



Department
for Education

**Regional Director's Office
Yorkshire and the Humber**
Bishopsgate House,
Darlington,
DL1 5QE

The Members and Trustees of Dixons Academies Trust
Dixons Academies Charitable Trust Ltd
Ripley Street
Bradford
BD5 7RR

02 October 2023

Dear Mr Blackburn,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Dixons Academies Trust in respect of Dixons Unity Academy

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5.H of the funding agreement for Dixons Unity 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 8 June 2023 confirming that Dixons Unity Academy 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:

- Some pupils do not access a broad range of subjects. They have very limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and interests in subjects such as design technology or food technology.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not routinely identified. Their needs are not well met in some areas of the curriculum. As such, many pupils with SEND do not benefit from a good-quality education.
- Pupils are not routinely helped to remember and recall the most important content from their subjects. This leads to gaps in their understanding. These gaps are further reflected in the weak outcomes achieved by many pupils in external examinations in many subjects. This limits the extent to which pupils are prepared for their next steps in education, employment and/or training.
- The use of alternative provision for some pupils is not effective. Leaders' monitoring of the pupils at alternative provision lacks rigour. These weaknesses in leaders' use and oversight of alternative provision mean pupils are not well prepared for life after school.

- Rates of attendance in school are low. This is the case for most groups of pupils, but particularly for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils miss important lessons. They miss out on important messages about growing up in modern society.
- While falling, the rates of suspension for poor behaviour remain high. When not in school, pupils fall behind in learning and do not consistently catch up with their peers.
- Some pupils are not fully benefitting from the school's offer to support their wider personal development. This includes some pupils at alternative provision. Elsewhere, some older pupils want to know more about relationships and sex education.
- A notable proportion of parents and carers have a negative view of the school. Pupils have limited opportunities to share their views on life at school. Until recently, leaders have not been proactive in engaging with these important stakeholders.

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 wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice.

I would also be grateful for the following evidence, which I will take into account when assessing whether the Academy is making sufficient improvements:

- A copy of the post-Ofsted Action Plan.
- Information on what action is being taken to support educational improvement at the Academy, particularly for pupils with SEND, and the timescales of this work.
- Details of current governance and leadership arrangements, including clear lines of support, delegation and accountability.
- Evidence of how you will improve the use and oversight of alternative provision in the school.
- Evidence of how you will improve attendance, particularly for pupils with SEND.
- Evidence of how you intend to improve behaviour whilst also reducing the number of suspensions.
- Evidence of how you intend to improve the curriculum offer for Relationships and Sex Education at the school.
- Evidence of how you will improve engagement with pupils and parents.
- Any other information you feel would be helpful.

Please provide me with any representations the trust wish to make by 20 October 2023.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, Julie Longworth - DCS of Leeds City Council, and Luke Sparkes - CEO of the trust. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Alison Wilson.

Alison Wilson
Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Humber

CC:
Katrina Gueli, Ofsted Regional Director
Julie Longworth, DCS of Leeds City Council
Luke Sparkes, CEO of Dixons Academies Trust