



Department
for Education

Regional Director's Office
Regional Director
North West Regions Group
3rd Floor, Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

The Members and Trustees of Kirkby Stephen Grammar School,
Christian Head,
Kirkby Stephen,
CA17 4HA

By email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

16 March 2023

Dear Mr Weir

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Kirkby Stephen Grammar School, Christian Head, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria, CA17 4HA in respect of Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

In accordance with sections 2A and 2D of the Academies Act 2010ⁱ, 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 13 January 2023 confirming that Kirkby Stephen Grammar 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 its inspection report Ofsted highlighted concerns, including that:

- The culture of safeguarding is poor. This puts pupils' and students' welfare and safety at risk. Leaders and governors, as a matter of urgency, must improve the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, so that all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, receive effective and timely support to ensure that they are safe.
- Members of the governing body lack sufficient understanding of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are safe. This means they are not fulfilling their statutory duties or providing suitable challenge and support to leaders in relation to safeguarding. Governors must ensure that they have the

knowledge and expertise that they need to hold leaders to account for the safeguarding culture within the school.

- Leaders' work to promote a love of reading and to support pupils who are not accomplished readers is in its infancy. This limits pupils' desire to read for pleasure. It also prevents some pupils from becoming fluent and confident readers. Leaders should ensure that staff are suitably trained to support pupils who find reading difficult and to inspire pupils to read widely and often.
- Some pupils with SEND are not supported well enough by staff. This means that these pupils are unable to progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information that they hold about pupils with SEND more effectively to adapt how they deliver curriculum content.
- The curriculum in some subjects is under-developed. Subject leaders are in the process of clarifying exactly what will be taught. These curriculums lack the ambition of the national curriculum. This means that some pupils do not acquire sufficient knowledge to prepare them for their GCSE courses. Leaders should ensure that they identify the important knowledge that pupils must know and remember in these subjects.

You will appreciate that, 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 that has the capacity and experience to support the academy to improve in the longer term. I welcome the positive discussions that I understand have been taking place between my team and yourselves about potential multi academy trust options for Kirkby Stephen Grammar School. I am interested to understand the trust board's current view and its vision for the future of the SAT; including, an update of any discussions trustees have had in relation to joining a strong 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.

Please provide me with any written representations the trust wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice by no later 17 April 2023. The time frame has been extended to account for the school term holidays.

I would be grateful, whilst addressing the points raised by Ofsted above, if you would also include the actions you have taken as a trust regarding the implementation of effective safeguarding systems and trust wide training. This should consider how these be embedded and respond to the following: .

- Effective and timely support of pupils to make sure they are safe. What provisions have you put in place and how do you continue to mitigate the risk of potential harm?
- Members of the governing body do not have sufficient insight into their responsibilities for keeping pupils' safe, or enough oversight of the safeguarding arrangements in the school. What actions have been put in place to support and upskill the board of trustees to the required standard?

I am copying this letter to Ofsted and [REDACTED], Director of Children's Services at Cumbria County Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

Vicky Beer C.B.E.
Regional Director for North West

CC: Ofsted, [REDACTED]

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