

Hundreds of additional school improvement projects get green light

Funding has today (5 August) been allocated for 580 building projects at academies, sixth form colleges and voluntary aided schools in England to transform facilities and improve school buildings.

The funding will be used to repair and upgrade school facilities and create modern, fit-for-purpose spaces that meet schools' needs. It also allows for a small number of expansion projects to increase school capacity.

Projects range from the upgrading of boilers to new green, energy-efficient models, to the complete refurbishment of a classroom block with brand new facilities.

The works can begin as soon as schools are ready, and the majority should be completed this financial year.

Today's funding comes from the £560 million announced by the Prime Minister last month to help the nation bounce back from the pandemic, investing in schools to help teachers deliver a world-class education and create jobs.

The government is also bringing forward £200 million for FE colleges this year, as part of plans for £1.5 billion of investment over five years to transform the FE college estate.

The Prime Minister's transformative new ten-year school rebuilding programme also starts this year, supported by over £1 billion in funding for the first 50 projects. This investment will be targeted at school buildings in the worst condition across England – including substantial investment in the North and the Midlands – as part of the Prime Minister's plan to level up opportunity for all.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

As we work towards all children returning to school in September, this investment in our school and college buildings helps create modern environments that lend themselves to great teaching, making sure every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

We have worked at great speed to release this additional £560 million of condition funding to schools for projects this year to kick-start the economy and transform the buildings so vital for excellent teaching.

We have now allocated over £2 billion this year to improve the condition of our school buildings, paving the way for our new transformative ten-year school building programme starting later this year with over £1 billion funding for the first wave of 50

schools.

Brendan Tapping, CEO, Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust said:

We are delighted that we have been granted the funding to build six additional teaching spaces, as well as increase the size of our dining room.

The improvements to our building will greatly enhance the experience of our students, not least because we will be able to build the new facilities to the most modern standards.

With our plans coming together to enable all children to return to school in September, it is great to be able to look to the future and know we will have the space and facilities we need to give all our children the education they deserve.

The 580 building projects are supported by over £180 million in funding distributed through the Department's Condition Improvement Fund. They have been selected based on bids submitted to the fund for the main funding round earlier this year.

The remainder of the £560 million is being provided to local authorities, larger multi-academy trusts and large voluntary aided school bodies to spend on improving the condition of their schools.

This additional funding comes on top of over £1.4 billion already allocated in 2020-21 to improve the condition of the school estate.

Over £1 billion is being invested to fund the first 50 projects of the new, ten-year school rebuilding programme, starting later this year. These projects will be confirmed in the autumn, and construction on the first sites will begin from September 2021.

As the first major school rebuilding programme to be launched since 2014, these building projects will be more environmentally-friendly and employ the latest construction methods – creating highly skilled jobs and providing a boost for the construction sector.