



Department
for Education

Department for Education

Eastbrook
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8DR
[REDACTED]

The Members and Trustees of Alban Academies Trust
The Ridgeway
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL4 9NX

(Sent via email to: [REDACTED])

13 November 2023

Dear [REDACTED], Chair of Trustees,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Alban Academies Trust in respect of Ridgeway Academy

I notified the trust on 23 March that the Ridgeway Academy (“the Academy”) is not making necessary improvements.¹ On 17 April I invited the trust’s representations in response to the notification letter which the trust provided. 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 23 October. 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.A to 5.EE of the Supplementary Funding Agreement for Ridgeway 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.

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.

██████████ is the Delivery Officer responsible for working with you on this. ██████████ will be in contact with you soon to discuss any school improvement support to assist in raising standards in the Academy.

The Academy has been with Alban Academies Trust since September 2018. I am mindful of the inspection outcomes at the Academy since 2013, when it has been judged Requires Improvement over that period. The January Ofsted report was Requiring Improvement across all categories except Personal Development.

The most recent Ofsted report noted the following areas needing improvements:

- Although leaders have focused on developing the curriculum, some subjects are more established in their implementation than others. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This is because teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough or meet pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are implemented consistently well and that teachers adapt their teaching effectively to meet pupils needs. This should support all pupils to develop detailed knowledge, deepen their understanding and achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders have not ensured that the behaviour system is implemented consistently well. Follow-up actions are not systematically recorded and connected. As a result, a small number of pupils do not behave well enough. Leaders need to ensure that all instances of behaviour are appropriately recorded, connected and followed up robustly and that pupils are confident to report concerns at an early stage.
- Leaders are developing a culture of tolerance and respect. However, a small number of pupils are not respectful of others. This leads some pupils to worry about how others treat them. Leaders should build on the work done to develop the school value of respect so that all pupils demonstrate an understanding of how they should treat others and ensure that there is a positive culture of respect across the school.

For this reason, 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.A to 5.EE of the Supplementary Funding Agreement.

- By 4 December, provide me with the school improvement plan for Ridgeway Academy for the academic year 2023/24. The improvement plan with milestones will be subject to agreement by the Department. The plan should allow me to identify the steps being taken to address the areas of concern identified by Ofsted, highlighted above, and to assess the extent of progress addressing those issues since the last inspection.
- Implement the agreed plan this term and from next term, provide termly updates on the actions and milestones within the plan (or other information as requested) and where there are delays or risks how these are being addressed.
- Accept bespoke school improvement support, funded by the Department's Trust and School Improvement (TSI) offer, and delivered by a school improvement partner (approved by me) that has a track record in delivering

improvement.

- Continue to work closely with the school improvement partner to support improvement at the academy. Implement actions identified through the partnership and provide me with termly updates on progress.

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, 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 trust must take, and the date by which it must be completed. The trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 4 December, 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 4 December, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

A copy of this letter will be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Duff

Regional Director
East of England, Regions Group

CC: Ofsted

██████████, Executive Director of Children's Services, Hertfordshire LA