

17 November 2010

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Letter from Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, to chairs of governors and headteachers

Dear Colleague

I am writing to all schools today to give details of the next phase of the academies programme.

I announced today a significant extension of the academy programme to encourage the best schools to work in partnership with others to raise standards. It will also give greater power and freedom to heads and teachers, as well as promoting innovation and diversity in the schools system.

Previously, only primary and secondary schools rated outstanding by Ofsted were eligible to apply for academy status. My announcement means that:

- state-maintained primary and secondary schools which are rated good with outstanding features by Ofsted may apply
- primary and secondary schools can apply with other schools as part of a formal partnership, providing at least one is rated outstanding or good with outstanding features or they join an existing academy trust with a proven track record of school improvement
- maintained special schools rated outstanding by Ofsted will be able formally to submit their application from January 2011.

Pupil Referral Units are governed by a different legal framework, and we are looking to ensure they are eligible to apply for academy status at the earliest possible opportunity.

Enabling more schools to benefit from academy status within a supportive network is a crucial part of our approach to school improvement. I know there is a lot of interest from schools themselves seeking to build on existing relationships to create a new academy family of schools. I encourage you to discuss any proposals you have with the Department. I have also asked local authorities for their ideas about innovative arrangements to support local partnerships of schools in ways which fit with their new commissioning role.

Further details of the announcement can be found on the [Department's website](#).

All primary, secondary and special schools interested in applying should register with the Department through the [online form](#). You will then be supported through the process by a named contact in the Department.

If you are a school whose last Ofsted inspection rating was good overall with at least one outstanding feature, and you have already registered an interest, someone from the Department will be in touch with you over the coming weeks to discuss whether you want to take forward an application.

The Department for Education website has all the latest information on how to become an academy and is regularly updated. Links to some key sections are highlighted below.

- [General information about academies](#)
- [Registration form](#)
- [Practical guide with the key decisions and steps schools need to take during the conversion process](#)
- [FAQs on the conversion process](#)
- [Additional advice on common issues](#)

Alternatively, if you would like to speak to the Department about your school becoming an

academy please call 0870 000 2288.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Gove

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