contacted DfE to share the allegations that they had received. Then on 7 February a letter was received from the leader of Birmingham City Council about what actions they had taken so far. That was then shared on 10 February—so, three days later—with Ofsted, who decided there were sufficient grounds to merit an inspection. On 12 February there was a meeting between my predecessor and Sir Albert Bore, plus officials and Lord Nash. Then, at the beginning of March, Ofsted conducted their no-notice section 8 inspection at Park

View Academy. There was action, and also the letter was brought to attention and steps were taken.

Q351 Chair: What was the DfE doing? It knew in December; there were action points as various people triggered things. Did the DfE respond appropriately when it was aware of it in December? Did it move with sufficient dispatch on something that turned out to be so serious?

Nicky Morgan: Clearly, I was not in the Department, so I am answering now on the basis of previous action.

Chair: It puts you in a particularly excellent position to judge.

Nicky Morgan: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Yes, when a serious letter like that is received, it is right to give the City Council, in this case, time to respond and also, in terms of discussing it with Ofsted, for Ofsted to decide that they needed to go and do the inspections. So, yes, I think there was appropriate speed. This was taken up immediately; it was not put to one side.

Q352 Chair: Give us the exact dates in December and what was done immediately.

Nicky Morgan: Between 9 December and 12 December, the chief executive copied the Trojan Horse letter to the West Midlands Police. That was then discussed by Department for Education officials on 13 December. The Secretary of State was then briefed the following day. Then BCC were asked for their account of what had happened, and that was received on 7 February.

Q353 Pat Glass: Secretary of State, I have seen a copy of a letter that went from the Department to Birmingham City Council. Birmingham City Council were raising concerns about one or two of these schools in 2010 and the Department was saying, “These are academies; back off.” I am happy to give you a copy of that letter. The Department knew about these things—maybe not in this kind of detail—in 2010. I know you were not there, but the Department has really sat on its hands a long time over this.

Nicky Morgan: I would say that the Permanent Secretary is conducting a review as to previous information received by the Department. I would just point out those schools converted to be academies in 2012; at that point, in 2010, they were under local authority control.

Pat Glass: I will go back to the letter. I will let you see it.

Nicky Morgan: Thank you.

Q354 Chair: Pat has taken me off from December last year all the way back to 2010. I just want to go back to those dates. There was a briefing to the police—it was sufficiently serious. The DfE must have been, by implication of what you have said, notified at the same time. There was a briefing of the Secretary of State. Did you say that was on 14 December?

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Chair: Then it was not until February that—

Nicky Morgan: Then BCC were asked to provide a response to the allegations in the letter, and that response was received on 7 February.

Q355 Chair: If I had got notification of something like that and I was aware the police had it, and it was taken to the Secretary of State the following day—it was sufficiently serious—I do not think I would be sitting around letting the council come back to me in February; I would be chasing them pretty hard. I would have thought I would be saying to them, “This is so serious. I know you maybe will not be able to give me everything, but I would like within seven days your response so that I can tell whether this is a false alarm or whether there is something to go on here.” You told us just now you felt that the Department moved with sufficient dispatch on what is a very serious issue. It does not look like it.

Nicky Morgan: It takes time. I was not there at the time in terms of the chasing that was done of Birmingham City Council, but I would suspect from the officials who I know, who are deeply responsible, that they would have been chasing and it would take time to get that information. As I say, we needed to get that information in order then to judge the need for Ofsted inspection, which then happened with dispatch.

Q356 Caroline Nokes: Last month there was an article in *The Sunday Times* from one of your predecessor’s former special advisers that described the attitude of Whitehall towards tackling extremism in schools as one of “appeasement and inaction”. Is that a description you recognise?

Nicky Morgan: I am not going to comment on a leaked email from a former special adviser, but my impression since taking up this role in July is that the Department and Whitehall take the issue of tackling extremism extremely seriously, as shown by the actions of the Prime Minister’s extremism task force and the actions that we have discussed so far.

Q357 Chair: It is alright not to comment on leaked emails, but as this was not a leaked email but a published article, perhaps you can comment.

Nicky Morgan: It was a published article based on a leaked email.

Chair: It was a published article by a former adviser.

Nicky Morgan: I have given a response based on my impression since I took up this role in July.

Q358 Caroline Nokes: Do you have any plans to appoint Peter Clarke or another commissioner to look at extremism in education more widely?

Nicky Morgan: Not at the moment, but we keep everything under review and any allegations that are received—any whistleblowing at all—will be followed up.

Q359 Caroline Nokes: The appointment of Sir Mike Tomlinson took a very long time. Why was it so delayed?

Nicky Morgan: We wanted to get the right person in, and it took time. As you will be aware, the statement I gave to Parliament was on the last day before recess, and so it took time to find the right person over the course of the summer and to negotiate with them and their release from other activities and that sort of thing. We have got an excellent Education Commissioner in Mike Tomlinson. We could not have a better person. He has 50 years of experience in the education sector.

Q360 Caroline Nokes: Whilst we can have confidence in him and his experience, what milestones have you set him?

Nicky Morgan: He is going to report to me on a monthly basis. I spoke to him last night and he briefed me on discussions so far and the work that he is doing, including a big meeting with head teachers next week and also looking at governors, the role of the City Council and the capability of the City Council education department, which is what he is there for. I am expecting his first report at the beginning of November, and then he will report on a monthly basis. His appointment is for a 12-month term, but that could be extended depending on where we get to.

Q361 Caroline Nokes: You said a 12-month term. How long do you plan to give Birmingham City Council before intervening further if they do not make progress?

Nicky Morgan: We would have to see. I want to see what his first report is. It goes back to having the plan, which they are drawing up. They are not there yet in terms of having a plan that is going to do the turnaround that we want to see and implement all of the actions, but I am monitoring this very closely and I am very conscious that at the end of the day it is children's education at the heart of all of this.

Q362 Chair: Why has it taken so long—it is months—to do a plan for a relatively small number of schools with some problems?

Nicky Morgan: It is a wider plan than that. It is about building resilience in the system. It goes back to the point about culture. You can put all you like on a plan. I have done many plans myself when I was working as a lawyer. Getting the plan to be implemented and getting people to buy into it in the Department and having the right capability and capacity to deliver that plan is what is going to be most important.

Q363 Chair: You think we should not read in worries about incompetence or lack of capacity behind the delay; we should see it as filling in all the gaps in the most thorough and proper fashion.

Nicky Morgan: I want, and I think Mike Tomlinson wants, from the conversation I had with him last night, there to be a proper, comprehensive plan. There is an issue around capacity and capability. That is exactly why—partly—we have seen the issues, but also

why Mike Tomlinson is there doing what he is doing, and we are going to need to get in the right people in all sorts of different ways. That is what he is working on. That is what he and I discussed, and he advised me last night.

Q364 Pat Glass: Minister, there seems to be a complete lack of urgency about all of this. Part of my role before I was a Member of Parliament was as that person who went into a local authority or a school that was failing, and I was expected to have a plan in place very quickly. Some places I went were so dangerous that I had a plan to say, “This will happen by the end of today.” There just does not seem to be that kind of urgency around this at all.

Nicky Morgan: There are different plans we are talking about here. The plan that I have just been talking about is the overall plan for Birmingham City Council, which is a much bigger thing.

Q365 Pat Glass: But it should not take months and months. A plan is pretty easy to put in place; it is the implementation that takes a long time.

Nicky Morgan: I would agree with that, but it does take a while, particularly if you are lacking the capacity and the capability to put in that plan. Mike Tomlinson was appointed on 24 September and is working extremely effectively with Birmingham City Council and, as I have said, in relation to the schools, and I have undertaken to update the Committee on the progress made since the Ofsted inspection reports, which were at the beginning of the term.

Q366 Bill Esterson: How long does it take to deal with issues like some of the things in the letter from Ofsted? Staff segregating themselves into groups, just as one example we have discussed already, seems to me to be the sort of example that could be dealt with within a day.

Nicky Morgan: It depends, Bill, does it not? I could pass a regulation or we could have a plan that says “staff will not segregate”. Changing cultures and changing minds and everything else takes a bit longer.

Q367 Bill Esterson: Some people might say you are remarkably calm about the whole situation considering the scale of what you have inherited.

Nicky Morgan: I am not sure that overreacting benefits anybody. The point is that I want to get to the bottom of the problems. I am conscious that children’s education matters; every day is a day lost. The majority of parents—whether in Birmingham or anywhere else—want to see a good education for their children, and that is what I am in the business of working with the profession to deliver.

