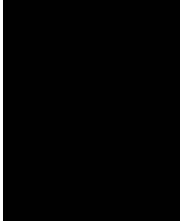




Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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6 September 2010



Free School Proposal: Stour Valley Community School

Thank you for submitting your proposal to set up a new school to the Department for Education. It has now been fully assessed and judged to be sufficiently strong in all areas to proceed to the next stage. I am therefore pleased to approve your proposal at this stage and invite you to proceed to business case stage.

I understand that you are looking to open your new school in September 2011, and the Department will work with you to do everything it can to make this a reality. I am very keen for the first wave of Free Schools to be innovative and responsive to parental demand, and I believe that the new school your organisation is proposing can carry through this vision.

As you know, Free Schools form an integral part of the Government's education policy to improve choice for parents and raise standards for all young people. I will be looking to your proposal, along with others in this initial cadre of 2011 schools, to shape the way forward for future proposers.

Business Case

I want to ensure that you have the support you need to develop your business case. Attached to this letter you will find a table which sets out the tasks that will need to be completed. Please complete this table, identifying which tasks you are able to take forward alone and those for which you think you will require additional support, and submit it to your named DfE lead, Helen Bennett. Please note that DfE cannot fund any work that its officials have not explicitly agreed to support.

Admissions

All Academies and Free Schools are required to have inclusive admission arrangements which comply with the School Admissions Code. Officials will be happy to assist Free Schools in developing such policies in readiness for a 2011 opening, as the first academic year may fall outside local co-ordination of admissions. For 2012/13 and subsequent years you will be required to be within local co-ordination. You should therefore provide your local authority with your admission number and admission arrangements for inclusion in their admissions prospectus as soon as they are determined (15th April each year).

I will look forward to receiving your final business case in due course. Please continue to work with Helen Bennett throughout this process, and direct any questions you have to her.

In addition to this letter, I will also be writing to Suffolk County Council and local MPs to inform them that your proposal has moved forward to business case stage.

With every good wish,
Michael

MICHAEL GOVE