



Department
for Education

Regional Director's Office

Regions Group
Department for Education
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

The Members and Trustees of Frank Field Education Trust
The Ellesmere Port C Of E College
Whitby Road
Whitby
Ellesmere Port
CH65 6EA

07 May 2024

Dear Chris,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Frank Field Education Trust in respect of Birches Head Academy

In accordance with clauses 5F to 5H of the funding agreement for Birches Head 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 30 November 2023 confirming that Birches Head 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.

- Some pupils regularly experience unacceptable discrimination or bullying from others. They do not have confidence in leaders' ability to address this, so they do not report it. Leaders need to ensure that all discrimination or bullying issues are challenged and resolved consistently and effectively when they occur.
- The school's work to improve pupils' behaviour has not had sufficient impact. A significant number of pupils misbehave and experience consequences too often, including being removed from lessons or suspended. These pupils miss out on valuable curriculum time. In addition, some parents are unclear about the school's expectations. Leaders should review their approach to behaviour management so that it leads to improvements in pupils' behaviour, ensuring that parents are clear about how they can support the school too.

- Leaders have not addressed the high rates of pupil absence well enough, especially for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. A significant number of pupils regularly miss too much school, which adversely affects their education. Leaders should take all possible steps to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment well enough to check that pupils have understood what has been taught. When this happens, teachers do not adapt their teaching to take account of what pupils can do. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers use assessment consistently well to check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching and curriculum planning where necessary.
- Trustees and governors do not have a sufficiently accurate view of the school's effectiveness. This means they are not precise enough in their support and challenge for leaders, especially around the quality of education, and behaviour and attendance. Those responsible for governance need to ensure that they offer more precise challenge, so they can hold leaders to account and address areas for improvement effectively.

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 **04 June 2024**.

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 and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Warren
Regional Director for West Midlands Regions Group

CC: Ofsted, Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority