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Speech

Academies Show 2016: educational excellence everywhere

From: [Department for Education](#) and [The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP](#)
Delivered on: 20 April 2016 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)
Location: Excel Centre, London
First published: 20 April 2016
Part of: [Academies and free schools](#)

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan speaks about her vision of all schools becoming academies.



Thank you, Tom [Clark, Chair of Freedom and Autonomy for Schools - National Association (FASNA)], for that introduction.

It's such a pleasure to be here with you today. I know my colleague, Lord Nash, has been a regular visitor to the show. It is with thanks to the incredible teaching profession that we now have 1.4 million more children in 'good' or 'outstanding' schools.

And you are the vanguard, leading the way and showing just what can be done with the autonomy offered by the academies programme. You have seized the opportunities to lead school improvement from the front, offering a world-class education and a bright future to more young people than ever before.

Why academies

But I know that academy status doesn't raise standards as a matter of course. What I believe is that academy status means that you have the vehicle by which we can achieve higher standards and that you - the excellent leaders in the system - are the drivers, using it to propel schools to success.

[Academy status](#) puts the power in your hands to innovate and try new things to get great results, you put in place local solutions and you can make long-term plans based on the needs of the children in your communities. This is a crucial rejection of the outdated, one-size-fits-all approach of the past, freeing your schools from the diktats of local and national governments.

Academies make it easier for you to recruit, train, develop and deploy better teachers and leaders in your schools and trusts; they allow you to recognise the expertise of any person who can have a positive impact for young people; pay them what you think they're worth; and give them a clear path to career progression that will keep them engaged rather than looking for opportunities elsewhere.

We know there are lots of models for operating academies but we think many will choose - as many of you have already - to work in local clusters, supporting each other to succeed. But let me be absolutely clear that there is a place for successful and sustainable stand-alone academies and we will never put pressure on them to subscribe to a different model.

Right now 66% of secondary schools and 19% of primary schools are already enjoying the freedoms that come with academy status but there are schools, teachers and pupils that have been denied those freedoms and their associated opportunities for far

too long.

New role for local authorities

So yes, we will ensure that - by 2022 - all schools become part of the dynamic academies system. The fact is that even if we didn't, three-quarters of secondary and a third of primary schools would have converted to academy status by 2022 anyway.

That trajectory makes it impossible for local authorities to manage expensive bureaucracies with fewer and fewer schools. Resources are better focused in the classroom than on servicing inefficient bureaucratic structures. LAs themselves have expressed concerns about the sustainability of the situation and those concerns have been echoed by schools.

And yes, 'good' maintained schools will need to become academies too. So they can become sponsors and support those schools which are not meeting the high standards pupils need. But also because we do believe the freedoms that come with academy status will allow those 'good' schools to improve even further and achieve even more for their pupils.

We have deliberately given schools plenty of time - 6 years - to plan their transition so that they are in a position to make well thought out decisions in the best interests of their students and their local communities.

Many academies already work closely with their local authorities and we see no reason why that should change. LAs will continue to offer services which schools can pick and choose to purchase; they will continue to provide services for children with special educational needs; and they will continue to have a duty to provide school places for all children.

We believe this change in LAs' relationship to schools will give them the opportunity to truly fulfil their role as advocates for parents and pupils. They will cease to be central service providers and will instead become champions of those in our schools.

Intervention

Many of the critical voices of our vision point to the fact that we have seen some academies fail. But that doesn't take account of the swift intervention offered by the academy route - which will now become the norm - and the range of solutions which will be offered to schools in difficulties.

We have already shown that we can respond quickly in the few instances where academies do underperform. We have issued 154 [formal notices to underperforming academies and free schools](#), changing their leadership in 129 cases. And the powers introduced by the [Education and Adoption Act 2016](#) - recently passed by Parliament - mean we can do that more quickly, ensuring that schools cannot continue to fail or coast - putting the future success of young people at risk.

We want you to seize the opportunities, in a new system of supported autonomy, to re-mould schools that aren't working in the image of the successful schools you are already leading.

Too many children are still denied the access to excellent education that I believe should be their birth right. It is a matter of social justice for every child to have access to a good education, regardless of their background. But we know - and the [white paper](#) showed - that in some parts of the country that just isn't happening. And as I have made clear the "everywhere" in educational excellence everywhere is, for me, non-negotiable. So we need to make sure that what is already happening in the best of our schools spreads to the rest of our schools.

I know from my conversations with teachers up and down the country that you go into teaching because you want to have a positive impact on the lives of young people. We want you to be able to do that for as many of them as possible, particularly in those areas currently lagging behind. The young people in areas of particular challenge need you to build capacity in the system. Without it they won't be able to access the type of education that can deliver them bright futures. For our part we will do all we can

to remove the barriers that might otherwise discourage you from rising to those challenges.

Our white paper

The proposals put forward in our '[Educational excellence everywhere](#)' white paper concentrate on building the framework that will allow you to succeed. If academies are the vehicle for success then I want you, as the drivers, to get in the driving seat safe in the knowledge that you are supported throughout the journey.

The white paper outlines our plans to put more power into the hands of the best leaders; expand teaching schools and NLEs and target their reach so no areas will be without access; ensure teaching schools co-ordinate and define high-quality ITT and CPD, as well as acting as brokerage hubs to facilitate school-to-school support; put in place a new fairer funding formula and target funding so the best leaders can build capacity for support; and create a growth fund for multi-academy trusts as well as an excellence in leadership fund to develop innovative new leadership ideas for challenged areas.

We are going to incentivise work in challenging areas by offering inspection holidays to give you enough time to truly make your mark on schools, and through accountability that focuses on progress - rather than simply attainment - as a measure of success; create achieving excellence areas so the schools in the most need can get better access to excellent teachers and leaders; and crucially we will create a national teaching service so we can recruit and retain the best teachers where they are needed most.

Far from being about academy status alone, our white paper is about nurturing great teachers, developing great leaders, tackling underperformance, targeting intervention, resourcing that's fair and accountability that's intelligent. Taken as a whole it represents a new era for the education system, one with opportunities and incentives for you to spread your reach so we really can realise excellence in every part of the country and in

every school.

In closing let me take this opportunity to say: thank you - for everything you are already doing to change the lives of young people. And let me urge you to seize the opportunities in the new era of education outlined by our white paper. Let me encourage you to use your incredible expertise to 'inspire success and excellence' in every part of the system. Let me say as your Secretary of State, how honoured I feel to see you telling the story of your own success.

With you, the professionals, rightly at the helm of the education system I know we will make educational excellence everywhere a reality.

Thank you.

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Published:

20 April 2016

From:

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Part of:

Academies and free schools

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