



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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31st January 2011



Free School Proposal: St Michael's Small School

Thank you for submitting your proposal for your school to convert to a Free 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 and invite you to proceed to business case stage.

Your initial proposal was for your existing school to become a Free School in 2011, and then for it to expand significantly from 2012 onwards. The approval of your proposal is on the basis that your business case and plan is for a school that does not become a Free School until September 2012.

I understand that my officials have already discussed this with you, and that you are content with this. The Department will work with you to do everything it can to make the expansion and opening of your school as a Free School in September 2012 a reality. I am very keen for the first Free Schools to be innovative and responsive to parental demand, and I believe that the expanded school your group 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 these initial cadres of Free Schools, to shape the way forward for future proposers.

Business Case

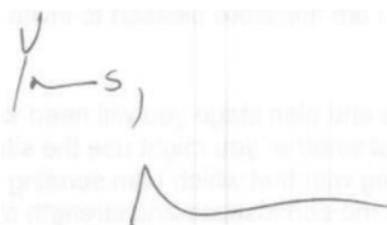
I want to ensure that you have the support you need to develop your business case, and particularly to ensure that the model of provision is financially viable. Attached to this letter you will find a table which sets out the tasks that will need to be completed. Please complete this table, identifying 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 leads, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Please note that the 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 2012 opening, as 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 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in the Department throughout this process, and direct any questions you have to them.

In addition to this letter, I will also be writing to your local authority and to Sarah Newton MP and George Eustice MP to inform them that your proposal has moved forward to business case stage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Gove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent 'M' at the beginning and a long, sweeping line at the end.

MICHAEL GOVE