



Department  
for Education

**Regions Group North East  
Bishopsgate House  
Feethams  
Darlington  
DL1 5QE**

**01325792538**

Chair of Trustees  
Northern Leaders Trust  
Kenton School  
Drayton Road  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE3 3RU

The Members and Trustees of Northern Leaders Trust

31 March 2023

Dear Chair of Trustees

**Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Northern Leaders Trust in respect of Kenton School**

I notified the trust on 23 November 2022 that Kenton School (“the Academy”) is not making necessary improvements.<sup>1</sup> I invited the trust’s representations in response to the notification letter, which the trust provided. I have applied the principles set out in the published document, Regional Directors decision making: 2022 and considered the Academy’s circumstances in line with the criteria set out in chapter 4 of the Schools Causing Concern guidance.

I refer to my letter of 01 March 2023. As stated in that letter, as Regional Director I must be confident, based on the information available and evidence provided, that the trust can deliver rapid and sustained improvements at the Academy. Currently I am not satisfied this is the case. I therefore intended to issue a Termination Warning Notice.

In accordance with clauses 5.B to 5.E of the funding agreement for Kenton School the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement where

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<sup>1</sup> The term “not making necessary improvements” is used in the Schools Causing Concern guidance (October 2022 update). A reference in that guidance, and in this letter, to schools “not making necessary improvements” should be read as meaning that such schools meet the statutory definition of ‘coasting’, contained in regulation 4 of the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022.

paragraphs (2), (3), (4) or (5) of regulation 4 of the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022 applies to the academy and the Secretary of State has notified the Academy Trust.

Following this notification, we spoke to you on 03 March 2023 about potential next steps, including support to assist the trust in raising standards at the Academy.

In considering whether to take intervention action, I have taken into account all the available evidence, including the representations received from the trust. I have also taken into account Ofsted's reports of 27 September 2016, 26 February 2019 and 13 September 2022 which found the Academy to be Requires Improvement in terms of overall effectiveness; and that the Academy was part of the trust during each of these inspections.

I also note Ofsted found, in its latest inspection, that the trust's new leadership team had seen the rate of school improvement work accelerate. However, since this inspection, the leadership of both the trust and the Academy has changed further.

The latest Ofsted report highlighted areas for improvement specifically in relation to the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes and attendance. The report stated:

- There is variation between some subjects in the effectiveness with which teachers deliver the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects. Leaders should continue to improve staff expertise so that there is greater consistency in the quality of education across the school.
- A minority of pupils do not behave as well as they should. This leads to repeated suspensions which means that they miss lessons and fall behind. Leaders should take action to reduce the number of incidents of poor behaviour in school, including those leading to suspension.
- Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are absent from school too frequently. As a consequence, gaps in their knowledge develop over time. Leaders should ensure that new systems to improve attendance are carefully monitored and if necessary, further developed so that pupils attend school regularly.

For this reason I require the trust to take the specified actions below.

The following actions ("the Specified Actions") must be taken by the stated timescales or the Secretary of State may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement pursuant to clause 5.E of the funding agreement.

- Progress bespoke school improvement support, funded by the department's Trust and School improvement (TSI) offer and delivered by a school improvement partner, identified by the department, that has a track record in delivering improvements in schools and for pupils with

a similar context. Arrangements for the support to be in place by 16 June 2023.

- Work with the school improvement partner to review Kenton School's development plan for any areas of weakness and to identify additional measures that could be put in place with a specific focus on driving rapid improvement in pupil outcomes. Revised and quality assured improvement plan in place and shared with my team by 21 July 2023. The plan and milestones will be subject to agreement by the department.
- Implement the agreed plan and work with the school improvement partner to provide termly updates to my team on progress against the action plan and impact of those actions in the Academy with the first update submitted by 27 October 2023.

I will monitor progress made towards meeting the Specified Actions. If the trust fails to meet any of the above Specified Actions by the specified date, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative trust.

I reserve the right to amend this Termination Warning Notice to specify further action which the trust must take, and the date by which it must be completed.

The trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 09 May 2023, making any representations the trust wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice and the above Specified Actions, or providing confirmation that the trust intends to comply with the above Specified Actions by the specified dates.

If the trust fails to respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 09 May 2023, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, and to Assistant Director, Education & Skills, Newcastle City Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely



**Vicky Beer CBE**  
**Regional Director for North West**

CC: Ofsted, Newcastle City Council