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Date: 18th February 1999

TO: HEADTEACHERS OF ALL SCHOOLS

Dear Headteacher

ADVANCED SKILLS TEACHERS

Further to the guidance given in MI 90/98, the DFEE has now produced more details about the national timescale and funding for the introduction of this new grade, and about the procedure and criteria for appointment of ASTs.

These make it clear that:

- i) only teachers who have passed a national assessment procedure will be eligible for appointment to AST posts, and ...
- ii) the 1999 financial year has been the initial pilot year of the new arrangements, during which it was only specialist schools and schools within EA7,s which have been able to apply for a teacher to be assessed for AST status.

The DFEE has been using the pilot year to establish national standards of competence for the AST grade so that there is a clear link between the new grade and high levels of performance. The standards against which applicants for AST status will be assessed are attached to this letter.

However, guidance issued to LEAs in relation to Standards Fund arrangements for the 1999/2000 financial year makes it clear that full introduction of the new grade will start from April 1999. Key features of this next phase are that:

from 1 April 1999, it is open to any school to create one or more AST posts
schools should advertise AST posts externally rather than make internal appointments

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