



Department  
for Education

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Mr Mohsen Ojja (CEO) and  
Mr Jay Bhutani (Chair of Trustees)  
Anthem Schools Trust  
Highbridge House  
16-18 Duke Street Reading  
RG1 4RU

15 February 2024

Sent by email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Ojja and Mr Bhutani

### **Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Anthem Schools Trust in respect of The Deepings School**

I notified the trust on 8 November 2023 that The Deepings School (“the Academy”) is not making necessary improvements.<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

In accordance with sections 2B and 2D of the Academies Act 2010<sup>2</sup>, 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.

As a 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 am therefore issuing a Termination Warning Notice.

I recognise that there are some positive findings in the most recent Ofsted inspection report (September 2023). For instance, the report identifies that the governing body has knowledge of the school’s improvement needs, that pupils feel safe, and that pupils have

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<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>2</sup> Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016

a role in contributing to the school, for example through school councils. I note also that Sixth-form provision was judged good.

I have reviewed your representations which set out the actions that the trust is now taking to address the weaknesses identified in the latest Ofsted report. However, the Academy has been part of the trust since 2012 and has consistently been judged requires improvement since 2017. I am concerned that there remain areas for improvement across a range of elements including curriculum, quality of teaching, SEND provision and implementation of the behaviour policy. Despite a monitoring inspection in June 2021 which indicated improvements were being made and the change of leadership at the school, the most recent inspection indicated that leadership and management and the quality of education had declined from good to requires improvement. Also, outcomes for pupils have not been positively impacted with 2023 KS4 results remaining below local and national averages.

Given the longstanding history of underperformance, and lack of evidence of improvement over the last 6 years, I am not confident that progress will be embedded or sustained, nor that measures being taken will have the significant impact on pupil outcomes that is required.

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<sup>3</sup>:

- The trust must collaborate with a school improvement partner, proposed by me or my team, which has a track record in delivering improvements in schools and for pupils with a similar context, including any appropriate support for SEND provision and behaviour. Such arrangements should be entered into within 6 weeks of the date of this letter.
- The trust must work with the school improvement partner to review the Deepings Academy post-inspection action plan for any areas of weakness and to identify additional measures that could be put in place in a revised and quality assured school improvement plan (the ‘Plan’). The Plan should address the issues identified by Ofsted with a specific focus on driving rapid improvement in pupil outcomes and demonstrate that there is capacity within the trust to drive forward improvement in the Academy. The Plan and milestones should be in place and shared with my team by 24 May 2024 and will be subject to agreement by the department.
- The trust must implement the agreed plan and provide termly updates to my team on the progress against the actions, and the impact of those actions in the Academy. Where there are delays or risks, please provide details how these are being addressed. Please provide the first update on 19 July 2024 and thereafter on or before the last day of each term until I confirm that no further updates are required.
- I note the trust has implemented a new governance strategy which has been quality assured externally. I also note that the trust intends to arrange an external audit of the trust’s governance arrangements in the 24/25 Academic year following a full

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<sup>3</sup> Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016

cycle of the newly introduced collaborative review days. As per our discussion and your intention, please could the trust commission this in October 2024. The findings of the audit and the trust's governance action plan in response to the audit's recommendations should be shared with my team by 14 February 2025. This plan will be subject to agreement by the department.

- The trust must implement the agreed governance action plan and provide termly updates to my team on progress against the action plan, with the first update submitted by 4 April 2025.

I am mindful of creating unnecessary pressures on school leaders and staff, and as such we would ask the trust to ensure that appropriate provision is in place to support the school workforce as improvement action is taken. We also ask the trust not to create specific documents for the purpose of the termly updates to the Department, but to share any existing documents which provide evidence of the progress made against the actions in the Plan and the impact of those actions in the Academy. We may request additional information from the trust if the evidence provided by way of existing documents is incomplete and where this would be reasonably expected as part of normal high quality trust processes.

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 dates, I will consider whether to terminate the Academy's funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative trust.

The trust must respond to this Termination Warning Notice by 7 March 2024 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 7 March 2024, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

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

Yours sincerely



**Carol Gray and Kate Copley**

**Regional Director  
Regions Group, East Midlands**

CC:

Michael Sheridan HMI, Regional Director for the East Midlands and East of England,  
Ofsted

Heather Sandy, Director of Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council