



Department
for Education

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Schools Commissioner for
North West London and South Central
England
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The Members and Trustees of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust
Quadrant House
The Quadrant
Brighton Road
Sutton
SM2 5AS

11th March 2022

Dear Mr Mercer,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust in respect of The Young People's Academy

In accordance with sections 2A and 2D of the Academies Act 2010¹ 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 26th January 2022 confirming that The Young People's Academy (the Academy) was judged to be inadequate and requires special measures. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

The Ofsted report, published on 11th February 2022, highlights the following key areas of concern:

- All pupils have significant social and emotional needs. Despite this, leaders do not make sure that the premises are maintained well and that graffiti and litter are removed promptly. Leaders should urgently ensure that the premises are improved and better managed, so these support rather than detract from pupils' personal development and well-being.
- There are too many instances of unacceptable behaviour among pupils. Some pupils do not feel safe, and staff have come to believe that they should expect to experience this type of behaviour from pupils. Leaders should urgently ensure that the implementation of the behaviour policy leads to a prompt and sharp reduction in unacceptable and dangerous pupil behaviour.

- Some pupils abscond from school, leaving them at risk. This can involve them using physical force to break through locks. Other pupils witness unacceptable, aggressive behaviour. Leaders should urgently tackle these concerns so that pupils stay safe within secure areas of the school and comply with the agreed school policies.
- Subject leaders do not consistently ensure that the sequence in which pupils learn different components of skills and knowledge is well considered across the whole range of subjects. Leaders have not identified gaps in teachers' subject knowledge sharply enough to help them decide what staff training to prioritise. Leaders should ensure that the reasons for the way in which the curriculum is organised are clear to all staff and provide subject-specific training based on a thorough review of gaps in staff's subject knowledge.

As Regional Schools Commissioner, I need to be satisfied that the trust has capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at The Young People's Academy. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative academy trust.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the funding agreement, I will consider any written representations you wish to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice. This information should include, but is not limited to:

- An update on the progress made against the post-Ofsted action plan submitted to my office on 2nd February
- Information on what action is being taken to support improvement at the academy, timescales of this work and monitoring arrangements
- Details of plans to strengthen leadership and governance oversight of the Academy at trust level including details of the available supportive capacity in the wider trust.

In addition, I request your agreement to the following:

- I would like to review progress against the trust's action plan on a monthly basis, including through tripartite meetings with the Department and Hillingdon LA where appropriate, given the LA's responsibility for safeguarding.
- I would like an Education Expert, commissioned by the Department, to visit the school early in the summer term and report back to me. The visit will focus on issues highlighted in the Ofsted report.
- I would like the Trust to provide details of immediate steps taken and planned actions to address safeguarding issues identified in the Ofsted report, including any additional actions taken following LA safeguarding visits.

Please provide me with any representations you wish to make, the additional information requested above and your agreement to my requests set out above by 1st April 2022.

I am copying this letter to the National Schools Commissioner, Ofsted, and the London Borough of Hillingdon. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "K. Dethridge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Schools Commissioner for North West London and South Central

CC: National Schools Commissioner, Ofsted, London Borough of Hillingdon

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