Q368 Bill Esterson: Moving on to Ofsted inspections, you already commented that Ofsted grades change. This is not just an issue about the schools that we are talking about as part of this inquiry. We have seen Ofsted grades change quite significantly in quite a short

space of time. Some professionals have commented that it is beyond belief that this should happen. Has the time come—and is it sustainable—to have much longer, deeper Ofsted inquiries? Is that desirable? Is that what is needed? In the current environment, where these things change sometimes quite quickly, can parents rely on what Ofsted is saying?

Nicky Morgan: Ofsted is an independent body. It is there to hold schools accountable. It is one of the ways that we check what is going on in schools. You had Sir Michael Wilshaw in front of you to give evidence on that and other points. But, yes, I think parents can and should have confidence in Ofsted inspections. The point is—perhaps as members of the Committee and others will know—that things can change rapidly in a school, particularly in relation to school leadership. They can go extremely well and they can go extremely wrong very quickly depending on leadership and what is going on in schools. Ofsted do a good job to catch that.

Q369 Bill Esterson: Michael Gove said that there were critical questions for Ofsted, and he made the point that the Chief Inspector is going to consider lessons learned. You have said it is an independent organisation, which it is. What lessons would you like them to learn?

Nicky Morgan: From this particular situation?

Bill Esterson: From this situation, yes, and I would put to you the wider point about the changing grades.

Nicky Morgan: One of the lessons that has been learned—I think rightly—is the training of inspectors in the Prevent strategy, and the fact that it is always incumbent on them to look not just at everything that is immediately shown but to look behind it and to ask questions. One of the reports—I think Peter Clarke’s report—reported things like the call to prayer being turned off when the inspectors visited. That is a very difficult thing to spot, but it is about working with intelligence and things like training being received to ask further questions and not always perhaps to accept the information as presented. That is incumbent on all of us.

Q370 Bill Esterson: Is there something—or a range of things—that Ofsted could change so they can identify sudden changes in what happens within schools?

Nicky Morgan: Ofsted are able to go in at short notice. Ofsted have a whistleblowing line—as do the DfE and other organisations such as local authorities—so if they receive information, that intelligence will be shared. One of the things that my predecessor did was set up the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division in the Department for Education. The clue is in its title: “Due Diligence”—going in, listening to what is going on in the education sector and liaising. Ofsted have that power to go in at short notice or no notice to conduct inspections and to really probe on the issues they find.

Q371 Chair: Will they be doing that in every inspection of every school everywhere?

Nicky Morgan: What is that, sorry?

Chair: Checking up that the Prevent strategy is being implemented and that staff have been trained.

Nicky Morgan: All the inspectors have been trained on Prevent. There are certain key Prevent areas in the country where these things may be more relevant.

Q372 Chair: So it will be proportionate.

Nicky Morgan: Yes. Well, they are looking at the broad and balanced curriculum.

Chair: There is the issue of being fair and equitable in the treatment of schools in Islamic areas, and you have also got, on the other hand, not spending time with small inspection teams on limited time checking for something that is likely in certain areas to be non-existent as an issue. How do we get that right so Muslims do not feel picked upon, nor do other people in other communities, and yet we have got something that is proportionate, balanced and reasonable?

Nicky Morgan: You have had Sir Michael Wilshaw in front of the Committee and no doubt will again, but it is about training of inspectors, having the best possible inspectors and making sure that inspectors have the confidence of the schools that they are inspecting. There is a clear framework that includes looking at the broad and balanced curriculum and looking at the leadership in schools. Inspectors are best placed—again, using intelligence and other information that may come to them—to inspect a school in the most appropriate way and to ask the right questions.

Q373 Bill Esterson: Sir Michael said to us that all inspectors should be in-house. Do you agree with him?

Nicky Morgan: The administration is moving in-house. It is something that certainly has been raised in my conversations with schools and unions. The important thing is making sure that there is a consistent quality of inspectors and inspections. Because it is an independent body, I would leave Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to make the decision about the best way to deliver that.

Bill Esterson: You are happy if he goes down that route.

Nicky Morgan: If he says that that is the right way to be doing things. As I say, what I want to see is schools having confidence in the quality and consistency of inspectors and inspections.

Q374 Chair: Could this be the first of many nationalisations within the DfE?

Nicky Morgan: As I say, this is an independent body. I want to see the best. It is for Sir Michael and the Ofsted board to advise on the best way to ensure this, but at the end of the day Ofsted brings lots of pressures on the education system, as I have heard from my many visits around the country to schools and teachers since my appointment. I want to see consistency and quality—and so, I think, does Her Majesty's Chief Inspector—in the way inspections are carried out.

Q375 Pat Glass: Secretary of State, Sir Michael also told us that he would rather have inspectors who were of high quality than have more time in schools, and I agree with him. Will you be supporting him with resources in that?

Nicky Morgan: We discuss the budget on an annual basis with Ofsted, and, yes, we will have discussions about resources. I am happy to be advised by him. He is an independent body. I think we all know where we want to get to; he has the inspection handbook. As I say, the accountability regime is very important in schools, but it is also important that schools do not feel overwhelmed by the accountability regime.

Chair: He is an independent body accountable to Parliament.

Nicky Morgan: Absolutely.

Q376 Mr Raab: In the wake of the Trojan Horse episode, Birmingham council had some concerns in particular about Her Majesty's Inspectorate's inspections of the schools there. The concerns were about the speed at which the inspections were conducted, the calibre, and also about the personal involvement of Sir Michael himself. I just wondered, given the balance that you just described, whether you think there are lessons from that series of inspections or whether you think this is always what you get when there is a difficult situation that is inspected. Do you think there are concrete lessons from that series of inspections?

Nicky Morgan: It goes back to the first point that the Chairman asked about. There are lessons to be learned. I do not like that phrase, because it trips off tongues too easily—what does it really mean? But there are points always to take on board as a result of this kind of situation.

Q377 Mr Raab: What about from Birmingham? Can you give any examples of lessons that ought to be learned from the Birmingham inspections?

Nicky Morgan: I have already mentioned inspecting in terms of training inspectors in relation to the Prevent strategy. One of the things that was talked about as a result of this situation was the need for no-notice inspections. As it turned out—and we have seen in the Ofsted consultation that was published last week—Ofsted already have the power to do no-notice inspections, and so that is something they are able just to get on with. You are right to say that for those who are inspected and who get a disappointing grade or a conclusion that they do not like, there is always going to be a certain amount of push-back, but, as I say, the training of inspectors and the realisation that this is a difficult situation are things that we have taken away from this.

Q378 Mr Raab: You say there has always been the power for no-notice inspections. It has not been implemented until recently, in light of this. This was something where there appeared to be a long-running institutional tussle between the Department and the Inspectorate. We have got evidence of Sir Michael expressing his frustration that they were

not moving to it. That is something that you favour as a matter of policy, subject to it being decided by him at an operational level.

Nicky Morgan: As we have seen in this situation and others, there will be times when the situation is so serious that a no-notice inspection is required. As I say, separately to their latest consultation, Ofsted have broadened the criteria used to judge whether an unannounced inspection is required for particular schools or colleges. They are also undertaking a review of the circumstances in which no-notice inspections should take place. For that reason, the consultation did not cover no-notice because they felt they already had the powers and they had broadened the criteria to enable them to do it. I think that is right.

Q379 Mr Raab: So, your basic headline view is that, subject to being handled in an operationally sensitive way, this is an important new initiative in terms of practice.

Nicky Morgan: We heard the evidence earlier on and the personal experience that there are times when a situation needs to be dealt with rapidly and that no-notice will be appropriate. You are right to say that operationally as well, the inspections, in terms of resourcing and getting the right inspectors into the schools, are a matter for Ofsted, as an independent body, to take, but, as I say, I am very pleased that in the latest consultation they have established the fact that they do already have the powers and just needed to broaden the criteria.

Q380 Mr Raab: Yes. There is one other aspect of the post-Birmingham consideration. One of the complaints again made by Birmingham council was about whether it is fair that the Department have access to material from Ofsted reports that is not made available to those closely involved within the schools—and I think within the local authorities as well. Are there grounds—I can see where there might be if they relate to security—where you think, “No, we do need to redact or selectively apply what we let those in the schools or the local authorities see”?

