



Department
for Education

Regional Director's Office

3 Floor, Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD

The Members and Trustees of Manor Hall Academy Trust
Manor Hall Academy Trust,
Loxley Hall School,
Stafford Road,
Uttoxeter,
ST14 8RS

26 January 2024

Dear John,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Manor Hall Academy Trust in respect of Finch Woods Academy

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5H of the funding agreement for Finch Woods Academy ("the Academy") the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if the Chief Inspector gives notice to the Academy Trust that special measures are required to be taken in relation to the Academy or the Academy requires significant improvement.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 24 November 2023 confirming that Finch Woods Academy was judged to be inadequate and has serious weaknesses. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice:

- The lack of a well-designed overarching curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils across the school means that some do not achieve as well as they should or could. This situation is compounded further by a lack of accountability and confusion about roles and responsibilities.
- Trustees and members of the local governing body do not have sufficient oversight of the school's weaknesses. This has stalled them from taking the action required to limit the negative impact of staffing instability and to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education.
- The curriculum in key stage 4 is not sufficiently broad, ambitious or well designed to enable pupils to learn all that they should. There is a lack of

clarity about what examination routes pupils will follow. Some pupils who receive their education at a different site do not have access to a coherent curriculum. As a result, pupils do not achieve well. They are not prepared well enough for the next steps.

- Some staff have not been supported well enough to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet pupils' different learning needs. This hinders some pupils from building a secure body of subject-specific knowledge.
- Many pupils are frequently absent from school. They miss learning time and also do not benefit from the wider experiences on offer to enhance their personal development. This hinders their achievement and readiness for the next stage in their lives.
- The school does not use the information that it gathers about behaviour incidents effectively to identify patterns and reduce such incidents over time. Some staff do not follow the new behaviour approaches consistently well. As a result, some pupils do not adhere to the school's rules well enough. This disturbs the learning of others.
- Some groups of pupils do not experience the full range of personal development opportunities on offer.
- The school does not identify and address the deficits in older pupils' reading knowledge as well as they do for younger pupils. This means that some older pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. This hinders them from accessing the curriculum.

As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the trust has capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the academy. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider whether to terminate the funding agreement in order to transfer the academy to an alternative academy trust.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the funding agreement I will consider any written representations the trust wish to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice.

Please provide me with any representations the trust wish to make by Thursday 22 February 2024. In relation to the above findings from Ofsted, the representations should include how the school and trust will ensure:

- that the variation in pupils' educational experiences and enjoyment of school are eradicated so that all pupils can thrive, achieve well and be ready for the next stage of their education.

- that those responsible for governance will ensure that they gain an accurate view of the school's effectiveness so that they are well placed to challenge shortcomings and support the strategies for improvement.
- that there is a well-designed curriculum that enables pupils to learn all that they should.
- that all teachers are suitably equipped so that pupils access the curriculum and learn all that they should.
- that the approach to attendance is reviewed so that pupils can attend school regularly.
- that key issues affecting pupil's behaviour are identified and addressed so that pupils' behaviour improves further over time.
- that all pupils can benefit from the full programme of activities that promote their personal development.
- that pupils of all ages receive the extra support that they need to read fluently.

We are mindful of creating unnecessary pressures on school leaders and staff, and as such we would ask the trust to ensure that the appropriate provision is in place to support the school workforce.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Huyton Municipal Buildings, Archway Road, Huyton, Knowsley, L36 9YU. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

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Vicky Beer CBE

Regional Director for Northwest Regions Group

CC: Ofsted – ██████████

DCS, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, ██████████ Assistant Executive Director, Education and Inclusion, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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