



Department
for Education

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The Members and Directors of Plymouth CAST
Plymouth CAST
Edmund Rice Building
21 Boniface Lane
St Boniface College
Plymouth
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4 December 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors of Plymouth CAST in respect of St Boniface's Roman Catholic College.

I notified the trust on 17 May 2023 that St Boniface's Roman Catholic College ("the Academy") is not making necessary improvements.¹ In the same letter, 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 20 July 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 sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010², any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State 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.

I welcomed your representations which summarises the work which has been undertaken to date to deliver improvements at St Boniface's. It was not clear, however, from your representations the areas that the trust considers priorities for action. I am concerned that the necessary improvements in quality of education and leadership and management will not be achieved at pace. The representations share little detail of specific actions to address the areas for improvement identified in the Ofsted report from the February 2023 inspection, which outlined the following:

- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum and the way in which it is taught and assessed

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 the Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022

² Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016

are consistently effective. Consequently, pupils do not learn well enough in many subjects. Leaders need to ensure that the revised curriculum is embedded more securely so that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

- The number of suspensions for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils is too high. Leaders should ensure that they develop their approach to the management of behaviour, so that the number of suspensions reduces.
- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school as well as they should. This has a detrimental impact on their learning. Leaders must ensure that parents, carers and pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly.

I understand this Termination Warning Notice will come as a disappointment to the trust as you embed your recent leadership changes across St Boniface's and Notre Dame. As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the trust has the capacity to delivery rapid and sustained improvement at the academy.

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 sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010.

- Continue to work with Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust and use their skills and expertise to produce an action plan to demonstrate how the trust will strengthen and improve the way school improvement is undertaken and tracked across the academy. The plan should also detail how issues preventing improvement will be responded to, including how this will be reported to the executive leadership team and the trust board. The plan should include the specific actions the trust will take to address the areas of improvement required at the academy, as identified in the Ofsted report including:
 - Strategy to ensure that the curriculum is consistently implemented and assessed across the academy;
 - Actions to address the variability in how well the needs of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are met;
 - Strategy to reduce the disproportionate level of suspensions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND;
 - Actions the trust will take to engage with pupils, parents and carers to help address the low levels of attendance at the academy. This should include a focus on those disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- The action plan should contain clear milestones and must be provided on or before **20 February 2024**, in preparedness for our meeting scheduled for **12 March 2024**. The plan and milestones will be subject to agreement by the DfE at this meeting.
- For Plymouth CAST to implement the agreed action plan and provide monthly updates on the actions and milestones within the plan and where there are delays or risks how these are being addressed. As abovementioned, we would like to see the action plan on or before **20 February 2024**, the first update should be provided on **29 March** and thereafter on the last working day of each month.
- Monthly progress updates will be reviewed by my team who will check to see if sufficient progress and improvements are being made.
- Monitoring meetings between DfE and the trust should continue until the academy no longer meets the legal definition for coasting (not making necessary improvements). If it is deemed that insufficient progress against the agreed milestones is being seen, DfE may increase the frequency and/or length of our monitoring meetings.

I will monitor progress made towards meeting the specified actions. This will be through board reports, monthly action plan progress reports and regular meetings arranged with my office in addition to any Ofsted monitoring reports. If the trust fails to meet any of the above specified actions by the agreed dates, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the academy to an alternative trust.

The trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 8 January 2023 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 8 January 2023, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

I am copying this letter to re [redacted] South West Regional Director, redacted [redacted] of Children's Services at Plymouth City Council and to redacted [redacted] Diocesan Director of Education at Diocese of Plymouth. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

CC, [redacted] Ofsted South West Regional Director
[redacted] Director of Children's Services, Plymouth City Council
[redacted] Diocesan Director of Education, Diocese of Plymouth