Nicky Morgan: Probably there are going to be times when it is appropriate. There may be particular information, particularly in relation to individuals, and it is important that the inspectors feel they are able to report without fear or favour and that they are able to bring matters to the attention of the Department. Sometimes I will get a letter that is not shared publicly because there is an issue of importance that the Chief Inspector wants to raise directly with me.

Q381 Mr Raab: So, you would not be holding from their view something that was a serious issue or a policy aspect; it would be more about the way it would play out with personal sensitivities on the ground. That is the point.

Nicky Morgan: Potentially. It is difficult to legislate for all circumstances. The important point, as I say, is that inspectors are able to report without fear or favour and that they are able to bring all the points to my attention and the Department’s attention, particularly in relation to schools that are outside local authority control. It may be that there are times when a report is published initially with redactions or things withheld that is then later published in full once issues have been worked through.

Q382 Siobhain McDonagh: How closely does the Education Funding Agency work with Ofsted? Should they conduct joint investigations in cases of concern such as found in Birmingham?

Nicky Morgan: They do work closely. They are different organisations. Ofsted is independent and the Education Funding Agency is an arm of the Department. I am not sure—in terms of Birmingham, it was important that Ofsted went in quickly and did their inspections, and then the EFA, like the DfE and others, is able to follow up after that. It is not something that, as I say, the Chief Inspector has raised directly with me since my appointment.

Q383 Siobhain McDonagh: What discussions have you had with the Chief Executive of the EFA about improving the way the agency works in relation to auditing governance and monitoring funding agreements in academies and free schools?

Nicky Morgan: I have not had any direct conversations since my appointment on that basis, but officials have. The funding agreement does evolve, and has evolved since the schools in these cases became academies, in relation to the ability to withdraw funding—to terminate the funding agreements—and also in relation to the promotion of the fundamental British values. I now have particular powers in relation to barring unsuitable people from running schools.

Q384 Siobhain McDonagh: Given that the EFA reports covered the Park View Educational Trust as a whole, why did Lord Nash have to write three separate letters to the chair of that trust—one for each of the schools involved? Where problems occur across a trust, why are they dealt with as if the schools are completely separate?

Nicky Morgan: Because schools are, and they are their own autonomous bodies. There may be shared governance. I think Lord Nash has given evidence to the Committee as well. It is a question I would need to raise directly with him.

Q385 Chair: The schools are not autonomous bodies, are they? They are not remotely autonomous.

Nicky Morgan: An individual school operates, and there may be different issues in each school.

Chair: But the individual schools in this case are absolutely not autonomous. It is pretty fundamental. They are not autonomous. They are absolutely the creature of the trust and they must do exactly what the trust says.

Nicky Morgan: There will be slightly different issues, potentially, in each of the schools, and Lord Nash dealt with the trustees as a whole when he was speaking to them in meetings in July.

Q386 Siobhain McDonagh: Except he contacted each school separately.

Nicky Morgan: He might have done that as well as speaking to the trustees as a whole.

Chair: He sent three separate letters to the same person.

Nicky Morgan: Because they have three different funding agreements. The point is you would need to terminate the different funding agreements, or deal with the issues in the funding agreements, in a separate way.

Q387 Pat Glass: Can I ask you about the glib phrase “lessons have been learned”? I want to know how far those lessons are going to go. There is a view that has been expressed from a pretty wide and very different constituency that what happened in Birmingham is partly as a result of the speed and process of academisation and also cuts to local authority services. We have heard evidence as a Committee that Birmingham City Council’s school improvement team between February 2011 and February 2014 went from 158 to 12 and their governor support team went from 16 to eight. A wide body of people—Tim Brickhouse; head teachers in Birmingham; even Peter Clarke in his report—is asking you and your Department to look at the whole process and speed of academisation. Are those lessons going to be learned by the Department as well?

Nicky Morgan: It takes on average about 13 months for a school to convert to an academy. As a result of the Due Diligence Division that my predecessor set up there is enhanced due diligence now, particularly where we are aware of any individuals in relation to applying to run a school, and the funding agreements are very carefully negotiated. As I say, the terms of those funding agreements have changed. I would strongly push back on the suggestion that any of this situation in Birmingham is caused by either academisation or changes in local government finance. I simply do not think that is the case. The problems in Birmingham are the result of a small group of individuals.

Q388 Pat Glass: One of the head teachers who was pushed out said that “academies make it easy for governing bodies, a chair of governors, or a sponsor with an agenda... There is simply no one stopping them.” Is the Department going to look at that and take that seriously?

Nicky Morgan: We have looked at it. We take it very seriously. As I mentioned before, Lord Nash has already been looking at how we can improve governing bodies and make sure that they have the right skills. The Department follows up on any intelligence or evidence that is submitted to us. The important point is that when the problems started these schools were not academies; they were within local authority control. Forgive me; it does not take anything relating to local government finance for a head teacher to send a letter or to call up their contact at the City Council and say: “There is a problem in my school. I am being bullied.” That is not about finance; that is about whether the City Council takes action or not.

Q389 Pat Glass: No, the point I was making was that the school improvement team, who are the eyes and ears who are in schools every day—or used to be—went from 158 to 12. Clearly, if that is happening, then those eyes and ears are not in schools anymore.

Nicky Morgan: The point about the school improvement team in this case is that issues had been raised—

Pat Glass: However unsatisfactory or imperfect it was, to go from 158 to 12—

Nicky Morgan: Yes, and there are issues, and I am sure something that Mike Tomlinson will be working with Birmingham City Council education department to look at is the capacity and capability of their school improvement team.

Q390 Pat Glass: Going back to the issue of learning lessons, are there lessons for other local authorities, for the Department, for the Government and so on out of this, or do you see this as a rogue local authority in Birmingham?

Nicky Morgan: Of course there are issues that need to be taken on board. One of the biggest issues is about acting on intelligence when it is raised. When evidence is received, whether it is queried or not, the point is that it needs to be taken seriously and followed up. We have seen that in Bradford; where issues have been raised, the local authority have been very proactive and where necessary they have put in place an interim executive board in a school.

Q391 Pat Glass: Given that many local authorities feel that they have no role at all in academies, are you going to have a look at that again?

Nicky Morgan: It would be wrong for local authorities to feel that, because they do, not only in terms of admissions but also in terms of working with academies. Local authorities, I am aware, are very much following all of this and what is happening in Birmingham and looking at the points that they need to take on board.

Q392 Pat Glass: Local authorities have given evidence to this Committee saying that they have been told by the Department: “Back off; you have no control. You have no role at all in academies.” Clearly, local authorities like Bradford have simply gone in anyway or done whatever they need to do. Are you going to look at that again, or look at the advice that your officials are giving to local authorities?

Nicky Morgan: I am happy to look at the advice. I would say local authorities certainly do have a role, but there is a different relationship with local authorities if you are an academy school as opposed to a voluntary-aided or a state-maintained school. But local authorities do have a role and they certainly have a role—we all have a role—to follow up where any information like this is received.

Q393 Pat Glass: Would you consider your Department giving proper guidance to local authorities, codifying: “This is your role in relation to academies”?

Nicky Morgan: I think I made it quite clear earlier on that I am not a person who likes issuing lots of pieces of paper and lots of tick-boxes and all the rest of it, but I am very happy to look at the advice that is being given on the relationship.

Pat Glass: Right. It is unclear at the moment.

Q394 Bill Esterson: I think you just said that local authorities are responsible for admissions in academies.

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Pat Glass: That is not right.

Nicky Morgan: They have a role in the admissions process.

Bill Esterson: They are not responsible for them, because each academy has its own admissions authority.

Nicky Morgan: But they have a role, do they not, in administering, because parents apply through the local authority?

Pat Glass: No they do not. Not to all academies.

Bill Esterson: No. You should check that, Secretary of State.

Nicky Morgan: I am talking about my local experience.

Pat Glass: That just clarifies the lack of clarity in the system.

Bill Esterson: Yes. In lots of places that is not the case.

Nicky Morgan: I know places where it is.

Bill Esterson: Well, I think it would be worth you looking at it, as Pat has just said.

Q395 Pat Glass: Can I ask you about the regional school commissioners? When two of them came to the Committee, they said that they saw their role as being where parents could go if they had complaints. I have to say I was amazed at that, because I just thought, “If that is the case, they will do absolutely nothing else”. Is this the best way of having whistleblowing in the system?

