



Department
for Education

Regional Director's Office

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The Members and Trustees of Quest (A Church of England Schools Trust)
682 Atherton Road
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28 February 2023

Dear Crispin Pailing

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Quest (A Church of England Schools Trust) in respect of University Collegiate School

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5.H of the funding agreement for University Collegiate School ("the Academy") the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if the Chief Inspector gives notice to the Academy Trust that special measures are required to be taken in relation to the Academy or the Academy requires significant improvement.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 2 February 2023 confirming that University Collegiate School was judged to be inadequate and has serious weaknesses. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

In its inspection report, Ofsted highlighted several concerns, including that:

- Leaders, trustees and members of the local advisory committee have overseen an inadequate standard of education for all pupils, including students in the sixth form. They have also failed to address the poor behaviour of pupils in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders, members of the local advisory committee and trustees have not demonstrated the capacity to tackle these considerable weaknesses. They have failed in their duties to keep pupils and students safe.
- Members of the local advisory committee do not understand their roles and responsibilities. Current tensions between governors and the board of trustees are hindering how quickly leaders can enact their vision for improving the quality of education for pupils.
- Leaders, members of the local advisory committee and trustees do not adequately safeguard pupils and staff. They do not have a coherent oversight of the safeguarding issues that pupils face. They do not manage safeguarding

concerns consistently well. Sometimes, they do not make timely referrals to external agencies. As a result, some pupils and staff feel unsafe.

- The curriculum is underdeveloped and is currently not suitably broad and balanced, particularly in key stage 3. As a result, pupils underachieve considerably across the subjects that they study.
- Leaders have not established appropriate assessment systems to check how well pupils and students learn the curriculum. Teachers are not adept at identifying gaps in pupils' and students' learning. Consequently, pupils and students throughout the school, including those who are disadvantaged, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have wide gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- The systems for identifying the needs of pupils and students with SEND are underdeveloped. Often, pupils' and students' support plans do not identify their specific needs. Many teachers do not have the information, knowledge or skills that they need to support these pupils and students effectively. They do not know how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, many pupils with SEND receive a poor-quality education.

As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the trust has capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the academy. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the academy to an alternative academy trust.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the funding agreement I will consider any written representations the trust wish to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice.

I would be grateful for the following evidence, which I will consider when assessing whether the trust is making sufficient improvements:

- **Leadership and governance:** Clear evidence that there is strong and stable leadership and effective governance in place at all levels to drive rapid and sustained school improvement and ensure pupils and students are safe.
- **Safeguarding:** Evidence to show that leaders and governors have acted immediately to build a strong culture of safeguarding where pupils and staff are protected from harm. This should include rigorous systems to report and record safeguarding concerns. Evidence should be provided to show that concerns are addressed to provide confidence to parents and pupils.
- **Behaviour:** Clear evidence is required that there is a robust behaviour policy in place and evidence that demonstrates effective action has been taken to improve pupils' behaviour, leading to a reduced level of instances of discriminatory language.
- **Education and Curriculum Planning:** A plan must be in place and fully implemented to ensure that action is taken to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is in place and that study programmes provide sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' employability skills.
- **School Improvement:** Clear evidence that a strong school improvement strategy has been implemented and that there is school improvement capacity within the trust to drive forward improvement. This strategy should lead to clear evidence of improving and sustained performance including progress and outcomes for pupils and students.

Please provide me with any representations the trust wishes to make by 21 March 2023 to enable me to assess the capacity of the trust to improve University Collegiate School.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, and Liverpool Diocese. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

Vicky Beer CBE
Regional Director for North West

CC: Ofsted
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Stuart Harrison, Liverpool Diocese