Department for Education

Regional Director's Office
Yorkshire and The Humber
Regional Delivery Directorate
Bishopsgate House
Feethams
Darlington

John Winkley
Chair of Trustees
Beckfoot Trust
Wagon Lane,
Bingley, Bradford
BD16 1EE

By email only

05/10/2026

Dear Mr Winkley

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Beckfoot Trust (the Trust) in respect of Beckfoot Thornton (the Academy).

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5.H of the supplemental funding agreement for the Academy, the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 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 *2 September 2026* confirming that the Academy was judged to require special measures.

I recognise that the Trust is engaging positively with the Department to explore options for transferring the Academy to a strong multi-academy trust (MAT), and I acknowledge the benefits that such a move is expected to bring for the Academy and its pupils.

Although the Trust has agreed to work with the Department towards a transfer, I have decided it remains necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice (TWN). I recognise that this decision may be disappointing. However, until the transfer is completed, the Academy remains subject to this intervention power, and the Trust remains fully accountable for the Academy's performance and the educational outcomes of its pupils. I recognise that the trust is working proactively with another trust to build capacity and capability at the school ahead of transfer and I support this approach.

For the reasons set out below, I consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

The Ofsted report published on 9 September 2026 highlights the following areas for improvement:

- Those responsible for governance must act with urgency to ensure that leaders fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities so that pupils and staff are safe and feel safe in school.
- Leaders must establish a consistent and sustainable approach to managing pupils' behaviour, ensuring that staff are appropriately supported to implement the shared strategies effectively.
- Leaders should ensure that any systems used to collect and analyse pastoral data are used effectively to improve pupils' experiences of school, including decreasing the prevalence of discriminatory language.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they adopt a strategic approach to rapidly improve pupils' levels of attendance.
- Leaders should ensure that gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge are identified and support is put into place to help pupils close these gaps.
- Leaders should continue to ensure that the graduated approach to supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and timely.
- Leaders should track participation in extra-curricular activities, broaden the offer and ensure that it is equitable.

Following safeguarding issues highlighted in the Ofsted report (form 2), a seeking assurances letter was sent out on 19 May 2026. The safeguarding concerns noted leaders' failure to establish an effective safeguarding culture and to deal appropriately with child-on-child violence, bullying and wider pupil and staff safety issues. It was reported that leaders lack the expertise to address these issues effectively.

We received assurances from the Trust that safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and monitored by the Board, with additional assurance provided through external safeguarding audits of both schools and central trust functions. The Trust advised that quality assurance processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding practice, while comprehensive staff training and clear accountability arrangements help ensure that safeguarding requirements are consistently understood and implemented across the organisation. We are assured that immediate action has been taken to ensure pupils are staff are safe in school but will continue to monitor this and seek further assurances where necessary.

I am aware the Trust has agreed to work on a transfer with pace. The following section applies should a voluntary transfer to another trust, approved by the Department, not occur in a timely way.

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 the Trust fails to continue to work on a transfer at pace and 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 respond within 15 working days of the date of this notice. However, I note from our verbal conversations, that you have confirmed the trust does not wish to make representations to retain the academy as part of Beckfoot Trust.

[redacted] will be in contact to discuss the next steps and to answer any queries you may have. She will also discuss with you any additional school improvement support we believe would be helpful for you to engage in to assist in raising standards in the school.

I would like to thank the Trust for its commitment to ensuring that it enables the best future outcomes for the children at the Academy and hope that you will continue to work with the Department to secure this outcome.

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 the Interim Strategic Director, Children's Services, Bradford. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Alison Wilson
Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Humber

CC: Ofsted, Shirley Watson and Richard Crane.