Nicky Morgan: It is one of the ways. We go back to local authorities, which have a role, particularly in relation to safeguarding. Regional schools commissioners will have a role. Ofsted has a role; it has a whistleblowing line. The Department has a role. There are many different ways that people can raise concerns.

Q396 Pat Glass: For parents particularly—parents come to me quite a lot, and I have got academies in my constituency, as we all have—if they have a problem with an academy, they go first of all to the local authority, who say, “It is not my role any longer; you must go

to the academy.” If they do not get anywhere then, where do they go? Parents are confused about this.

Nicky Morgan: I am sure as a Member of Parliament you would raise it, like I would, as you say, with the local authority, with the regional schools commissioner, with the Department or with the academy direct.

Pat Glass: Not every parent comes to a Member of Parliament.

Nicky Morgan: No.

Pat Glass: What about the parent who does not? Where do they go?

Nicky Morgan: They go to the academy. First, I suppose, they would go to the academy, and to the head teacher or the governing body. Then they could also approach the regional schools commissioner or they could approach the Department for Education. I can tell you from my email inbox that lots of people do.

Q397 Pat Glass: Right. Do you have people within your Department whose job is to deal with parents’ complaints in academies?

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Q398 Pat Glass: How many?

Nicky Morgan: I could not tell you, but there are officials who will look into this and work with academies and regional schools commissioners up and down the country.

Q399 Pat Glass: Do you think you could let us know how many complaints you get and how many people you have dealing with it?

Nicky Morgan: I get a number of emails for all sorts of different reasons. It is not all complaints; it is very good stuff as well, but we have officials in the Department who are dealing up and down the country with academies.

Q400 Pat Glass: Do you think there are sufficient people dealing with parental complaints? That is what I am asking.

Nicky Morgan: I suppose you would have look at all the complaints and the satisfaction rating for complaints, but I know I have dedicated teams of officials in the Department and across the country, and the regional schools commissioners, who are doing their best.

Pat Glass: Could you let us know how many? I do not mean now, but let us know how many.

Chair: Could you write to us about it? It is a bit of an issue. We are getting more and more and more academies. We had some of the regional schools commissioners here saying they felt, “Actually, we could have a role in dealing with complaints,” at which point Pat,

with years of experience, thought, “You must be mad. You have already got vast regions and huge levels of responsibility and you are now going to provide a service to deal with complaints from parents in academies. That is a massive thing.” You have just repeated it and suggested that it is appropriate.

Nicky Morgan: It is one of them.

Chair: I know you said one, but people outside are going to wonder, “Well, what is the protocol? What is the order? What is the hierarchy?” They come to me as a Member of Parliament and I say, “Well, until you have exhausted the complaints procedure at that level, you should not come to me, so exhaust it then come to me, and if we do not get anywhere we can go to the Ombudsman,” and for each area there is a very specific pathway to follow. It seems to me you could go here; you could go there. We need to send a clear message to parents, increasing numbers of whom have children at academies, telling them, “If you are not happy, exhaust the academy and then go”—where? I am not clear whether it is DfE. You are saying they could go to the DfE; they could go to the regional schools commissioner. We have no idea as to the adequacy of the regional schools commissioners’ ability to respond to that, or if they are as slow as the DfE to respond to letters; I got a letter yesterday from your Minister for Schools replying to a letter I sent as the Chairman of this Education Committee, which probably gives me privilege of some sort, in July. Maybe not, but if the Department cannot manage to get a response to the Chairman of the Education Select Committee in a little under three months, then what hope is there for the poor parent who feels fobbed off and ignored by a school that may or may not have governors who have got some peculiar agenda that needs to be challenged? I do not think you need to answer right now, but could you come back to us with an answer as to what that should look like and how that can be communicated to parents? We need to be sure that it is clear and that there is capacity.

Nicky Morgan: We are discussing academies and free schools next week, so perhaps it will come up then.

Chair: Super. Thanks.

Q401 Mr Ward: There seems to be a general consensus now that the rapid expansion of the number of academies and free schools over the last few years was at the expense of a robust and rigorous and duly diligent process. Is that sorted now?

Nicky Morgan: I do not accept that, but, as I have already outlined in earlier evidence, there have been—

Mr Ward: There have been some abysmal failures.

Nicky Morgan: And there have been some fantastic successes. We now have more children doing better in academies and free schools, with higher results and excellent GCSE results. When I go and visit schools around the country—some academies, some state-maintained—there are some fantastic examples of leadership and professionalism amongst teachers.

Mr Ward: So you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Nicky Morgan: In any system, whether you are looking at the House of Commons or education or anywhere else, there are always going to be people who do not quite measure up to the standards that are expected of them, and they will be dealt with. That is what I am saying about the education sector. If there is an issue in relation to an individual on a governing body or somebody seeking to set up a school, there are clear due diligence procedures, particularly enhanced by, as I say, the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division set up by my predecessor. We will look into the backgrounds of those who want to run schools. It is a competitive process. We will turn them down—we will turn down sponsors. There is a clear and rigorous process.

Q402 Mr Ward: You do not accept that some of the abysmal failures have been because of a failure to have rigorous scrutiny of the sponsors of academies.

Nicky Morgan: I suspect there are a number of different reasons, but if we are talking about the Birmingham situation, there was a particular small group of people who wanted to follow a particular extremist ideology.

Mr Ward: Derby, or Kings in Bradford.

Nicky Morgan: Kings in Bradford is, as I understand it, part of a police investigation, so that is different. It is completely different from this situation. In relation to Derby, again, the minute that evidence was brought to our attention there was action taken. But you are talking about a handful of cases amongst the over 4,000 academies we now have in this country.

Q403 Mr Ward: The reason I am asking is because you have referred a number of times to the fact that the academies that we are talking about were not academies.

Nicky Morgan: They started off not being academies—some of them—and then they converted. That is right.

Q404 Mr Ward: Yes. So, they became academies during this process. Could some of the problems that we have now seen not have been identified during the process of them becoming academies?

Nicky Morgan: As I say, we have moved on. The process of checking and due diligence has changed. I would hope now that any of the individuals who had been, or wanted to be, involved in the setting up of the schools that we have seen in Birmingham would be caught. As I say, we have now appointed a new director to the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division within the Department; we have new capacity and capability to do those due diligence checks. It goes back to my earlier point, which is that this whole situation has meant that we cannot assume that everybody subscribes to the British values. Most people do in this country. The vast majority of parents want their children educated to prepare them for life in modern Britain, but there are some who do not, and our job is to vet all the applications and to work to find those people.

Q405 Mr Ward: It is disappointing that you are saying that there are now improvements that have been put in place but, in effect, those improvements were not necessary because it was alright before.

Nicky Morgan: No, I have not said that. I have said that I do not accept the premise that it is because of academisation that these problems happened. It is because of certain individuals that these problems happened. What we have done over the last couple of years, like any other system, is improve it continuously.

Chair: You hope.

Q406 Mr Ward: Inshallah. The other area, which has been touched on already, is this issue of Ofsted's inspection of the chains as opposed to the individual schools. You are quoted as saying when you were asked about this: "I am going to look at that, as I think it needs to be considered." Have you looked?

Nicky Morgan: I have looked at it, and I have had a discussion with Michael Wilshaw about it. The statement was back in July. Ofsted can already consider the governance arrangements of schools as part of their current remit, and so the governance of academies and free schools can be looked at as part of inspections. When people talk about wanting to inspect academy chains, that is what people particularly want to see can be examined. The inspectors can do that, and there is nothing in law to stop the inspectors asking other general questions about the support that schools are getting from their particular sponsors or academy chains.

Q407 Mr Ward: So that is a change.

Nicky Morgan: It is not a change. The power was already there. I have now asked that questions and had that discussion.

Chair: What has changed, then?

Nicky Morgan: Nothing. What has changed is I have asked the question and had a discussion.

Q408 Chair: Sir Michael Wilshaw has been telling this Committee for as long as I can remember—and this Committee has agreed—that it is absurd that the control centre of, in some cases, large numbers of schools is somehow exempt apart from the fact that by going to the school you can ask some questions about the governance. It is absurd. It would be like trying to judge an army by only talking to the people at the front line and not ever meeting the general who is in charge and not going into his bunker and finding out who he has got around him and how he communicates with them and what the values and ethos are and what the strategy is for his troops. That is what you have. Trusts vary, but it can be very much command and control. If you do not go and look at the control centre, you are struggling to understand what is really happening and what the patterns are behind the schools. If anything shows it today, it is Ofsted one minute saying a school is "outstanding" and the next it is apparently in special measures "because we have missed a few things". You need to

recognise where the ethos is being set; you need to see who is determining the music that is played.

