



Department  
for Education

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The Members and Trustees of Southern Education Trust  
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By email only: [REDACTED]

09 June 2026

Dear Mr Baker and Mr Grigsby

**Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Southern Education Trust (“the Trust”) in respect of The Harbour School (“the Academy”)**

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5H of the funding agreement for the Academy, the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if the Chief Inspector gives notice to the 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 April 2026 confirming that the 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 11 May 2026 highlights the following areas of concern under ‘Next steps’:

- Leaders and governors must urgently develop effective strategies to raise pupils’ attendance. This should include ensuring that any use of part-time timetables follows government guidance. Leaders should monitor the effectiveness of these strategies to ensure that they have sustained impact.
- Leaders should ensure that recent improvements to the curriculum and teaching are further embedded so that pupils develop detailed knowledge and their achievement improves. In particular, leaders should ensure that assessment processes help staff to understand pupils’ gaps in learning and that there are effective methods in place to support staff in filling these gaps.

- Leaders should develop strategies to ensure that pupils who do not attend regularly receive timely, effective help that supports their personal development and wellbeing and helps to reduce pupils' risks of harm.
- The trust should improve how well it oversees the school so that school leaders feel better supported in their work and that barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing are reduced more comprehensively.

As set out in [Support and intervention in schools](#), there is a presumption that academies found by Ofsted to require special measures will receive structural intervention, which means they will be transferred to an alternative academy trust. This presumption may be set aside in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances may apply, for example, if I am satisfied that the Trust has demonstrated, through its representations and/or other evidence, that there has been an exceptional improvement or change in leadership capacity at both trust and school levels since or shortly before inspection, which already shows impact, and therefore the Trust is now demonstrating that it has the capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the Academy.

If I am not satisfied that exceptional circumstances apply, I will, in accordance with the Department's policy, consider terminating the Academy's funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative academy trust.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the Academy's 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 30 June 2026.

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 Academy's workforce.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, the Trust's CEO and Portsmouth City Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,



**Dame Kate Dethridge**  
**Regional Director, South East Regions Group**

CC: Caroline Dulon, Regional Director, Ofsted  
John White, CEO of Southern Education Trust  
Sarah Daly, Director of Children's Services, Portsmouth City Council  
Nathan Caine, Assistant Director of Education, Portsmouth City Council