16 January 2018

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December to my predecessor about the Environmental Audit Committee’s report on the Sustainable Development Goals in the UK.

You asked the previous Secretary of State to commit to including a specific aim of raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals among young people within my department’s Single Departmental Plan. Our Plan covers the period 2015-20 and is available at: tinyurl.com/Y8QPYaQ7. It sets out three overarching objectives, one of which is to provide educational excellence everywhere so that every child and young person can access high-quality provision and achieve to the best of their ability, regardless of location, prior attainment or background. We will achieve this by embedding rigorous standards, curriculum and assessment.

I would like to assure you that there are already opportunities for teachers to teach the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals within the content of various subjects across the curriculum. I hope you will appreciate that any change to my department’s Plan would also require an update to the National Curriculum. As stated in the Government’s response, this is not something that we are currently considering.

Our policy is that teachers should use their professional judgement to decide how best to ensure that pupils are taught these subjects as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State for Education