Nicky Morgan: The point is that Ofsted can ask all of those questions. They can ask to meet those who are part of the academy chains and the governance arrangements. I am not entirely sure that going and visiting the head office is going to yield anything more than talking to the people who are running the chains.

Q409 Chair: So, if you wanted to know what was going on at Shell you would be quite happy to be told, “No, don’t go to the head office; just go around and visit their refineries around the world and you will know everything you need. You can ask a few questions there about how they are run.” That is not how I would audit Shell. I would want to get right into the heart of the headquarters, and I would want to get right to the heart of finding out who is running the organisation and why it therefore does what it does.

Nicky Morgan: That is the critical point; it is getting to the heart of who is running the organisation and why they are doing what they are doing. Going and looking at an office is not going to help.

Q410 Chair: That is a bit trite, isn’t it? It is not the office; it is the people—trying to find out who runs this organisation.

Nicky Morgan: And the Chief Inspector can ask to meet the people and talk to them and find out the arrangements and support. What we are interested in is the support that is being given to the schools.

Q411 Chair: Why did he think that he could not?

Nicky Morgan: That is a question that you would have to put to Sir Michael Wilshaw, but I am clear that the Chief Inspector can ask the questions about the governance, the support, the financial support, and any other issues that schools are getting from their sponsors or from an academy chain.

Q412 Chair: So, when he turns up here next, he is going to tell the Committee that thanks to his meeting with you all is sweetness and light; he can do exactly what he wants and he has all the powers he wants. Is he going to tell us that or is he not?

Nicky Morgan: I would hope so, but that is a question you will have to put to him.

Chair: I would have thought it was a question you would have put to him before you left the room.

Nicky Morgan: I have spoken to him about it and I have made it clear that I think in terms of chain inspections the Inspectorate has the power.

Q413 Chair: It is not what you think that counts; it is what he thinks. He is the Chief Inspector of the independent inspectorate. If he does not think he has got the powers to inspect properly, that is a serious issue.

Nicky Morgan: And he will raise it again with me.

Chair: So he is not happy.

Nicky Morgan: I have had one conversation where we have discussed it, and I have put forward my view that the power is there for them to—

Q414 Chair: Did you do any listening? I am sorry to be so rude, but you are clear about what you told him. You had just arrived as Secretary of State and proceeded to tell him what he needed. Did he tell you back what he might need, after several years in his position?

Nicky Morgan: Yes. We have had debate. You have asked me whether I think that there is a need for there to be a change in academy chain inspections.

Chair: I want to know whether he thinks there is a need.

Nicky Morgan: I cannot second-guess what Michael Wilshaw is going to say.

Chair: You could have asked him.

Nicky Morgan: I have spoken about it, but you have had him before you in the Committee and you no doubt will again.

Q415 Pat Glass: I really do not understand, Secretary of State, how you can say or accept that it is entirely right to inspect a school and to inspect a local authority that runs that school and not inspect the sponsor.

Chair: It is bizarre.

Pat Glass: It is bizarre. As a person who has been through these things, I know that unless you go into the heart of the organisation and you see the people who are there and you see how it is run and you open up the books and you see the whole thing, Ofsted have no idea what is happening, and cannot necessarily judge a local authority by inspecting its schools.

Nicky Morgan: I suspect this is a subject for further discussion between me and the Chief Inspector, but I think that they do have the power to ask—or have the power to look.

Chair: Excellent. We will take that for now. Dominic is going to follow up, I think.

Q416 Mr Raab: I can understand the arguments for it. Can you just, based on what you know from the Department and your own judgment, give us an outline of some of the countervailing arguments against allowing inspection of sponsors that you have received advice on?

Nicky Morgan: The advice I have received is that the Chief Inspector has the power to ask about the governance, the support, the financial arrangements and how the

academy trust or sponsor is working in relation to that particular school or set of schools. They can do batch inspections of a number of different schools and work out from all the conversations they have the support they are getting from the sponsor.

Q417 Bill Esterson: It is remarkable, given that Michael Gove made clear that he was not getting that advice, that you are telling us what you have been hearing from your officials. You have also made the point that Ofsted is an independent organisation, yet they seem to be saying they are denied this fundamental power that they want. These things do not stack up, do they?

Nicky Morgan: You have asked me what my view is and the advice that I have had in relation to multi-academy chains. What I have said is that Sir Michael Wilshaw will no doubt at some point appear before the Committee again and you will talk to him, and I will be having meetings with him too.

Q418 Chair: I just wish we understood remotely why you would not do that. It seems bizarre.

Nicky Morgan: I have just explained it to Mr Raab.

Chair: They are increasingly important, these trusts, and they have got groups of schools. Ofsted went round very effectively and looked at councils and gave a lot of them a kick up the backside who had been thinking, “Oh, we have got no role in academies,” and reminded them that they did, and it had a salutary effect. Even if they have got reduced staff, like Birmingham, they have still got a moral responsibility and a capacity they need to maintain to be able to do it. The idea that you could not do that because, “Oh, well, they can ask questions at the school level about local authorities but they cannot go into a local authority,” is bizarre, to repeat that point. I just think it is an indefensible position, and you have not managed to convey to us in any way what would be lost by letting him go and do an inspection of the increasingly important component of English education that is these academy trusts.

Nicky Morgan: I think I have made it very clear that it would not add anything to the powers the Chief Inspector and the inspectors already have to talk to those who are in sponsors or who are offering support to academy chains—whether that is financial or other governance support. As I have said, they can also do batch inspections and look at schools within an academy trust or sponsored by the same sponsor in the round.

Q419 Chair: And you refuse to say whether you convinced the Chief Inspector of that.

Nicky Morgan: You will have to ask him whether he was convinced by my argument. We had a discussion and I put my view forward, but, as we have heard, they are an independent inspectorate. They have not consulted on that in their most recent consultation.

Q420 Bill Esterson: Michael Gove, in some parliamentary answers, said that chains already are inspected, which definitely is not the situation.

Nicky Morgan: I am sure you have noticed, but the previous Secretary of State is not sitting in front of you.

Chair: We had rather hoped you were going to say that you had considered it and you would let him have the power he wants.

Bill Esterson: Some would say not much has changed, but that is another story.

Nicky Morgan: Bill.

Chair: I will make enquiries of Ofsted and then we will be able to find out the Chief Inspector's views by next week, when you are before us again.

Nicky Morgan: Thank you.

Q421 Bill Esterson: Do you agree that the Trojan Horse experience is primarily a question of governance rather than of extremism? This is coming from the National Governors' Association.

Nicky Morgan: I certainly think governance plays a large part in what we have seen happen in Birmingham, because some of the individuals concerned were governors rather than teachers. But as I said in my evidence earlier on, there is a spectrum of extremist behaviour that moves from perhaps intolerance right the way through to violent extremism. I have said already that we were on the spectrum of extremism and heading towards the extremism end but certainly not the violent extremism end. Governance is very much a part, and governors have a very important part to play in the life of a school.

Q422 Bill Esterson: What can you do as Secretary of State, and what can your officials do, to support head teachers whose governors are attempting to weaken their authority, whether it is to do with Birmingham schools or anywhere else?

Nicky Morgan: There is a range of different things. Firstly, it is acting on the intelligence. When a head teacher asks for assistance, whether that is to the Department, to the regional schools commissioners or to the local authority, we need to make sure that a request is acted upon. We have seen that most recently in Birmingham, where there was a head teacher who asked for support, and they did receive it quickly, I am pleased to say. Also, there is the training of governors and making sure that governing bodies are balanced and have the right skills. We have said that governors should not serve more than two terms, and there is also a register of interests now so we can see when governors are on more than one governing body.

Q423 Bill Esterson: Is there anything specifically for head teachers? You have given that one example, but is there anything in more general terms you can say you would be in a position to help head teachers with directly?

Nicky Morgan: All of this is about helping head teachers and schools directly in terms of tackling governors. There are times when I can bar people from being governors.

Bill Esterson: You are focusing on what you would do with governors rather than what you would do direct with head teachers.

Nicky Morgan: Sorry; you asked me about governance.

Bill Esterson: I did, but it is the support directly to head teachers.

Nicky Morgan: Oh, I see. Well, it is a mixture of things. It may be support about the governing body, but it may also be about organising some sort of parents' meeting or parents' evening, or support for the head teacher on the curriculum they are proposing to teach.

