



The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith

Minister for Skills

Department for Education Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT

tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/dfe

The Baroness Barran MBE
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Tuesday 7th October 2025

Dear Diana,

I'd like to thank you for the interesting debate on Clause 50 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which seeks to change the current duty to issue academy orders to the most underperforming maintained schools into a discretionary power.

During the debate I mentioned the fact that around 40% of maintained schools identified for conversion take over a year to become academies. You asked me to clarify whether this figure related to conversions generally or only to conversions into sponsored academies, and I promised to write. I can confirm that the figure relates specifically to the proportion of maintained schools judged by Ofsted to be in a category of concern (i.e. special measures or requires significant improvement) which took more than a year to convert into sponsored academies between 1 January 2022 and 31 December 2024.

Thank you again for taking the time to engage on this matter. I hope this clarification is helpful and I will place a copy of this letter in the House libraries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jacqui Smith' with a stylized flourish at the end.

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