

Williamson: A revolution in further education – delivering for the forgotten 50 per cent

A new focus on the “forgotten fifty per cent” of the population who don’t go into university will be launched by the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, today as he lays out an ambition to beat Germany in delivering opportunities across non-academic routes within a decade.

To support this ambition a huge expansion of Institutes of Technology will be launched today to make sure young people across the country have access to quality technical education. Up to £120m will be invested to take the total number from twelve currently planned to up to twenty in cities across England. This huge expansion of the programme will particularly benefit the North-West of England, Teesside, the East Midlands, and cities along the South Coast.

Institutes of Technology bring together business, universities and FE colleges, to deliver post-16 FE and technical and vocational courses suited to the needs of the business in the regions they serve. This move will make sure that key sectors and every region in England will benefit from at least one IoT, meaning that wherever you live or work, there’ll be an IoT to enable you to take your technical skills to the next level.

The Education Secretary will also form a new Skills & Productivity Board of leading labour market economists to advise him policies to drive forward the provision of world leading skills and qualifications, particularly for the FE sector. This will be geared towards ensuring the courses undertaken by students will fit with to the demands of the workforce of tomorrow, helping drive productivity and ensure taxpayers money is focused on delivering the skills we need.

Building on the success of the free schools programme to date, Mr Williamson will also expand the number of specialist maths free schools open from two to eleven, to ensure elite maths teaching is available for all 16-19-year-olds, wherever they live in England. These schools will ensure all young people gifted in maths

have the best opportunity of achieving academic excellence, working with likeminded young people and going on to academic success, whatever their background and wherever they live.

These announcements follow the recent spending review which saw school funding across the country increase, with an additional £14 billion being spent on schools over the next three years and every school to receive more funding.

Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, said:

“There is one part of our education system that’s often overlooked, Further Education. While past Labour Governments obsessed over targets to get half the population to university, they forgot about the other 50%. We’re going to put that right.

“Apprenticeships, technical and vocational education are just as valuable as University education and they are at least as important to our economy. We want to ensure that in the next decade, we beat Germany on the opportunities we give to those taking technical and vocational routes.

“We’re going to super-charge Further Education and set our sights high. We will ensure equal focus is given to all young people, whether they choose the technical, vocational or academic routes.”

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