



Department  
for Education

Regional Director for the West Midlands  
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Department for Education  
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The Members and Trustees of The Mercian Trust  
Mercian House  
Sutton Road  
Walsall  
WS1 2PG

By email [REDACTED]

10 June 2025

Dear Mr Davis,

**Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of The Mercian Trust in respect of Shire Oak Academy**

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5H of the funding agreement for Shire Oak 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 22 April 2025 confirming that Shire Oak Academy 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 12 May 2025 highlights the following issues and areas of concern:

- *"Far too many pupils often miss school and too many pupils truant lessons. This means these pupils have an episodic experience of education and miss out on personal development opportunities. The school should put in place effective strategies that result in improved attendance, both at school and in lessons."*
- *"Trustees, governors and trust leaders have not held the school to account effectively for key aspects of the school's work, and improvements have been implemented too slowly. As a result, weaknesses have been allowed to persist, and standards have dropped. Trustees, governors and trust leaders should ensure that there are clear systems of accountability and that their*

*challenge and support for leaders is based on a secure understanding of the school's current weaknesses and needs".*

- *"The school's behaviour policy is inconsistently implemented. As a result, poor or inappropriate behaviour is not dealt with effectively. The school should ensure that its behaviour policy is fit for purpose, that staff understand how to manage poor behaviour and receive support to implement the school's policy consistently."*
- *"The school has not ensured that the curriculum is implemented to an effective standard, for example, in the selection of tasks or checking of understanding. This means that pupils are not receiving an adequate quality of education, so they do not make the progress they should. The school must ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum as leaders intend."*
- *"The experience of more vulnerable pupils at the school, including pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, is especially poor. As a result, their achievement, attendance and participation in the life of the school are weak. The school should ensure that the most vulnerable pupils in their community are prioritised through strategic developments, such as the pupil premium strategy and whole-school provision for pupils with SEND, such that their experience of school improves."*

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 1 July 2025.

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, the Trust CEO and Walsall Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,



**Jonathan Duff**  
**Interim Regional Director – West Midlands**

CC: Ofsted, Dan Parkes (CEO – The Mercian Trust), Colleen Male (DCS – Walsall Council), Sharon Kelly (Director of Access and Inclusion)