



Department
for Education

Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Director, South East Regions Group
34 Clarendon Road
Watford
WD17 1JJ
RG.SE@education.gov.uk

Ian Duguid
Marlow Education Trust
West Street
Marlow
SL7 2BR

25 July 2023

Dear Mr Duguid,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors of the Marlow Education Trust in respect of Beechview Academy

I notified the trust on 3 May 2023 that the Beechview Academy (“the Academy”) is not making necessary improvements¹ and I invited the trust to submit representations in response to this notification letter. The Trust submitted representations on 16 May 2023. I have 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](#).

I refer to my letter of 29 June 2023. As stated in that letter, as Regional Director I must be confident, based on the information available and evidence provided, that the trust can deliver rapid and sustained improvements at the Academy. Currently I am not satisfied this is the case. I therefore intended to issue a Termination Warning Notice.

In accordance with clauses **5.B** to **5.E** of the funding agreement for Beechview Academy the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement where paragraphs (2), (3), (4) or (5) of regulation 4 of the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022 applies to the academy and the Secretary of State has notified the Academy Trust.

Beechview Academy has been in the Trust since October 2016, and it is considered has not made the expected level of improvement. This is reflected by the school receiving two subsequent ‘requires improvement’ judgements from Ofsted in June 2019 and February 2023 respectively and performance data being below the local and national averages.

¹ The term “not making necessary improvements” is used in the Schools Causing Concern guidance (October 2022 update). A reference in that guidance, and in this letter, to schools “not making necessary improvements” should be read as meaning that such schools meet the statutory definition of ‘coasting’, contained in regulation 4 of the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022.

Ofsted identified in the **February 2023** report that the school needed to make the following improvements.

The curriculum does not identify and order the knowledge that pupils need to learn precisely enough. This means that teachers are unable to systematically build and assess pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders must ensure that detailed and robust plans are developed and check that they are consistently used by all teachers.

Leaders have not provided staff with the training they need to expertly support pupils who find reading more difficult. As a result, these pupils do not have the phonics knowledge they need to rapidly become fluent readers. Leaders should make sure that all staff supporting delivering the phonics programme receive the training they need to be confident practitioners.

Ofsted identified similar concerns in the **June 2019** report.

The quality of teaching varies. Not all teachers make enough use of assessment information to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and can do. Sometimes, the work provided for pupils is too easy.

Some leaders are relatively new to their roles. They do not all make enough use of performance information to evaluate the impact of actions they have taken.

Subject leaders do not routinely check the quality of teaching in order to provide targeted support to their colleagues and improve outcomes for pupils.

The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that pupils develop knowledge and skills progressively as they move through the school. Pupils do not routinely read books to broaden their knowledge across the curriculum.

The rate of improvement at the school is not as rapid as was expected when the decision was taken to approve Marlow Education Trust as the sponsor.

Your representations do not give me confidence that the Trust has the capacity to deliver the required improvements at Beechview Academy. There is very little in your representations to demonstrate that you have a targeted and credible school improvement plan to make the necessary improvements.

For the reasons above I require the 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 clauses **5.B** to **5.E**.

- The Trust must provide a school improvement plan. The school improvement plan must include:
 - The Trust to review the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriately sequenced.
 - Leaders must ensure that detailed and robust plans are developed and

check they are consistently used by all teachers.

- To ensure all teachers make use of assessment information to plan work that pupils on what pupils already know and behaviour in lessons.
 - To ensure subject leaders monitor the quality of teachers' work so that they can better support their colleagues to improve their skills.
 - The Trust must ensure they make sharper use of performance information to evaluate the impact the actions they put in place to raise standards.
 - The CPD offered to staff, to enable them to deliver excellent educational outcomes for pupils.
 - To ensure that overall absence and persistent improves.
- The plan should identify actions points, who is responsible for these actions, how these will be measured, what impact these actions have or will have, and success criteria for each action. The school improvement plan should be submitted by **29 September 2023**. The plan will be subject to agreement by the Regional Director.
 - The Trust must implement the agreed plan and provide half-termly updates on the actions and milestones within the plan (or other information as requested). The first update must be submitted to the Department by **30 October 2023**. Where there are delays or risks, the Trust must explain how these are being addressed.
 - The Trust must demonstrate what primary expertise there is within the Trust to deliver the required improvements at Beechview Academy. The trust is to include pen portraits in the school improvement plan.
 - The Trust **must** commission an external review of its governance to identify any gaps and recommendations for changes to lead to improvements at the academy. The scope of the review is to be shared with me by **29 September 2023**. Please share the findings of the review and submit the trust's action plan in response to the review's recommendations within 10 weeks. The plan will be subject to agreement by the Regional Director.

I will monitor progress made towards meeting the Specified Actions. If the trust fails to meet any of the above Specified Actions by the specified date or if I do not consider the plans to be appropriate or effective to deliver rapid improvements, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement to transfer the Academy to an alternative trust.

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.

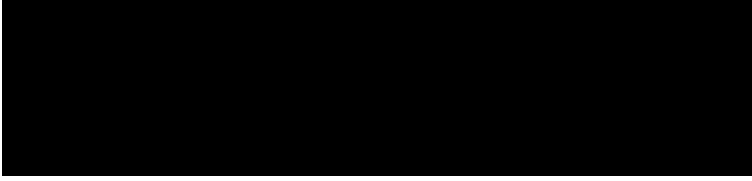
The Trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by no later than **Monday 4 September**, making any representations the trust wishes to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice and the above Specified Actions, or providing confirmation that the trust intends to comply with the above Specified Actions by the specified dates.

If the trust fails to respond to this Termination Warning Notice by Monday 4 September, I

may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

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

Yours sincerely,



Dame Kate Dethridge
Regional Director for South East Region