

10<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about academies.

The Government is committed to ensuring every child has an excellent education which allows them to achieve their full potential. The reforms of the past 6 years have led to 1.4 million more children being taught in ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools. Central to this improvement has been the academy programme.

The academy programme puts control of running schools in the hands of teachers and school leaders – the people who know best how to run their schools. That is why the Government is committed to every school becoming an academy. This system will allow us to tackle underperformance far more swiftly than in a local-authority-maintained system where many schools have been allowed to languish in failure for years. At the same time, it will allow our most successful and popular schools to expand their reach to even more children.

Since launching its proposals in the White Paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, the Government has listened to feedback from MPs, teachers, school leaders and parents. It is clear from those conversations that the impact academies have in transforming young people’s life chances is widely accepted and that more and more schools are keen to embrace academy status.

As a result of these conversations, the Government has decided, while reaffirming its continued determination to see all schools becoming academies in the next 6 years, that it is not necessary to bring forward legislation for a blanket conversion of all schools to achieve this goal. The Government will continue to require underperforming schools to convert to academy status where they can benefit from the support of a strong sponsor. It will also legislate so that all schools within a local authority area are converted if the local authority can no longer viably support the remaining schools, or where a local authority is consistently failing to meet a minimum performance threshold and is unable to bring about meaningful school improvement.

The Government will focus its efforts on those schools most at risk of failing young people and on encouraging ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools to seize the opportunities of conversion, which will ensure the continued growth of the academy programme, empowering frontline heads and school leads, and transforming even more children’s education.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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