



Department
for Education

Department for Education
Bishopsgate House
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20th August 2020

Mr Paul Rickeard
Director of Education
The Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle
Church House
St John's Terrace
Percy Main
North Shields
NE29 6HS

Dear Paul

Minded to Terminate Letter to the Members and Directors of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust in respect of NCEA Duke's Secondary School (the 'academy')

In accordance with section 2A of the Academies Act 2010¹ any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State where an inadequate judgment has been given to an academy or where 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 14 May 2020 confirming that NCEA Duke's Secondary School was judged to be inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Of serious concern are Ofsted's conclusions that:

- weaknesses in the planning and implementation of the curriculum have led to pupils making inadequate progress across a wide range of subjects
- disadvantaged pupils make much weaker progress than other pupils nationally
- pupils' behaviour remains variable
- pupils' attendance is not improving quickly enough
- pupils' achievement has declined in the sixth form.

As Regional Schools Commissioner, I must be satisfied that the trust can achieve rapid and sustained improvement of the academy. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider a Notice of Termination in accordance with Section 2A of the Academies Act 2010.

Although I am aware that the trust has introduced new leadership at the academy and through Opportunity North East (ONE) Vision have a school improvement plan in place for the 20/21 academic year, I would like to provide you with the opportunity to provide written representations detailing any additional steps that are being taken to secure improvement. I will take any representations into account in making the decision whether to terminate the funding agreement. Representations should be provided within 20 working days of the date of this letter.

¹ Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016

My office will contact you to arrange a meeting at the same time as the ONE Vision progress meeting for the school.

I am copying this letter to the National Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services at Northumberland County Council. This letter will also be published on www.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'K Cowell', written in a cursive style.

Katherine Cowell
Regional Schools Commissioner for the North.