

# Multi-million investment in school and college buildings

Academies and sixth form colleges across England can now bid for a share of more than £400 million to transform facilities, improve school buildings and create more good school places.

The multi-million-pound annual fund can be used by academies and sixth form colleges to expand classrooms, upgrade facilities such as sports halls or science labs, and address issues with the general wear and tear of school buildings.

This year applications will be subject to new criteria which will favour bids from schools with good governance and organised finances – including showing restraint on executive salaries.

Today's launch of millions of pounds to improve schools and colleges across the country follows the Prime Minister's announcement confirming the budget for schools and high needs education would be increased by a total of over £14 billion over three years, rising to £52.2 billion by 2022-23. Schools and local authorities found out earlier this month their allocations for the first part of that investment – £2.6 billion – for the coming year.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This government is determined to give all children the best possible education, but as well as great teachers, we want all pupils to learn in classrooms that enable them to gain the knowledge and skills they need for success.

Following our huge investment in school funding with an increase of a total of £14 billion over three years, this year's multi-million-pound fund will support our pledge to create more good school places and continue raising standards.

The Department for Education will today launch the latest round of the Condition Improvement Fund – the last of which approved bids worth over £400 million to improve school buildings and expand academies and sixth-form colleges rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

The new criteria builds on a number of steps taken by the Government to bolster academy trust finances and clamp down on high pay – challenging 278 trusts over pay since 2017, with 51 academy trusts reducing top salaries as a result.

The strengthened criteria for next year's Condition Improvement Fund will incentivise academies and trusts to improve finances and governance. Bids are assessed on a point based criteria and applicants will get a four-point

deduction if they pay two or more salaries in excess of £100,000 or one salary over £150,000, and have failed to take appropriate action in response to our high pay challenge. Alongside this, Academies Minister Lord Agnew has also introduced:

- an extra point for applicants that have signed-up to the most recent government funding agreement;
- deductions of up to four points for applicants that have not submitted a financial improvement plan following a visit from a School Resource Management Adviser; and
- Further scrutiny for successful projects worth more than £1 million.

All applications for the Condition Improvement Fund will be scored against the new criteria, with points added or deducted from the overall score. For unsuccessful bids, applicants will still have the option of applying for Urgent Capital Support to ensure their buildings are safe for pupils and staff.

Today's announcement comes ahead of the deadline this Thursday (31 October) for parents to choose secondary schools for their children. In 2019, 93% of parents received offers for one of their top three choices. We're on track to create a million new school places this decade, the largest increase in school capacity for at least two generations.