



Michael Goves speech on Academies

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Speaker: Michael Gove

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"As of today [4 January], there are 1529 academies open in England. 1194 are converters and 335 are sponsored.

45 per cent of all maintained secondary schools are either open or in the pipeline to become academies.

There are 37 local authority areas where over half of secondary schools are already academies, and 64 LAs where more than half of secondaries are either open academies or in the process of becoming academies. Over 90 per cent in North East Lincolnshire; over 88 per cent in Bromley; over 82 per cent in Swindon; over 80 per cent in Thurrock.

Three in five outstanding secondaries – and nearly one in 10 outstanding primaries – has applied to convert to an academy.

Over 1,250,000 pupils now attend academies. This means around one in seven pupils in state schools now attends an academy - one in three pupils in state secondaries.

In an average week, the Department for Education processes 20 applications from schools to convert to academy status, brokers another five schools to become sponsored academies.

One can hardly say there's been a lack of interest...

The last Government saw academies as a secondary-only programme. One of the first things we did was extend academy freedoms to primaries. This is a vitally important part of our reforms.

If pupils leave primary school without the basics – if they fail to get a Level 4 at KS2 – then they start secondary school at an extreme disadvantage. Pupils can't read to learn if they haven't learned to read. They can't begin to deal with more advanced mathematical concepts – or physics, or chemistry, or any number of other subjects – if they haven't grasped the fundamentals of numeracy. And however good a secondary school is, there's a limit to the extent to which they can pick up the pieces.

There are more than 1000 primaries where fewer than 40 per cent of pupils reach Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. These schools are leaving children to face a life of drastically narrowed choices in this world.

Insisting that schools educate their pupils to Level 4 standard isn't that big an ask. Level 4 is just the basics. To achieve a Level 4 in reading pupils need to be able to interpret and understand the meaning behind a simple story. And in maths, all that is required is to be able to understand simple fractions and add, subtract, multiply and divide without the help of a calculator. It's unacceptable that so many children are being let down.

So we must act urgently to tackle underperformance in primary schools. Part of the strategy is encouraging more primary academies.

More than 700 maintained primary schools are either open or in the pipeline to become academies. These range from small rural primaries - like Kings Cople in Herefordshire with 32 pupils - to large urban primaries like 843-pupil Durand.

There are 16 local authorities, such as Darlington and Cornwall, where more than 10 per cent of primary schools have opened or are in the pipeline to become academies.

We're encouraged by the enthusiasm primary schools have shown so far. In the most recent months, there have even been more primary applications than secondary. But there's more to be done."

Read more: <http://www.education.gov.uk/a00201425/michael-gove-speech-on-academies>

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