Q424 Bill Esterson: What is coming to mind here is: who are the people who come in to be there in the school alongside the head teacher?

Nicky Morgan: The regional schools commissioner, if it is an academy; otherwise, they could be part of a local authority.

Q425 Bill Esterson: There are eight of them across the country.

Nicky Morgan: But they are extremely good. They are supported by elected head teacher boards and they also have their own officials.

Q426 Bill Esterson: I am just struggling to see who these people are. Birmingham has gone from 158 to 12. Where are these individuals who are physically going to be there on the ground to go in and help head teachers when they need it?

Nicky Morgan: They are there, and they are also part of, as I say, the regional school commissioner network and the officers they have.

Q427 Pat Glass: There are only eight of them.

Nicky Morgan: Plus they have bodies of eight elected head teacher boards per region as well.

Q428 Bill Esterson: But these are not staff, are they, who are going to be able to go in and offer support?

Nicky Morgan: The point is that every situation is going to be different. What some head teachers want to know is that they have got the backing of the Department, the regional schools commissioner or the local authority. If they are to have a meeting with parents, some might want somebody to attend a meeting; some might want help in terms of addressing issues in their governing bodies.

Q429 Bill Esterson: Coming on to recommendations about governance, Michael Wilshaw has called for more professional governors, often with direct education experience. Do you agree with that recommendation? What do you think about the suggestion that they be paid?

Nicky Morgan: I am not overly keen on the idea that they be paid. I certainly understand that we are asking people to give up time—often to take time out of their jobs—and there is an argument for reimbursement of expenses, but if it turns into something professional, that may not be what we want. We want as governors people who are from the local community and who have a variety of different skills—some will be education based; some might be business based; some will be parents; some will be just members of the local community. As we heard earlier on, lots of governors get together on a concerted basis, and the concerted basis is to help the school raise money, to organise trips, and to support the school and the head in their activities. They do it in a very positive way.

Q430 Bill Esterson: That sounds like the current model; it does not sound like what Sir Michael is recommending, where you have more with direct education experience.

Nicky Morgan: We are looking at how we can work to make sure that governors have a broad base of skills and that they have more skills. It would not be right to go one way and to have too many that are based in the education sector, because when I speak to schools, often they want as governors people who are outside the education sector who are going to bring in their own particular experiences, often particularly in relation to businesses and offering things like work experience and links with future employers.

Bill Esterson: So, you do not agree with Sir Michael.

Nicky Morgan: There is a role for education, but there are other people who offer other skills as well on governing bodies.

Bill Esterson: So, you do not agree with him.

Nicky Morgan: You can draw your conclusions from that.

Q431 Mr Raab: Secretary of State, just returning to the issue of combating extremism, what has the DfE done to raise awareness of Prevent among schools? In particular, when was the last best practice guidance on how to apply the strategy issued?

Nicky Morgan: That I would need to just remind myself of. I cannot tell you the date. The Home Office have been leading on the WRAP strategy—the Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent. The Home Office delivers a training product for public sector staff, including teachers. Since the revised Prevent strategy in June 2011, over 100,000 frontline public sector workers have been trained—many of them will be teachers—in relation to Prevent.

Q432 Mr Raab: That is very useful. When you write to us about some of the other issues, I wonder whether we might also ask if you could just check when the last best practice guidance—i.e. formal written guidance—was issued to schools.

Nicky Morgan: It was in probably 2011, looking at my briefing, that the Department published guidance: *Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people*.

Q433 Mr Raab: I would need to go and check it myself, but will that give guidance on navigating what I think you and I agree is the very thorny issue of non-violent extremism, for example? If you are a head trying to work out what is allowed and what is not allowed, you do not have time, as we have had this morning, to debate it and thrash it out in full—and even then, we have not really come to any firm conclusions. I just wondered about the certainty of the head trying to work out what is and is not allowed. Are you confident that that guidance would be clear enough for them? That is what you talked about: the clarity.

Nicky Morgan: I would need to check, and the statutory guidance we published in April this year about keeping children safe in education is more about safeguarding. It is very difficult to write it down.

Q434 Mr Raab: How are heads supposed to know on a fundamental issue that cuts between whether we are giving succour to extremists—and I share your concern about that—and whether we are defending the tolerance and the liberty that you have talked about? If we do not know—and we could not thrash it out and work it out with any kind of precision—and we do not think that we could put it in guidance for teachers, how on earth are they supposed to know?

Nicky Morgan: First because we have excellent head teachers in this country and I trust the judgment of many of them, and secondly because we can share certain examples. Examples are seen in the Clarke report—the language used in the WhatsApp discussions; the Trojan Horses; the behaviours that he identified—rather than saying, “This is and this is not acceptable.” But I do agree with you that best practice is certainly something that can be shared and has been in the past.

Q435 Mr Raab: That is all in the realm of violent extremism—i.e. chanting or the jihadi—

Nicky Morgan: That is not violent extremism.

Mr Raab: It depends what they were chanting.

Nicky Morgan: Precisely.

Mr Raab: But anti-western—let us agree on that—and likewise the jihadi videos and the issues around segregation. What I am worried about is the impingement on academic freedoms. That is far tougher. That is exactly plum where the new strategy is going. I worry for a head teacher, however impeccable their judgment, who has a different set of values—they might agree with you; they might take more the line that I take. How will they know what is allowed? They do not really want to engage in some intellectual symposium before

they take a basic decision on whether, let's say, a debate is allowed or whether a guest speaker or guest speakers engaged in the debate are allowed. How do they know?

Nicky Morgan: They could ask for advice externally or with their governors if that was something that they particularly wanted advice on.

Q436 Mr Raab: But how would the governors know if there is no written guidance helping them to navigate this?

Nicky Morgan: They could also ask the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division in the Department. There will be certain speakers who we know are either banned or are particularly inflammatory who are veering towards violent extremism and certain behaviours.

Q437 Mr Raab: So if they are not banned by the Home Office or whatever else, they are legit.

Nicky Morgan: I am not going to lay down rules. The whole point about the autonomy of our education system is about trusting heads and teachers. The heads in these schools, as we saw, knew something was not right—they knew that they were being bullied. What they did not get was the support they needed at that time.

Q438 Mr Raab: So, you are not going around second-guessing a head's legitimate good-faith judgment on a finely-balanced question of whether a cleric is—

Nicky Morgan: It would be very foolish for the Secretary of State for Education to sit in front of a House of Commons Select Committee and try to write rules as to what is or is not acceptable in terms of—

Q439 Mr Raab: You said first of all that you wanted to trust their judgment, and I what I want to understand is whether they can take from this that there are no hard and fast rules—"exercise some common sense and we will trust you if it is a finely balanced case"—and avoid a situation where, if we have another scenario, they get the kitchen sink thrown at them for what is an inherently difficult judgment call.

Nicky Morgan: As I say, we can certainly share best practice. It is very clear from the Clarke report that there were behaviours that were found to be unacceptable and that were veering towards extremism, and also from the WhatsApp messages. If people have not looked at what was being discussed on WhatsApp they should, because I think it will be very clear to the vast majority of people in this country, including head teachers, whose judgment I trust, that is unacceptable.

Q440 Mr Raab: What I would put to you is that it may be clear to the white middle-class population, but if you go into an urban area with a very mixed community with different faiths, it may not be nearly so clear. I would urge you to think about that perhaps a little

more. It is precisely because we cannot prescribe hard and fast rules that, if we are going to trust their judgment, we are going to have to be brave when there are difficult cases. Would you accept at least that?

Nicky Morgan: I certainly understand about being brave. I also do not think we should make judgments about how certain people behave. If anything, this case has revealed to us the importance of talking about our fundamental British values. If we do not talk about them, then other people will talk about values that we do not accept in this country.

Q441 Mr Raab: But you cannot spell out what they mean in practice, because it is so amorphous.

Nicky Morgan: We can talk about them. We have defined certain fundamental British values as part of the preventing extremism strategy.

Q442 Chair: Most of the most successful religions have a kind of exclusivity: “I am the way, the truth and the light. There is no way to the Father except by me. You are going to burn forever in hell if you do not follow Christ.” That is the Christian one. That is what religions do. That is perhaps how they have evolved and succeeded.

Bill Esterson: I thought we had the second coming there for a minute, Chair.

Nicky Morgan: Don’t tempt him.

