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for Education

Department for Education

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The Members and Directors/Trustees of Stanton Lane Trust  
Stanton Lane Trust  
Lexicon House  
17 Old Court Place  
London W8 4PL

9<sup>th</sup> March 2017

*Dear Members and Directors*

### **Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors/Trustees of the Stanton Lane Trust in respect of Basildon Upper Academy**

As a result of the Education and Adoption Act 2016<sup>1</sup>, regardless of the prior terms in that academy's funding agreement, where an academy has met the coasting definition, and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) on behalf of the Secretary of State has notified the academy that it has fallen within the coasting definition, then the Secretary of State is ultimately able to terminate the funding agreement for that academy and move the academy to a new trust. Before terminating the funding agreement on the grounds that the academy is coasting, the RSC must first give the academy proprietor a termination warning notice.

I wrote to the Chair of the Trust about Basildon Upper Academy on 23 January 2017 to set out that the Academy had met the coasting definition based on its performance in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Since then I have reviewed the response I received from Doug Lawson, Executive Principal of The Basildon Academies. My colleague, [REDACTED], visited the academy on 10 February, and I had a very useful meeting at the academy on 27 February.

Based on the information gathered during these processes, I have assessed the school and its capacity to improve and I am now issuing this Termination Warning Notice. This is because I am not satisfied that the Trust has a sufficient plan to bring about the necessary improvement. I have based my conclusion on:

- The Trust's response to the coasting notification which did not acknowledge that the school's performance over the last three years met the coasting criteria nor did it give sufficient detail about the Trust's actions to raise standards in any specific terms
- The Trust plans a very significant reduction in leadership capacity to meet the

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010 as inserted by the Education and Adoption Act 2016.

financial difficulties facing the Trust but did not present a clear case about how this will lead to the improved standards needed

- The proposed reduction in leadership raises concern that there will be insufficient capacity to improve standards
- The highly challenging financial situation of the school and the failure of the Trust to date to meet the conditions set out in the Financial Notice to Improve (FNTI) that was issued on 20 December 2016 suggests there is insufficient leadership and capacity to improve standards
- The failure to date to carry out an independent review of governance as required in the FNTI

The Schools Causing Concern guidance states that:

“a termination warning notice will require the academy proprietor to take specified action to improve the academy by a specified date. This could include working with a system leader such as those from within Teaching School Alliances or National Leaders in Education (NLEs), or forming a partnership with a high performing school. It will also require the academy proprietor to respond to the RSC, either by making representations, or by agreeing to take the specified action by the specified date.”

In this instance, I would like you to set up a partnership with the Loxford School Trust to develop a different way of running Basildon Upper Academy which will ensure the standards of performance are raised.

Before I decide whether to terminate the Trust's funding agreement I will consider any representations you may wish to make about the concerns I have raised and your proposed course of action to ensure standards are raised. In making the decision on whether to terminate the funding agreement, I will consider those representations, your plans to produce rapid and sustained improvement in educational performance standards, and your views on setting up a partnership with the Loxford School Trust. Please provide any such representations in writing within 14 days.

As set out in the Schools Causing Concern guidance, the Trust must inform parents that the school has fallen within the coasting definition and should keep parents informed about further developments, including what action will be taken to improve the performance of the school.

I am copying this letter to the National Schools Commissioner.

*Yours sincerely*  


Tim Coulson  
Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England and North East London  
CC: Sir David Carter  
Doug Lawson