



Department
for Education

Hannah Woodhouse
Regional Director
South West Regions Group
Second Floor
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Avon Street

The Members and Trustees of Beacon Education MAT LTD
Minehead Middle School
Ponsford Road
Minehead
Somerset
TA24 5RH

3 May 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Beacon Education MAT LTD in respect of Minehead Middle 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 9 March 2023 confirming that Minehead Middle School was judged to be inadequate and has serious weaknesses. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

In issuing this Termination Warning Notice, I must set out my concerns with the performance of the academy, and the capacity of the trust to drive rapid and sustained improvement. The Ofsted report highlights a number of key concerns:

- “Expectations of pupils are too low. A significant minority of pupils have negative attitudes to learning. Some pupils disrupt lessons or display unruly behaviour around the school. Too many pupils who attend the school say they are unhappy.”

- “A lack of stable leadership over time has made it difficult for the school to secure necessary improvements. Staff do not always feel supported by leaders, including those at the multi-academy trust.”
- “Behaviour is poor. Lessons are regularly disrupted. Some pupils behave in a disorderly way around the site. Therefore, many pupils find school life challenging.”
- “Attendance is consistently low and there is little sign of improvement. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Consequently, pupils are missing large amounts of learning time.”
- “Pupils with SEND do not always receive the support they need to learn the curriculum successfully. Some teachers do not adapt learning in response to pupils’ needs. There is a lack of confidence among parents in the school’s provision for pupils with SEND.”

I must also note the Ofsted profile of other academies in the trust. Minehead First School is rated as Requires Improvement, and is subject to departmental intervention under the ‘coasting’ schools regulations. Danesfield Church of England Middle School has had two consecutive Requires Improvement judgements. St Peter’s Church of England First School has recently had a Section 8 inspection which found that it might not retain its Good rating when a Section 5 inspection is carried out. St. Michael’s Church England First School has a Good judgement from 2019 and Old Cleeve CofE School is yet to be inspected as an academy but was judged to be Outstanding in 2011 before it joined the trust.

I also note concerns that have arisen from the trust’s recent External Review of Governance, conducted by [REDACTED], NLG. While the report highlights the improvements that are starting to be embedded at trust board level, I am concerned that:

- “Trustees are not fully effective in holding the CEO to account for delivering the trust strategic priorities.”
- “The CEO and COO have not received performance management this academic year.”
- “The trust have not yet developed trust wide school improvement strategies.”
- “The member’s committee is not effective.”
- “The trust board membership is not compliant with the trust articles of association.”
- “Trustees do not engage with training from a wide range of external bodies with expertise in trust governance.”
- “There are areas of non-compliance to be addressed.”

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 25 May 2023.

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

Yours sincerely



Hannah Woodhouse
Regional Director for the South West

CC: [REDACTED], Ofsted
[REDACTED], Somerset County Council

¹ Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016