



Department
for Education

Department for Education
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[REDACTED]

Laura Myles, Chair: [REDACTED]
CC: Hazel Cabbage, CEO: [REDACTED]
Heartease Primary Academy
Rider Haggard Road
Norwich
NR7 9UE

9 January 2024.

Dear Laura,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Heart Education Trust in respect of Valley Primary Academy

I notified the trust on 25 September that Valley Primary Academy (“the Academy”) is not making necessary improvements.¹ I invited the trust’s representations in response to the notification letter, which the trust provided on 16 October. 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 25 September. 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 intend to issue a Termination Warning Notice.

In accordance with clauses 5.A to 5.E of the funding agreement for Valley Primary Academy, the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement where paragraphs (2), (3), (4) or (5) of regulation 4 of the Coasting

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.

Schools (England) Regulations 2022 applies to the academy and the Secretary of State has notified the Academy Trust.

Valley Primary Academy has been an academy in The Heart Education Trust since 2016. The Ofsted inspection of June 2023 was the second inspection the Academy has had within the trust, the previous one having been in 2019. I acknowledge the positive developments that were noted by Ofsted in the 2023 report. The 2023 inspection judged the Quality of Education as Requires Improvement, noting the following areas as needing improvement:

- Leaders know that some subjects are not planned sufficiently well and, consequently, they are reviewing these curriculum areas. In these cases, there is a lack of detail about what pupils need to learn. Subsequently, the work expected of pupils does not routinely meet their needs and support them adequately to develop their knowledge and skills. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum planning is consistent across all subjects.
- Due in part to previous weaknesses in curriculum plans, assessment is not being used precisely enough to check on pupils' learning. Where gaps are identified, pupils are not always given the opportunities to improve their knowledge or understanding. Leaders need to make sure that assessment is used effectively, so pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Clear plans are in place for staff that provide appropriate strategies for how best to support pupils with SEND. Pupils with complex SEND are supported very well. However, pupils with less complex needs do not always receive appropriate support after their needs are identified. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have the appropriate training to follow the plans that are in place and support all pupils with SEND to do well.

I am also aware that the Governing Body currently consists of 5 Trustees. I therefore have concerns about its capacity and capability to hold the trust to account for achieving rapid and sustained improvements at Valley Primary Academy.

For these reasons, 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 of the funding agreement.

1. Put in place a school improvement strategy and set this out in a school improvement action plan (the 'Plan'). The Plan should address curriculum planning, effective use of assessment and support for pupils with SEND and should demonstrate that there is capacity within

the trust to drive forward improvements. Please provide your Plan by 6 February 2024. The Plan and milestones for compliance will be subject to agreement by the Regional Director.

2. 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 27 March 2024 and thereafter on or before the last day of each term until I confirm that no further updates are required.
3. Commission an external review of the trust's governance arrangements to identify progress on the action points raised in the last review, in particular the areas of holding school and trust leaders to account, and recommendations for changes to lead to improvements at the academy. The scope of the review is to be shared with my team by 6 February 2024 for my agreement. Share the findings of the review and submit the trust's action plan in response to the review's recommendations by 19 March 2024. The plan will be subject to agreement by the department. Implement the agreed plan and provide me with termly updates on implementation at intervals to be agreed.
4. Agree to enter a partnership with a school improvement partner, through the Trust and School Improvement Offer. The proposed partner for this support is Unity Schools Partnership. These arrangements need to be formalised by 20 February 2024. Implement actions identified through the partnership. Provide me with termly progress updates on the delivery of improvements identified.

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

We are 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. We also ask the trust not to create specific documents for the purpose of the termly updates, 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 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 29 January 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 29 January 2024, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

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

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Duff

Regional Director

East of England, Regions Group