

The Members and Trustees of
The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust
53 New Street
Chelmsford
CM1 1AT

03 November 2022

Dear Michael Ferguson

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust in respect of Southminster Church of England Primary 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 19 July confirming that Southminster 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.

Concerns with safeguarding, behaviour and attitudes:

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are not securely in place. Concerns recorded about pupils who are not in school are not followed up quickly enough.
- In addition, pupils' persistent absence is high and continuing to rise.
- Pupils say not all adults deal with poor behaviour well enough. Leaders are not checking that their behaviour policy and the agreed recording systems are being effectively implemented by all staff consistently well. Therefore, leaders do not know how much difference their actions are making to behaviour.

Concerns with the quality of leadership and management:

- Relationships between school leaders and the trust have not been as productive as they should be. Leaders have not sufficiently prioritised the most important areas for improvement.
- Several teachers who are new to the profession are taking on leadership roles with little guidance or support. This has led school leaders and staff to be overwhelmed and has resulted in an increasing and unmanageable workload.

Concerns with the quality of education, including Early Years Provision

- The quality of education that pupils receive from Reception to Year 6 has taken far too long to improve. Pupils across the school, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are not receiving an acceptable standard of education.
- Pupils with SEND are not given support to achieve well. the classroom. Learning for pupils with SEND is not reviewed routinely to check that teachers are providing the support, so that pupils can successfully access the curriculum. Consequently
- Pupils do not learn from a curriculum that is sufficiently well designed or taught. This means that many pupils do not achieve well. Too many pupils leave Reception not prepared for the demands of key stage 1.
- Many pupils leave the school not having the necessary skills they need to be successful at secondary school. A significant proportion of pupils are not receiving a broad and balanced curriculum.

As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the trust has 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 wish to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice. In addition, please provide me with the following:

- A copy of the post-Ofsted Action Plan;
- Information on what action is being taken to support educational improvement at the academy and the timescales of this work;
- Information on any other activity aimed at addressing weaknesses in the school's safeguarding processes, educational provision, financial management or governance.

Please provide me with any representations the Trust wish to make by 24 November.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education, and Essex local authority. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Duff
Regional Director for East of England

CC: Ofsted, Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education, Essex County Council