



Department
for Education

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1 August 2018

Hannah Ranson (Chair of Trustees)
Sandye Place Academy
Park Road
Sandy
SG19 1JD

Dear Mrs Ranson,

**Notice of Termination of Funding Agreement in respect of Sandye Place Academy,
Sandy, Central Bedfordshire**

I write concerning the funding agreement made between the Secretary of State and Sandye Place Academy (the Academy) on 31 March 2011.

As a result of the Education and Adoption Act 2016, regardless of the terms in an academy's funding agreement, the Regional Schools Commissioner (on behalf of the Secretary of State) can terminate the funding agreement of an academy that has been judged inadequate.

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 January 2018).

On 11 June 2018 I gave written notice under section 2A of the Academies Act 2010 of the Secretary of State's intention to terminate the funding agreement, and invited the Academy Trust, in accordance with that provision, to respond with written representations by 2 July 2018.

Thank you for sending written representations on 14 June 2018, which I have now reviewed. In terms of the actions taken by governors to improve the school, I note in particular the following points:

- The leadership of the existing governing body changed in July 2017, and the new governors had started to make changes, including easing the burden on the headteacher who was acting as Executive Head of both Sandye Place and Maple Tree Lower School.
- Following the Ofsted judgement in December 2017, the governors took steps to improve the situation by replacing the existing School Improvement Partner (SIP) with a new SIP with a proven track record of improving results.
- The governors also introduced an accountability strategy via a Target Intervention Board; and revised teachers' timetables to allow more time for the core subjects of English, Maths and science.

I have considered carefully the actions which the Trust has taken in order to secure the necessary school improvement capability and am not convinced that they are sufficiently robust:

- There is no evidence of how the Trust is securing the additional capacity to ensure the necessary improvements in the school take place, for example by bringing in other external capacity apart from the SIP.
- There is no evidence of a plan to address Ofsted's main points regarding strengthening leadership and management, and holding leaders to account.

Consequently, in accordance with section 2A and on behalf of the Secretary of State, I am issuing you with written notice to terminate the Funding Agreement with the Sandye Place Academy Trust, which I expect to take effect on **31st August 2019**.

As you know, ministers have made an in-principle decision to close the Academy, and we have been holding a listening period to gain the views of stakeholders. The listening period ends on 3 August 2018.

In this context, I would emphasise that termination of a school funding agreement does not necessarily signal closure of the Academy, and I am still considering whether the school could be sponsored by an alternative Trust.

I recognise that this letter will be disappointing for the pupils, parents and staff of Sandye Place Academy. I hope that the Trustees will continue to work closely with officials from my office and Central Bedfordshire Local Authority to ensure the best possible education for all the pupils in the school.

I am copying this letter to the National Schools Commissioner Sir David Carter; Sue Harrison, Central Bedfordshire Local Authority; and Ofsted. This letter will be published on www.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Post
Regional Schools Commissioner,
North West London / South Central

Cc: Sir David Carter, National Schools Commissioner
Cc: Sue Harrison, Central Bedfordshire Local Authority
Cc: Paul Brooker, Ofsted Regional Director, East of England