



Department
for Education

Regional Director's Office
North West Regions Group
3rd Floor Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

The Members and Directors/Trustees of Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust
Marl Business Park,
Morecambe Road,
Ulverston,
LA12 9BN

By email: [REDACTED]

11 December 2024

Dear Mrs Mallinson,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors of the Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust in respect of St Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School, Carlisle

In accordance with clauses *5.F to 5H of the mainstream* supplemental funding agreement for St Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School, Carlisle (“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 *19 November 2024* confirming that St Margaret Mary Catholic Primary School, Carlisle was judged to require special measures. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice. The Ofsted report published on 27 November 2024 highlights the following areas for areas of concern:

- The curriculum in many subjects, as well as in the early years, is not well designed. It does not provide teachers with sufficient guidance for them to know what pupils should learn and when subject content should be taught. This hinders pupils, including those with SEND, from building a secure body of knowledge over time. The school must ensure that the curriculum sets out the important information that pupils will learn, ordered from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6, so that pupils can build their learning securely.

- In the absence of curriculum guidance, and without suitable support and training, teachers lack the expertise to deliver the curriculum. This means that the activities they select, alongside unclear explanations, do not help pupils to develop their knowledge or to understand key concepts. As a result, pupils do not learn the important knowledge that they should. The school must ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to build pupils' knowledge over time.
- Teachers do not use assessment strategies well. Consequently, they do not know what pupils know and understand. Misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning remain unidentified and not corrected. The school should make sure that teachers have the support they need to utilise assessment strategies successfully so that they understand where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and adapt their teaching to remedy misconceptions.
- The school's early reading curriculum is not effective in making sure that children in the early years, and pupils in key stage 1, learn to read as soon as they should. Consequently, many pupils do not learn to read well enough. This makes it difficult for these pupils to access the rest of the curriculum. The school must ensure that staff are sufficiently trained to implement the phonics programme consistently well. Additionally, it must ensure that pupils who do not keep up with the pace of the programme receive swift and effective support to be able to access the curriculum.
- The school has not ensured that teachers have the expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, adaptations to teaching and resources are not matched to pupils' needs. The school must ensure that teachers have the knowledge and expertise to provide the right support for pupils with SEND so that they learn all that they should.
- Capacity to improve the school is weak. The efforts to bring about much-needed improvements have been slow and lack urgency. Consequently, pupils underachieve and do not receive the standard of education to which they are entitled. The trust and those responsible for governance must ensure that they secure the necessary leadership capacity in the school to bring about rapid and sustained improvement.
- The trust and the school have failed to identify the decline in the quality of education. A culture of low ambition has become embedded. Those responsible for governance have not challenged the school or held it to account for the quality of its provision. As a result, pupils' experiences do not prepare them well for the future.

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 wishes to make by 14 January 2025, this deadline has been extended to take account of the school holidays. The information should include:

- Details of governance and leadership structures, and if the trust plans to review and/or change these, how and when.
- Details of how the trust's leadership and oversight structure will be strengthened following this judgement.
- Details of the trust's plans to support the school in the short and medium term.

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, Cumberland Local Authority and the Diocese of Lancaster. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,



Vicky Beer
Regional Director for North West Regions Group

CC:

Ofsted - enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Cumberland Council - 

Diocese of Lancaster 