

TEACHING SCHOOLS

The Government has recently outlined plans to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and school leadership through school-to-school support and peer-to-peer learning.

A key part of these plans will be a nationwide network of teaching schools.

What are Teaching Schools?

Teaching Schools will be outstanding schools that take the lead in supporting and assuring initial teacher training and professional and leadership development for teachers and leaders in their area.

It is envisaged that teaching schools will do three things:

1. Provide support for trainee teachers, leaders and other colleagues in schools by working as part of a partnership.
2. Provide support for schools that are facing challenging circumstances.
3. Create a network of schools that work in partnership to deliver both these agendas. So as well as offering support themselves, teaching schools will identify, develop and co-ordinate expertise in other schools for the benefit of all pupils in their area.

Teaching school designation will be open to all schools in England (*including primary, secondary, special, independent and recent academy converters*) that:

- have a significant track record of successful collaborative relationships with partner schools
- have an Ofsted rating of outstanding for overall effectiveness, teaching and learning, and leadership and management
- show consistently high levels of pupil performance or continued improvement
- have the proven capacity within their school to provide support and development to other schools
- have demonstrated a strong contribution to the delivery of high quality initial teacher training, professional/leadership development and school-to-school support

It is likely that there will be about 500 teaching schools by 2015.

Prioritising applications for teaching schools

In the event of too many applications, then schools will be selected on a fair and transparent process which is likely to take account of the following:

- the identified demand for school-to-school support in a given area and the level of support already being provided
- the numbers of other teaching schools in the same phase in any given area
- the number of schools already engaged in meaningful partnership with the applying schools
- other factors, such as:
 - the areas of expertise a school may offer if it meets an identified need
 - the need to support schools in challenging circumstances
 - the potential to build a local teaching school network

Pilot Teaching Schools Programme

There are currently 28 teaching schools (including primary, secondary and special schools) in 3 pilot areas - London, Greater Manchester and the Black Country. A further 23 are scheduled to be designated as teaching schools in the near future.

There are also over 240 training schools in operation across England which have developed professional development and ITT in their local areas and provide high quality, high volume school-led initial teacher training.

There are also a number of leadership partner schools that have been designated as part of the High Performing Specialist Schools programme.

Teaching school clusters

Small groups of schools will be able to apply for teaching school designation together, so long as each individual school meets the criteria. This may include cross-phase teaching schools (which may include an outstanding special school). However, the funding for joint applications will be the same as for a single teaching school, so the funding will need to be shared according to the roles taken by each school in the partnership.

Funding

The level of funding for teaching schools has yet to be confirmed but they will receive funding for their core role and they will also be paid to deliver activity such as initial teacher training, CPD, middle leadership development and specific school-to-school support.

It is expected that teaching schools will gradually develop more and more of their own income as their local partnerships develop. Teaching schools will primarily be accountable to their peers, as other schools will choose whether or not to take advantage of the provision and support that they offer.

Teaching schools and universities

The Department for Education expects all teaching schools will have strong links with at least one university partner to support their work. The Government White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' draws an analogy with teaching hospitals and it is anticipated that teaching schools and universities will work together to deliver accredited ITT Masters-level work and practice-based research, for instance through secondments and formal and informal sharing of staff.

You can find further detailed information on Teaching Schools on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk or by visiting www.nationalcollege.org.uk/teachingschools