



Department
for Education

Regional Schools Commissioner's Office
North West London & South Central
Department for Education
34 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1JJ

Mr Trevor Edinborough, Chair
The Members and Directors/Trustees of The Griffin Schools Trust
c/o The Talent Factory
4-14 Barmeston Road
London
SE6 3BH

28 August 2020

Dear Mr Edinborough,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of The Griffin Schools Trust ("The Trust") in respect of Stantonbury International Academy ("The Academy")

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.

Following an Ofsted inspection on 28 and 29 January 2020, the Academy was judged to be Inadequate and requiring special measures. The definition of an inadequate special measures judgement is that the school is, "failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school" (School Inspection Handbook, November 2019).

In the published report Ofsted reported that:

- The Trust had overseen the decline of the school since the last inspection.
- The Trust had not done enough to check that the senior leaders' management of the school is effective.
- Leaders have not been effective in addressing weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders have improved pupils overall attendance rates. However, not enough has been done to tackle pupil's persistent absence and high levels of truancy.
- Additionally, the arrangements for safeguarding are not effective and many pupils do not feel safe attending the Academy.

On 15 July 2020 I issued the Trust with a Minded to Terminate letter in relation to the Academy. You responded to my letter on 03 August 2020 and provided the following as supporting evidence:

- A post OfSTED Action Plan
- A Safeguarding Evidence document

On 21 August, my officials and I met with Trevor Edinborough, Chair of the Trust and Anne Powell, Chief Executive of the Trust to discuss the support currently in place at the Academy and to seek clarity on aspects of the representations made by the Trust.

In addition to your written response and the documents listed above, I have also considered the information provided by the Trust on 21 August 2020. I remain concerned about the future of the Academy as part of the Trust and I am of the opinion that the representations submitted:

- Fail to account for the poor outcomes at the Academy since it joined the trust, or present a credible plan for how outcomes will improve in a rapid and sustainable way.
- Fail to address the systemic failures in leadership, accountability, governance and monitoring highlighted in the Ofsted report. Further, these areas are not referenced sufficiently in the action plan produced by the Trust.
- Fail to demonstrate how leadership at trust level, will be improved and how trustees will hold trust leaders to account more effectively in order to secure the improvement required at the school. This includes the leadership of school improvement.

In addition to the above I have also considered capacity at Trust level more widely. The Trust currently operate three secondary schools, two of which are performing well below national average for pupil outcomes and have done so over a number of years. In that context, I have serious concerns about the capacity of the Trust to provide and monitor the high-quality intervention needed at the Academy. Further, I remain concerned that the Trust will continue to fail to hold leaders to account as little progress appears to have been made in this area since the date of the Ofsted inspection.

In conclusion, I am concerned that the Trust lacks the ability to drive forward rapid and sustainable school improvement at the Academy. Therefore, having reviewed the submitted evidence and reflecting on our conversation, I am issuing the Trust with this Termination Warning Notice in respect of the Academy.

To support the decision-making with regard to terminating the funding agreement of the Academy, I on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider any further written representations you wish to make. Please use this as an opportunity to submit any further evidence that you feel will support your case.

Please provide me with any representations you have by **05 October 2020**.

I am copying this letter to Dominic Herrington, the National Schools Commissioner and Mac Heath, the Director of Children's Services at Milton Keynes Council.

This letter will also be published on gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Dethridge", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Schools Commissioner
North West London & South Central England

Cc: Dominic Herrington, National Schools Commissioner

Cc: Mac Heath, Director of Children's Services Milton Keynes Council

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