



Department
for Education

Regional Schools Commissioner's
Office
Lisa Mannall
2 Rivergate
Bristol
BS1 6EH

████████████████████
Sexey's School,
Cole Road,
Bruton,
Somerset,
BA10 0DF

24 May 2019

Dear ██████████,

Termination Warning Notice to the to the Members and Directors of Sexey's School.

In accordance with section 2A of the Academies Act 2010ⁱ any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State where special measures are required to be taken by the academy or the academy requires significant improvement and the Chief Inspector of Ofsted has given notice of that under section 13(3)(a) of the Education Act 2005.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 3 May 2019 confirming that Sexey's School was judged to be inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Of serious concern were Ofsted's conclusions that:

- The leadership of this school has recently been through a period of significant change. New senior leaders have improved many aspects of the school's work. However, they have not yet established an effective safeguarding practice in the school or the boarding provision
- Safeguarding arrangements are weak because too often there is a lack of a fast and effective response to concerns about pupils
- The governing body has not challenged senior leaders robustly enough about the arrangements for pupils' welfare
- The risk-assessment process for safeguarding vulnerable pupils is not rigorous enough. It does not lead to timely and effective action by staff to protect these pupils
- The systems to ensure pupils are safe are unclear and do not follow statutory guidance. This is further compounded, because leaders responsible for safeguarding do not have the knowledge and skills required to take

appropriate action and safeguard pupils fully. This results in the safety of pupils being compromised.

- Child protection concerns are not managed well or in accordance with statutory guidance. For example, leaders have not consulted fully with relevant safeguarding agencies before making decisions about the best course of action to take.
- Too often, the assessment and management of safeguarding risks are insufficient and not completed swiftly. Immediate protective strategies are not put in place to protect pupils. Risks are not routinely communicated to the staff who are responsible for care and supervision, so that pupils can be protected.

I appreciate that the report identifies a number of positive actions that have been taken by the new headteacher and governors. The report identifies that new senior leaders have a good understanding of the changes that need to be made to improve the school and the positive impact on the culture by the current leadership of boarding. However, despite a history of concerns about safeguarding practice, first identified in the boarding provision inspection in October 2016, the current report states, "*The leadership of safeguarding is weak, and inadequate practice has not been challenged*".

Since 2016 the school has repeatedly been found not to meet a number of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, in particular standard 11.1 which requires that:

The school ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state.

(See reports dated 12-14 October 2016, 6-8 March 2018 and 20 -21 March 2019)

Despite this history of concerns, in the March 2019 inspection Ofsted identified that "*The governing body has not challenged senior leaders robustly enough about the arrangements for pupils' welfare*". This builds on the school's 2017 report which also found that the governors had not challenged senior leaders effectively in a number of areas and concluded that "*Governors accept the leaders' view that the school is outstanding but have not yet fully challenged the evidence to support this.*"

On the basis of the evidence provided by Ofsted, I am now issuing this Termination Warning Notice because I have concerns that the academy's governance, its management of safeguarding, and educational standards, are unlikely to improve rapidly and sustainably without further intervention.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the funding agreement I will consider any written representations you wish to make.

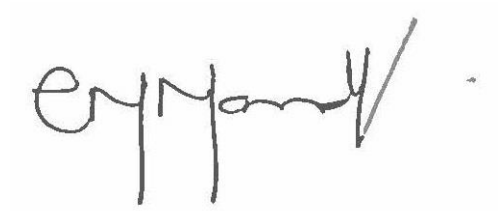
Please provide me with any representations you have by 20 June 2019, copied to

[REDACTED]

I am copying this letter to the National Schools Commissioner, Somerset County

Council, the Bath and Wells Diocese and Hugh Sexey's Hospital. This letter will also be published on gov.uk. We aim to do this within 15 working days of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Mannall', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lisa Mannall
Regional Schools Commissioner for the South West

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area of the second person.

Dominic Herrington National Schools Commissioner

ⁱ Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016