



Department
for Education

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

The Members and Directors of Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust
St James' House,
St. James Road,
Liverpool,
L1 7BY

By email: [REDACTED]

25 September 2024

Dear Ms Swinson,

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors of the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust in respect of St Michael's Church of England High School

In accordance with sections 2A and 2D of the Academies Act 2010¹ any funding agreement of an academy may be terminated by the Secretary of State where special measures are required to be taken in relation to the academy or the academy requires significant improvement and the Chief Inspector of Ofsted has given notice of that under section 13(3)(a) of the Education Act 2005.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 3 September 2024 confirming that St Michael's Church of England High School was judged to require special measures. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

- The trust and the school have failed to adequately address most of the weaknesses that were identified during the previous inspection. Despite the trust's efforts to support the school, the actions that have been taken to tackle pupils' underachievement have not been effective. This is because there is a lack of sufficient leadership expertise.
- Over time, pupils have experienced an ill-designed and poorly delivered curriculum. This means that pupils' knowledge does not build securely over time. At the end of key stage 4, many pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged, leave school without attaining the qualifications that they need to be successful. The school's and trust's actions have not led to the much-needed change that is required to improve pupils' education.
- In some subjects, the school is still identifying the specific knowledge that it wants pupils, and students in the sixth form, to learn. As a result, teachers do not know which information to prioritise when designing lesson activities. Many

¹ Inserted by section 14 of the Education and Adoption Act 2016

lack the expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. This is because the school has not paid enough attention to staff training and development. This means that pupils' achievement in a range of subjects is weak.

- In addition, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to remember their learning over time. The systems to check what pupils know and remember are in development. All too often, teachers are not aware of the gaps in pupils' learning. This hinders their learning across the curriculum. It prevents them from achieving well.
- The school does not check how well its provision to support pupils with SEND is working. This leads to pupils with SEND not receiving the support that they need to move through the curriculum.
- The provision to support pupils' personal development is variable. This means that some pupils are less aware than they should be of some of the important information that they need to be well equipped for their future lives. The school should ensure that the curriculum for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education is implemented consistently well.

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 may wish to make by 16 October 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, Sefton Local Authority and the Diocese of Liverpool. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,



Vicky Beer CBE
Regional Director for Regions Group

CC: Ofsted, Sefton Local Authority and The Diocese of Liverpool