



Department
for Education

Regions Group
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Professor Jeffrey Knight
Chair of Learning without Limits Academy Trust
c/o Lancaster Academy
Knighton Lane East
Leicester
Leicestershire
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7 March 2024

Sent by email

Dear Mr Knight

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Learning without Limits Academy Trust in respect of Woodstock Primary Academy

I notified the trust on 20 November 2023 that Woodstock 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. 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 clauses 5.B to 5.E of the mainstream supplemental funding agreement for Woodstock Primary 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.

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 therefore am issuing a Termination Warning Notice.

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.

I recognise that there are some positive findings in the most recent Ofsted inspection report (September 2023). For instance, the report identifies that the early reading programme has had rapid impact, attendance has improved, the school is a calm and safe place for all and that, whilst there is still work to be done, the school has started to implement a new revised curriculum on which teachers have received training to develop their expertise to deliver it. I also acknowledge that, during a strategic conversation with my team on 28 November 2023, the trust was keen to note that action to improve the curriculum is now having an impact at Woodstock, and that the findings of the Ofsted inspection, including the areas for improvement, were as expected by the trust. The trust has also engaged with the department's Trust School Improvement offer and has been matched with a trust in West Midlands. This support commenced in January 2024 with a view to be completed by July 2024.

I have reviewed your representations which set out the actions that the trust continues to take to address the areas for improvement identified in the latest Ofsted report and the work of the Primary Director of Education in supporting the school. I also recognise that, according to the Published Ofsted Inspections Management Information, Woodstock Primary Academy is in the most deprived (quintile 5) group of schools based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2019. However, the Academy has been part of the trust since November 2016 and has been judged twice by Ofsted as requires improvement since 2019. Although the latest Ofsted report published following inspection on 26 and 27 September 2023 contains some positive comments, there has been no change in any of the categories since the September 2019 report. The report also identifies several areas for improvement:

- The school's curriculum for writing is disjointed and does not build logically. This does not help pupils to improve their writing and limits how well they are prepared for their next stage in education. Leaders must ensure their curriculum for writing is coherent and logical. They must ensure that staff have the right expertise to deliver this curriculum.
- Systems and routines to support pupils with SEND are not implemented consistently. This creates barriers to learning for pupils with SEND and does not help them to succeed fully. The school must ensure that all pupils with SEND receive effective teaching as well as the right support and equipment to access the curriculum. The school must ensure that pupils with SEND learn the school's planned curriculum with increasing autonomy and confidence.
- Approaches to assessment are not consistently used across the curriculum. This does not help teachers to identify what pupils already know, what needs to be revisited or address pupils' next steps in a coherent way. The school must ensure that approaches to formative and summative assessment are well developed to enable pupils to know and remember more over time.
- Children in the early years do not develop their basic communication and language in a systematic way. This creates gaps in children's language acquisition and does not prepare the most disadvantaged children well for key stage one and beyond. The school must carefully consider the sequence for

early language development and ensure that there is a sharp focus on all children developing early communication and vocabulary.

Given the lack of evidence of the necessary improvement over the last 4 years, I am not confident that progress will be embedded or sustained, nor that measures being taken will have the significant impact 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 5.E of the mainstream supplemental funding agreement for Woodstock Primary Academy.

- Provide an updated action plan for the Academy (the ‘Plan’) that outlines how the 4 areas for improvement from the Ofsted report (highlighted above) are being addressed in both a rapid and sustainable way. The Plan and milestones should be in place and shared with my team by **24 May 2024**.
- 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 on how these are being addressed. Please provide the first update on **5 July 2024** and thereafter **on or before the last day of each term** until I confirm that no further updates are required.
- I note that the trust has commissioned an External Review of Governance (ERG) and that this is scheduled to be undertaken by the Confederation of School Trusts in March 2024. Once completed, the findings should be shared with my team by **9 September 2024**, or, if the review is not completed, progress should be shared with my team by this date.
- Following the ERG, the trust must implement any recommendations from the ERG and provide termly updates to my team on progress, with the first update submitted by **20 December 2024**.

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 9 April 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 9 April 2024, I may issue a notice terminating the Academy's funding agreement.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, and to Leicester Local Authority. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Carol Gray & Kate Copley
Regional Director for East Midlands

cc:

Mike Sheridan HMI, Regional Director for East Midlands and East of England Ofsted
Laurence Jones, Strategic Director, Social Care and Education, Leicester City Council