Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said this would be done after the Multimedia Development Corporation upgraded technical facilities at the schools.

To date, 58 of the schools have already achieved the status, 29 others are ranked four-star while one is ranked three-star. The five-star schools, he said, would then be used as the benchmark to turn other government schools into "smart schools" by 2010.

Hishammuddin said the concept of "Pembestarian Sekolah" which focused on teaching and learning (as well as school management) mediated by information and communication technology, was the way to go for all other schools under the ministry.

Under ministry plans, 7,500 government schools will be ranked three-star, 2,000 four-star and 500 five-star by 2010. The ministry will hasten all ICT initiatives, including computer laboratories and web televisions, for the schools. The schools would also be monitored under the Smart School Qualification Standard system to ensure they were on the right path to attaining excellence.

The ministry, Hishammuddin said, would also need to bridge the digital gap between urban, rural and remote schools.

"We are hoping that more schools can attain the five-, four- and three-star status by 2012," he said after launching the book Malaysia: From Traditional to Smart Schools -- The Malaysian Education Odyssey at his office yesterday.

On the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, he said any change would be made from Year One.

Hishammuddin said a win-win decision should be the only answer to the debate on the use of English in the teaching of Science and Mathematics as the ministry did not want students to be left out due to their poor command of the language.