



Department
for Education

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Mr Rowland Travis and Ms Gemma Penny
Chair of Trustees and Headteacher
Allestree Woodlands School
Blenheim Drive
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03 March 2023

Dear Mr Travis and Ms Penny

Termination Warning Notice in respect of Allestree Woodlands School (the academy)

In accordance with sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010¹, any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State where the academy is coasting as set out in the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022 and the Secretary of State has notified the academy trust that the academy is coasting.

I notified the trust on 6 October 2022 that Allestree Woodlands School (“the academy”) meets the legal definition of a school that is coasting (not making necessary improvements) as defined in the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022. On 25 November 2022, I invited the trust’s representations in response to the notification letter. The trust provided its representations on 12 December 2022.

I need to be satisfied that the academy trust is taking action to raise 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 applied the principles set out in the published document, [Regional Directors decision making: 2022](#) and considered the school’s circumstances in line with the criteria set out in chapter 4 of the [Schools Causing Concern guidance](#).

Having assessed all the information and evidence, I am not satisfied that the trust currently has the capacity and capability to deliver rapid and sustained improvements at the academy, therefore I am issuing a Termination Warning Notice to the trust in respect of the academy.

The school converted to academy status on 1 March 2012. Since this time, 4 full Ofsted inspections have occurred – 3 of those inspections have resulted in overall requires

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

improvement judgements, including the 2 most recent inspections on 19 June 2018 and 22 March 2022.

The academy's March 2022 Ofsted inspection shows some improvement compared to the inspection of June 2018, and that "*pupils benefit from an improving quality of education*". Some elements of the judgement were good. However, the report also identifies areas for improvement, particularly in relation to behaviour and attitudes and the quality of education. The report stated that:

- *"Leaders have not implemented a clear assessment and feedback policy. Pupils struggle to identify where they need to improve."*
- *"Teachers do not have consistently high expectations about the quality of pupils' written work. In some pupils' books, work is not completed to a high enough standard. Some pupils do not make the progress they should through the curriculum..."*
- *"Pupils do not behave consistently well around the school site at social times and between lessons. They do not always respond positively when challenged by staff. Some pupils feel uncomfortable around the school building..."*
- *Too many pupils are persistently absent. They are missing education and are at risk of falling behind their peers."*

I acknowledge that the trust reports in its representations that the suspension and absence rates at the school are improving and the trust is working with external partners to improve the academy. However, I cannot be confident the required improvements will be achieved and/or delivered at the necessary pace – indeed the representations share little detail on the specific plans to address the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted.

However, this Termination Warning Notice confirms that the academy remains subject to intervention powers and the trust remains accountable for the outcomes of the academy and its pupils.

Given the concerns outlined in this letter, I would ask that the trust takes the following actions ("the specified actions"), which I consider will help it secure the rapid and sustained improvements that are required at the academy. 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 sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010.

- That you provide an action plan that outlines how the 4 areas for improvement bullet points from the Ofsted report (highlighted above) are being addressed. I want to further understand how, at the academy, you are trying to improve a) behaviour and attitudes, and b) the quality of education for pupils, in both a rapid yet sustainable way. I ask that this action improvement plan is in place and shared with my team by the end of the April 2023. The plan and milestones will be subject to agreement by the department.

- That you implement the agreed action plan and 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 the end of July 2023.

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

I hope that the trust will work positively with the department in taking forward the above specified actions in respect of the academy. 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 24 March, 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 24 March, I may issue a notice terminating the academy's funding agreement.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, and to Derby City Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

Kate Copley and Carol Gray
Regional Director for East Midlands

Cc:

Ofsted

Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services, Derby City Council