



Department  
for Education

**Regional Director's Office**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

The Members and Directors of Cidari Education Limited  
Clayton House  
Walker Park  
Blackburn  
BB1 2QE

7th June 2023

Dear Mr Lloyd

**Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors of Cidari Education Limited in respect of Darwen St James CofE Primary Academy**

In accordance with clauses 5F to 5H of the funding agreement for Darwen St James CofE Primary Academy ("the Academy"), the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if the Chief Inspector gives notice to the Academy Trust that special measures are required to be taken in relation to the Academy or the Academy requires significant improvement.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 confirming that Darwen St James CofE Primary 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 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 highlights the following key areas of concern:

- Leaders and teachers' expectations of what pupils should know and be able to do are too low. Too little thought is given to ensuring that pupils gain the fundamental knowledge that unlocks future learning.
- Trustees and members of the local governing committee have not offered sufficient support and challenge to improve the curriculum and raise pupils' achievement. This means that weaknesses have not been rooted out and remedied.

- Leaders' capacity to improve the school is poor. Their efforts to bring about improvement have not made enough of an in-road on the many weaknesses. Subject leaders do not have the expertise or knowledge to resolve the issues with the curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not acquire the rich body of knowledge to which they are entitled.
- The curriculum in many subjects is not well designed. It does not provide teachers with the guidance that they need to know about what pupils should learn and when this knowledge should be taught. This hampers pupils from building their learning securely over time.
- Teachers do not check on pupils' learning well enough, nor do they give pupils the opportunity to recap what has been taught. Mistakes and misconceptions go unchecked. This causes gaps in pupils' understanding, and pupils struggle to recall what they have learned.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not identified early or accurately enough. Teachers lack the expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils fare poorly in terms of their academic achievement.
- The curriculum between the different classes in the early years is disjointed. This prevents children from making the best possible start when they enter Year 1.

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.

Please provide me with any representations the trust wish to make by Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023. These should include, but are not limited to:

- The post-Ofsted inspection plan for the academy. This should include how issues identified with the planning, design and delivery of the curriculum, achievement of pupils with SEND and teachers' practice will be addressed;
- details of how the trust will support improvements in leadership capacity at the academy; and
- details of how the trust board assures itself on the performance of individual academies within it and the information provided to Directors to allow them to do this.

I am copying this letter to: Ofsted; Joanne Siddle, DCS for Blackburn with Darwen Council; Stephen Whittaker, Director of Education for the Blackburn Church of England Diocese; and Sally Schofield, Deputy Director of Education for the Blackburn Church of England Diocese. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

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

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