

# PM pledges thousands more good school places

The Prime Minister has pledged to create thousands more good school places as he unveils a new drive for the next wave of free schools.

He is calling on parents, educational groups and community organisations to come together to set up brand new free schools, to drive up education standards and to take advantage of the freedoms and opportunities they offer.

The new schools will build on the successes of more than 500 free schools that have opened since 2010 and already created more than 133,000 school places across the country.

Over 40% of free schools are in the 30% most deprived communities in the country and 18% of all free schools are dedicated to special needs or alternative provision.

The latest round of applications for the free schools programme is open to everyone, but particularly encourages applications from parts of the country that have not previously benefited, as well as alternative provision and special schools.

The government hopes to select up to 30 schools through Wave 14, subject to the quality of bids. This comes on the back of Wave 13, which announced 22 new schools and 19,000 new places.

This follows the Prime Minister's recent announcement to invest over £14 billion in primary and secondary education between now and 2022/23.

Ahead of a visit to a London primary school, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Every child should have access to a good school place, no matter their background or where they live.

Free schools help to ensure children are getting the best education possible – offering exceptional teaching, encouraging strong discipline and providing families with more choices.

I want to see even more of these excellent schools open, particularly in areas most in need of more good and outstanding school places.

This government is committed to investing in our children's futures. Not only are we improving education standards with new free schools, but we're also levelling up funding across the entire country and increasing funding per pupil in primary and secondary schools.

Free schools are new schools set up by parents, teachers, charities, academy sponsors and existing schools in response to demand from the local community. The newly-opened schools include primary, secondary and all-through schools, and sixth form colleges. Secondary free schools are among the highest performing state-funded schools in the country.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our free schools programme, introduced nearly a decade ago, is transforming education for children all over the country, wherever they live and whatever their ability.

Our reforms have backed the innovative and trailblazing school leaders who are running great schools up and down the country. I want to harness that expertise and use it in the areas where there is still more to do, including the alternative provision and special school sectors.

There are now over 500 open free schools nationwide, with more than 220 set to open in the coming years. Of those inspected by Ofsted, 84% have been rated good or outstanding, with 30% rated outstanding – and in 2018, four of the top 10 Progress 8 scores for state-funded schools in England were achieved by free schools. The Department for Education is today launching the 14th round of applications – this is open to everyone, but will be targeted at areas in most need of good new mainstream schools.

The deadline for submitting an application to open a new free school in Wave 14 is 11 November 2019.