Chair: Going back to your earlier exchanges with Mr Raab and this idea of tolerance for others, the truth is that religious believers believe most of the time that theirs is the only way, and that is part of the faith. If you are going to proscribe everyone who believes that Islam is in fact the only proper religion, or Christianity is the only proper religion, you are going to be banning half the population from involvement in schools.

Nicky Morgan: Firstly, I would refer you to the definition of Islamist extremism, which is a lot more than you have just set out. Secondly, I am not a religious studies teacher, but thirdly, does this discussion not show what a good religious studies lesson looks like? That is what we want to see in our schools, where children are exposed to lots of different ideas and learn to be tolerant of other faiths and beliefs, and that is what we were not seeing in the schools where there was a problem.

Q443 Chair: Dominic’s point is trying to get the practical stuff. Your last guidance was not 2011, I don’t think; that was a research report that you read the title of. The last guidance I am aware of is 2008, so massively before the latest updates on the Prevent strategy. You do not have to do it here today, but it seems to me, if I am right, that it is time you updated the guidance to schools so they have got some sense of what it is they should and should not be doing. If they listened to us this morning, they might find it very stimulating, but I am not sure they would find it very easy to follow as to whom they could and could not allow to come to speak to the kids.

Mr Raab: Sorry, Mr Chairman, may I just add: it is not just about religious views.

Nicky Morgan: No. Absolutely.

Mr Raab: Monarchists—I remember Joanna Lumley saying that she believed in benevolent dictatorship. Is Joanna Lumley going to be banned from schools? Bob Crow was a communist. We can hold our own views very dearly and respect others who do. I am not clear how teachers are going to be expected to police that difficult line.

Nicky Morgan: You made the point very well that extremism is not just about religious extremism; it is about many different views. But there is a very clear definition in the Prevent strategy. This is not about impinging on academic views. I am happy to take the debate further as to guidance and the way that schools are supported. We are very clear about what the fundamental British values are. They are defined; they are now being woven through the curriculum in many different ways across all age groups. But what this matter has shown us is that we cannot assume that the actions of a few are not there to pervert an ideology.

Q444 Chair: Is that a formal offer to look into the guidance that exists and review and decide whether it needs to be updated? That is a not a commitment to update it.

Nicky Morgan: I have set out what I think is the most recent, but I am very happy to. The point I made right at the beginning is that this is an ongoing matter.

Chair: You told us it was *Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people*, 2011.

Nicky Morgan: That is the one I was referring to, yes.

Chair: It is a research report, which is cited in ACPO guidance, but—

Nicky Morgan: It is guidance for teachers about teaching approaches, as I say. There are lots of other resources. The Prevent co-ordinators locally will offer training as well. As I said at the beginning of this whole session, we continue to look at the points raised and to work on them in relation to what was identified in the Clarke report and beyond.

Chair: There was the 2013 ACPO guidance on Prevent in schools, written in conjunction with the DfE. Perhaps you could write to us, let us know whether you think it is entirely up to date or not, and lay out whether I have misunderstood what was and was not guidance.

Q445 Pat Glass: Can I just make a comment before I go on about what both Bill and Dominic said? I worry that even the most successful head teachers still need someone to go to for advice. I remember going to see one of the most successful heads I have ever come across. We had a small bit of business to do, and as I got up to leave he said, “Sit down. You are going nowhere. I need someone to talk to about some of the difficult decisions that I have to make.” We used to meet regularly. There is a whole raft of people and a whole raft of wisdom and experience that has disappeared out of the system. The Government may not like

it to be the local authority or the school improvement services, but that whole raft of wisdom and experience that head teachers need has disappeared out of the system.

Moving on to the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division, for which I cannot find a natty little abbreviation I am afraid, Peter Clarke, when he came to the Committee, told us that in his view “it needs to improve its capacity to mount an investigation”; it is “not well-equipped at the moment” to ensure due diligence “around a whole range of issues”; and it needs to “up its game”. Can you tell us what you think the main achievements of the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division have been since its establishment? Would you consider, or have you considered, producing an annual report of its priorities and its activities?

Nicky Morgan: Firstly, let me just take issue about your assertion that a whole level of experience has been lost from the system. There are many different ways for heads to gain support. There is peer-to-peer support and I talked earlier on about collaboration, but also the National Association of Head Teachers offers particular support and works with the DfE in terms of providing support to the Government. I was going to go on to say that in relation to particularly these issues, the Due Diligence and Counter Extremism Division is there to offer particular support or questions, and since the report we have recruited a new director to the division and we are building the capacity and capability. The division was set up in 2010 by my predecessor. I would have to go away and talk to officials about reporting and explanations, but it is there; it is building up capacity to carry out due diligence into people who are applying to run schools in all sorts of different ways, working through the system to make sure that we deal with situations such as this one.

Q446 Pat Glass: What do you think have been its main achievements so far?

Nicky Morgan: Being able to do due diligence on people who have wanted to run schools—there are times when information has come to light—and also working across Government and making the education system aware of the issues of extremism in the education system. However, we have more to do, which is why we are expanding it.

Q447 Pat Glass: Have you considered publishing, or do you think it would be a good idea to publish, an annual report of its priorities and activities?

Nicky Morgan: Certainly. It is always good to make it clear to people what it is there for and what it has been doing.

Q448 Pat Glass: Looking at the work of the division, how many free school applications have been turned down on the grounds that their proposals have links with extremism?

Nicky Morgan: I cannot share that information.

Q449 Pat Glass: Okay. The whole of the wave 6 applications for Islamic designated schools have been withdrawn. Can you tell us why that is?

Nicky Morgan: No. I am not able to do that.

Chair: Why?

Nicky Morgan: There will be a variety of different reasons, but I do not have the details and I could not share information about individuals anyway.

Pat Glass: These have been withdrawn by the sponsor, not by the Department. You are not able to give us any indication as to why.

Nicky Morgan: No.

Pat Glass: Right.

Q450 Alex Cunningham: Good morning, Secretary of State. I am sorry I was an hour late for your first appearance before the Committee, but I am sure I can add my welcome to others. I want to talk about British values, because there appears to be considerable concern in education circles about the whole issue of what we need to teach and what we need to promote. Is it clear to you what you are asking schools to do and the messages that you are asking them to pass to our children?

Nicky Morgan: Yes, it is. The point is that these values apply right the way through the education system, from the earliest years right up until the end of full-time education. The values are set out very clearly in the Prevent strategy—so, democracy; rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance of other people's faiths and beliefs. The important thing is to note they should be taught in an age-appropriate way. How they should be taught is perhaps a matter for discussion, in the sense of: are they woven through the curriculum? There will be many examples of excellent, good and outstanding schools who teach these values anyway.

Q451 Alex Cunningham: But across the piece, is your opinion that schools are generally failing in this area, or do you think most of them are doing alright?

Nicky Morgan: Many are probably doing very well. As I say, they are probably teaching them without realising, or having them as part of their ethos without thinking about them and labelling them as fundamental British values.

Q452 Alex Cunningham: You suggest that they might not even know they are doing it, so how can governors demonstrate that they are actively promoting British values?

Nicky Morgan: By asking about lessons and asking about the curriculum, and by visiting schools and seeing lessons in action. We have had a slight religious studies debate this morning, but you might visit a religious studies class and see the debates that are continuing and the way that people are able to express their views.

Q453 Alex Cunningham: Yes, but how are the governors going to demonstrate to Ofsted inspectors, for example, that they are promoting these values? What will they see?

Nicky Morgan: That is one of the reasons why we have not, perhaps, talked about them so much as a country—because we think it is not terribly British to talk about our values; we assume that everybody knows them and they have them in their back pocket. They would demonstrate the way that classes are conducted, and the way that teachers and others interact when somebody puts forward a particular view. It could be things like teaching about Parliament, in terms of democracy or politics; debating societies; youth parliaments; visits to Parliament and other councils and places of worship. All those things demonstrate it. There is not going to be a list, but it is something that Ofsted will be checking and that I am sure governors will be interested in.

Q454 Alex Cunningham: Do you see a situation where you could be exercising your new powers to close a school because they are failing to demonstrate fundamental British values?

Nicky Morgan: We now have in the funding agreement for academies and free schools the fact they have to promote British values as part of the way the school is run. I am going to be issuing non-statutory departmental guidance to maintained schools in the same way. It is certainly something that will be checked, but, as I say, we believe in heads and teachers running the schools and we believe that many schools already do this extremely well.

