

Press release: Improved access to thousands more world class school places

Disadvantaged pupils will have access to even more good or outstanding school places as the Government invests another £50 million to make sure as many children as possible benefit from world class education.

Launching the second round of the [Selective Schools Expansion Fund](#) today (11 February), the Department for Education will be making money available for grammar schools to create additional places, but only if they demonstrate how they will attract more disadvantaged pupils and work with other schools in their area to raise standards locally.

Today's launch marks the second round of funding available for this programme, following the announcement of the 16 schools that were successful in bidding for the first round. All those schools committed to a range of measures to improve access for disadvantaged pupils, and the Department for Education has also today published details of those commitments.

All schools successful in the first round of the fund were rated as Outstanding, with 98% of grammar schools rated either Good or Outstanding overall. Grammar schools are also popular with parents, with around 15 pupils choosing a selective school as their first preference for every 10 selective places offered. Today's announcement builds on the 825,000 new school places created since 2010 and the one million this Government is on course to create by 2020.

School Standards Minister, Nick Gibb, said:

Selective schools are some of the highest performing schools in the country and so it's right that more pupils should have the opportunity to benefit from the world class education they provide. It's also right that access to those places should be fair to pupils from all backgrounds, which is why selective schools must demonstrate how they are going to admit more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, if they are going to expand.

It is also a requirement that selective schools work with other schools in their area. Whether through a multi academy trust or an informal partnership, we want to see more selective schools using their expertise to improve opportunities for a wider group of young people.

All schools that bid to expand must submit a Fair Access and Partnership Plan, setting out how they will improve access for disadvantaged pupils. Today, the department is publishing the plans of those schools that were

successful in round one, making clear the extent of the work that will be undertaken to make sure as many young people as possible, regardless of their background, can benefit from a place at an Outstanding school.

The nature of this work is wide ranging, for example Chelmsford County High School will set up help desks in partner primary schools to assist parents registering children for the entrance test, while sixth form students at Queen Mary's High School – along with a number of others – will tutor pupil premium children in literacy and numeracy to support them ahead of the entrance test.

Chief Executive of the Grammar School Heads Association Jim Skinner said:

We are delighted that further selective schools are being given the opportunity to expand. The number of pupils reaching secondary age means that it makes absolute sense that, just like other good and outstanding schools, they are able to expand.

The work we are doing with the Department for Education through our Memorandum of Understanding, is proving most valuable in extending the initiatives that member schools have undertaken in recent years, to increase access for disadvantaged pupils and support other schools in raising standards for all children. Along with the Selective School Expansion Fund, this work is making an important contribution to ensuring more children receive the high quality education that is right for them.

The window for applications to the second round of the Selective Schools Expansion Fund will be open for ten weeks until 23 April.