



Department
for Education

Regional Director for North West
Piccadilly Gate
Manchester
M1 2WD

Mr Paul Jones
Chair of Trustees
Great Academies Education Trust
249 Cavendish Street
Ashton-Under-Lyne
OL6 7AT

27 March 2023

Dear Mr Jones

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Great Academies Education Trust in respect of Copley Academy

In accordance with sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010, 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 Academy Trust on 6 October 2022 that Copley Academy (“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 10 October 2022 I invited the Academy Trust’s representations in response to the notification letter, which the Academy Trust provided on 4 November 2022.

I wrote on 10 February 2023 to inform the Academy Trust that, after considering all of the information and evidence, I was not satisfied that the Academy Trust has the capacity or capability to deliver rapid and sustained improvements at the Academy and that I therefore intended to issue a Termination Warning Notice.

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 Academy’s circumstances in line with the criteria set out in chapter 4 of the [Schools Causing Concern guidance](#).

The Academy has been part of Great Academies Education Trust since February 2013, at which time education was rated good overall by Ofsted. At its first inspection in May 2016 the academy declined to requires improvement overall by Ofsted, and declined further to

inadequate by October 2018, before moving to requires improvement in November 2021. The trust has had more than ten years of leadership at the school to secure an improved grading of good at the Academy.

The last Ofsted inspection in November 2021 judged the school to be requires improvement. The Ofsted report published following inspection highlighted:

- Some subject leaders do not focus sufficiently well on ensuring that teachers have the necessary subject-specific support and guidance to deliver curriculums consistently well. As a result, some teachers do not select the most appropriate pedagogical approaches to support pupils to learn and remember the intended curriculum.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers use assessment information consistently well to check that pupils' prior knowledge is secure, identify misconceptions and design subsequent learning. This means that there are times when pupils have not grasped new knowledge well enough before teachers move on. It also means that teachers are hampered in remedying the gaps in pupils' earlier learning. This hinders pupils from building on earlier content.
- In the past, leaders have not adopted a rigorous and systematic approach to developing pupils' fluency in reading. As a result, many pupils, particularly in key stage 4, have fallen behind and not received the support they have needed to catch up quickly. This prevents these pupils from achieving as well as they should across the curriculum.
- Some teachers do not follow and apply the school's behaviour policy as well as they should. This means that, in some lessons, pupils' learning is disrupted by their peers, hindering their learning of the intended curriculum.

I acknowledge the additional information shared as part of the representations but given the Academy's history I don't yet have confidence that improvements are being delivered at the pace required.

For these reasons I require the Academy 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 sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010:

- Provide an improvement plan that addresses the outstanding concerns in particular:
 - (i) ensuring the curriculum is fully implemented, is broad and ambitious and builds on prior learning. This must include planning, delivery, and support for staff to enhance subject knowledge and use of assessment information, to ensure that all pupils are fully supported to achieve well;
 - (ii) ensure leaders accurately diagnose the gaps in pupils' reading knowledge and that staff are well trained to support pupils to read with greater fluency, confidence and accuracy and;
 - (iii) ensuring there are clear and robust policies and process in place to raise standards of behaviour, leading to reduced instances of disruption and poor behaviour.

The plan must be provided on or before 28 April 2023 and should include clear success measures and milestones for improvement will be used to monitor success. The plan, milestones and success measures will be subject to agreement by the Department.

- Implement the plan and provide me with termly updates on the agreed actions and milestones.
- Accept 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 and for pupils with a similar context. Arrangements for the support to be in place on or before 1 May 2023.
- Work with the school improvement partner to support improvement in the academy and implement actions identified through the partnership.

I will monitor progress made towards the Specified Actions, through board reports, school improvement progress reports and termly meetings arranged with my office in addition to any Ofsted monitoring reports. We are mindful of workload and therefore do not expect bespoke reports to be produced beyond what is already produced for the trust. If the Academy 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 reserve the right to amend this Termination Warning Notice to specify further action which the Academy Trust must take, and the date by which it must be completed.

The Academy Trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 29 April 2023, making any representations the Academy Trust wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice and the above Specified Actions, or providing confirmation that the Academy Trust intends to comply with the above Specified Actions by the specified dates.

If the Academy Trust fails to respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 29 April 2023, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted and Alison Stathers-Tracey at Tameside Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Vicky Beer.

Vicky Beer CBE Regional Director, North West Regions Group

Cc: Andrew Cook, Regional Director North West and West Midlands, Ofsted
Cc: Alison Stathers-Tracey, Director of Childrens Services, Tameside Council