Q455 Alex Cunningham: But could it lead to a school being closed because they are failing to do this.

Nicky Morgan: We have certainly seen, in the Birmingham situation, schools being put into special measures.

Alex Cunningham: But you could see a school close because it is failing to do this specifically.

Nicky Morgan: As we know, closing a school is a very big step to take. What tends to happen is the school is converted into an academy with a new sponsor.

Q456 Alex Cunningham: How is the review by the National College for Teaching and Leadership into allegations against individual teachers progressing?

Nicky Morgan: There are two interim prohibition orders that have been made against two of the teachers involved in the Birmingham situation, and there are further disciplinary proceedings continuing.

Alex Cunningham: Would you mind saying that first bit again?

Nicky Morgan: Two interim prohibition orders. So, those teachers are now not allowed to be teaching in schools.

Alex Cunningham: So two teachers have been barred as a direct result.

Nicky Morgan: Yes.

Alex Cunningham: But that is an interim order rather than a—

Nicky Morgan: It is an interim order to make sure they are not in schools, and then, as you would expect, there are further disciplinary proceedings and processes to follow.

Q457 Alex Cunningham: Are you expecting further interim orders to be introduced?

Nicky Morgan: I cannot really say, because I do not want to prejudice any proceedings, but there are other teachers whose conduct is being investigated, yes.

Q458 Alex Cunningham: In answer to my first question, you said that the teaching of British values goes from one end of the education system to the other. Let us start at the very beginning. Do you really think we can teach British values to children in nursery schools?

Nicky Morgan: I certainly think you can teach values of tolerance, listening to others and respect, yes.

Alex Cunningham: Is that it?

Nicky Morgan: Having a young child myself who has been through nursery education, I can see that, without even thinking about it, that is exactly what his nursery teachers did. That is why I am confident in saying many nursery teachers, lecturers, teachers and head teachers are already doing that.

Q459 Bill Esterson: Does that fit with PSHE education?

Nicky Morgan: It could do.

Q460 Bill Esterson: What is your view on PSHE?

Nicky Morgan: It is very important. Some schools do it very well. I have had meetings with the PSHE Association and others to discuss it.

Q461 Alex Cunningham: You have said that it will happen as a matter of course in good nurseries, but, just as in schools, there will be nurseries where they do not manage that. What response have you had to your proposals to actively promote British values to the youngest of our children?

Nicky Morgan: Let me take a step back. The reasons for putting that forward came as a result of responses we had to a consultation on funding for early-years settings and people saying, “Well, actually, there are times when you should be in a position to withdraw funding.” That made us think about why that would happen, and it ties in with the whole issue of values. By and large it was very positive. Of course there are a few people who are always going to say, “This is not the right thing,” or there are certain values that they do not agree with, but on the whole it has been extremely positive.

Q462 Alex Cunningham: What do people see as the problems of teaching these values in nurseries?

Nicky Morgan: There will always be people who worry that certain specific behaviours are going to be taught, or alternatively that respect for our Christian heritage in particular is not going to be taught, or we are going to make it difficult, for example, to teach Bible stories, which is not the case.

Q463 Alex Cunningham: Local authorities naturally have duties and responsibilities in this area. Are you reviewing your guidance to them in the light of the consultation exercise and what you now expect of them?

Nicky Morgan: We have had these responses to the consultation. We put that out there and, yes, we would have to look at the whole way that it worked in terms of when the regulations are changed.

Q464 Pat Glass: Minister, can I bring us right back to the beginning? We talked about Michael Wilshaw's letter from yesterday and his assertion that there had been very little change to the existing unbalanced curriculum in the inspected schools. I have always personally been of the view that the national curriculum should be a basis, but that those schools and those head teachers that have the confidence and the creativity to deliver something better should be encouraged to do so. What steps will you provide for schools, and particularly for academies, to provide greater clarity on what should be taught in a broad and balanced curriculum as recommended by Ofsted? Can that be done without having the national curriculum at least as a basis that schools can then move forward from?

Nicky Morgan: Most academies already do teach the national curriculum and then will add extra things. Again, it goes back to trusting heads and teachers, who are professionals. The vast majority of those I go and see are absolutely committed—as you will know, if you have been in the education sector—to preparing our young people for life in modern Britain in all the ways that means. Since I arrived at the Department I have particularly emphasised the need as well for additional activities that bring out character, resilience and grit. It is about those sorts of things, rather than having a very narrow and focused curriculum. Most schools do that very well already.

Q465 Pat Glass: But I also know, Secretary of State, that not all head teachers are good head teachers, not all governing bodies are good governing bodies, and not all schools are “outstanding” or even “good”. There is a need to provide clarity so that there is something to measure this by. Sir Michael Wilshaw is considering adding a fifth element to the Ofsted judgment to make head teachers think very carefully about a broad and balanced curriculum. Do you agree with him? Do you not think that there ought to be a very clear recommendation that the national curriculum is a fall-back position—it is a basis—and that head teachers must be able to demonstrate to Ofsted what they have done that is different from that?

Nicky Morgan: I suspect this will come up again next week when we talk about academies and free schools, but we believe very firmly in autonomy.

Pat Glass: But these things go wrong. We have talked today about what goes wrong.

Nicky Morgan: What happened in Birmingham was about a small group of schools and a small group of people who had particular things that they wanted to be taught or not to be taught in the curriculum—this was not about the national curriculum—and it was caught. Intelligence was provided, investigations were commenced, there were the reports, and there were the Ofsted inspections. Yes, I do think that the teaching of a broad and balanced curriculum is right, and Ofsted are right to be asking the question.

Q466 Pat Glass: So you support Michael Wilshaw's—

Nicky Morgan: He is right to be asking the question in the consultation, yes.

Q467 Chair: But he wants to add it as a fifth strand. Ofsted have been criticised for having a certain style of teaching, which became a kind of norm: if you were smart and you wanted a good Ofsted judgment, you made all your teachers comply with it, whether it was the best thing for the children or not. Sir Michael himself has tried to fight that and has written letters to inspectors telling them not to do that and that one size does not fit all. Is there not a danger that if Ofsted come in and look at your curriculum, the Pavlov's dog response from schools would be to go, "Well, what curriculum do you want to find?" Just when we have hope after years of denuding curriculum innovation and capacity, we might end up reversing it again by terrifying schools into desperate conformity with whatever it is that Ofsted want to see when they come in.

Nicky Morgan: You have hit the nail on the head. One of the big issues that I have been dealing with in my discussions with unions and teachers and schools across the country since I have started has been the issue of workload. A lot of the pressures on the workload appear to be as a result of perceptions or fears of what the inspectors are going to be looking at and finding. We are working jointly—the Department, the unions and Ofsted—on a document on how we can tackle that. You are right; whilst it is important that the curriculum is looked at, what we do not want to see is some sort of further prescription that further, as you say, takes away the freedoms that we want to see teachers pursuing.

Q468 Chair: Are there wider lessons to learn for faith schools of all denominations following the Birmingham case?

Nicky Morgan: I am a great supporter of faith schools. There are wider lessons to be learned for all schools about British values, particularly in relation to mutual respect and tolerance. The point is that these issues happened in a small number of schools. In the vast majority they did not. In particular, as the Archbishop of Canterbury made clear in a breakfast that he attended here in Westminster Hall, these issues have not happened in the Church of England or Catholic schools that make up the vast majority of our faith schools and church schools in this country.

Q469 Chair: Are there wider lessons to be learned?

Nicky Morgan: Absolutely. All schools will be looking at the curriculum and for the way that they teach religion and faith and acts of collective worship to be inclusive and to make sure that their young people, as I say, are prepared for life in modern Britain, which means being aware of and exposed to other cultures.

Q470 Chair: Are you confident that Church of England and Catholic schools do give sufficient attention to other faiths?

Nicky Morgan: From all the discussions that I have had and my experience of visiting schools, yes, but that is not to say that in every school there will not always need to be a watch kept. As I say, any intelligence that we receive about any schools, regardless of their background—faith or non-faith—will be acted upon. I should just point out that none of the 21 schools investigated by Ofsted or Peter Clarke were faith schools.

Q471 Chair: Is it time to abolish the act of daily worship? Who should lead the debate on that?

Nicky Morgan: We can have a discussion. I do not think so. I think the act of getting children together and thinking about some sort of collective worship is very important.

Chair: Secretary of State, thank you very much for coming before us today. We will look forward to seeing you again next week.

Nicky Morgan: See you next week. Thank you.