



Department
for Education

Regions Group
East Midlands
Department for Education
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Mr Richard Lindop
Chair of Trustees
The Ecclesbourne School
Wirksworth Road
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Belper
Derbyshire
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22 September 2022

Dear Mr Lindop,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of The Ecclesbourne School.

In accordance with sections 2A and 2D of the Academies Act 2010 any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State where special measures are required to be taken in relation to 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 7 July 2022 confirming that The Ecclesbourne School was judged to be inadequate and requires significant improvement. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice. In their published inspection report, Ofsted highlighted concerns including that:

- Some pupils, and students in the sixth form, do not feel safe in school. They experience harassment. Some pupils routinely use homophobic, racist and misogynistic language. Some pupils purposefully intimidate others. This behaviour often goes unchallenged by teachers. Leaders have failed to solve this issue.

- Pupils say that if they have a problem about bullying or feel unsafe, they have someone in school to speak to. However, some pupils have stopped telling their teachers about their problems. Some pupils have lost confidence that they will be taken seriously. They do not trust that the problem will be solved.
- Safeguarding records are not comprehensive enough. Details of incidents are held in different places. Chronologies are incomplete and do not always give a true picture of the actions taken to safeguard pupils. Leaders must ensure that safeguarding processes are robust so that the designated safeguarding leader, and safeguarding team, can instantly access all the relevant information for the most vulnerable pupils and that the information is clear, accurate and up to date.
- There are failings in the safeguarding culture of the school. Some pupils are victims of inappropriate sexual harassment. Some pupils do not trust that bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying, will be resolved effectively. Leaders must ensure that systems for reporting and tackling bullying and harassment are robustly reviewed and implemented so that all pupils feel safe to report concerns.
- A few subjects are not well planned and implemented. This means that some pupils and sixth-form students do not acquire the knowledge and skills they need in these subjects. Some pupils do not remember previous learning. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are well planned and implemented. They must continue to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, remember the knowledge and skills they have learned in order to excel.
- Leaders and governors have an overly generous view of the school. They have not checked, and then made sure, that the school is one where all pupils feel comfortable and safe.

As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the trust has the capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the 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 the trust wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice. The trust's representations should set out the actions it plans to take at school level to address the significant issues highlighted in the Ofsted report, as well as at trust level to ensure there is strong oversight of school improvement and safeguarding. I would also like to understand what external support the trust is drawing on, including from other trusts with strong practice in these areas.

Please provide me with any representations you wish to make by 12 October 2022.

I am copying this letter to Mike Sheridan Ofsted's Regional Director for the East of England and the East Midlands and Carol Cammiss the Executive Director of

Children's Services at Derbyshire Local Authority. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

Kate Copley / Carol Gray
Regional Director
Regions Group, East Midlands

CC: Mike Sheridan, Ofsted's Regional Director for the East of England and the East Midlands

Carol Cammiss, the Executive Director of Children's Services at Derbyshire Local Authority.

James McNamara, headteacher at The Ecclesbourne School.