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BY EMAIL - katherine.cowell@education.go.uk

14 November 2022

Dear Katherine

In reply to your: Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of Outwood Grange Academies Trust (“the Trust”) in respect of Outwood Academy Ormesby dated 25 October 2022.

The Trust Board met in Outwood Academy Ormesby on the 10th October, 2022 and unanimously agreed that we would wish to continue our association with the academy.

We do not support any termination of the funding agreement and transfer of the academy. The Trust's preferred option is to bring about the rapid change needed to remove the academy from its inadequate judgement.

The Trust can demonstrate the capacity and experience to secure this improvement and better address the long-term challenges the community faces that affect students' ability to learn and engage in their education. Please find linked [here](#) our detailed and robust action plan - do let us know if you have any problems viewing this document. We are sure that you noted that the academy obtained Requires Improvement in all areas except for Behaviour & Attitudes, which was inadequate alone. We accept that this is not good enough and so our Action Plan addresses all aspects of the academy organised by the main Ofsted inspection framework headings: Quality of Education, Behaviour & Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership & Management.

As our CEO, Sir Martyn Oliver, alerted you to in early 2022, the community was dreadfully affected by the Covid pandemic. Between January and March 2022 alone, the school was disrupted by 190 positive Covid cases and this disruption continued apace even though the Government stopped the testing and recording of cases from March. You are also aware that the school community suffered from a significant amount of Covid related deaths as first reported by the BBC in June, 2020. As the responsible body, the Board was

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aware of the challenges the academy faced and moved quickly in early 2022 to put in place additional measures to support the school. We are sorry that these efforts did not have sufficient time to impact the outcome of the Ofsted inspection on the 5th and 6th July, 2022.

In specific response to the Ofsted Areas For Improvement, which you outlined in your letter, we set out below the highlights from our Action Plan:

Too many pupils' learning is being disrupted by poor behaviour. A high proportion of pupils are suspended from school. The behaviour of some pupils is preventing some teachers from implementing the curriculum effectively. Leaders must take action to promote pupils' ability to regulate their own behaviour. They should also ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour to reduce the number of suspensions and exclusions.

Action being taken:

- Sought external support to improve behaviour and attitudes engaging with the DFE Behaviour Hub;
- Ensuring all learners feel welcome and valued and that they get the right support to help them achieve;
- Implemented a new Positive Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- Taking measures to proactively promote students' enjoyment and value of education and engagement in their school;
- Focusing positive behaviour at social and transition times and lessons starts and close insisting on clear, shared routines to ensure positive conduct and social responsibility;
- Securing clarity of expectation for positive relationships and behaviours to be explicitly addressed by all staff for all students;
- Improving the quality of behaviour for learning and student engagement in lessons and reduce the number of lessons that are affected by low-level disruption by ensuring consistent approaches to high quality teaching and classroom management;
- Reducing behaviours that lead to fixed term exclusion and Consequences and break recidivist cycles of behaviour;
- Establishing alternative provision strategies for students who are disengaged or at risk of permanent exclusion;
- Using Student Voice to raise student engagement, encouraging participation in charity, community, learning and peer support and make students feel valued and included in their schooling;
- Securing a high profile of praise, reward and recognition to promote a positive sense of self-worth and belonging in the student population and morale in the staff; and
- Developing a culture that recognises and values stakeholders accomplishments and promotes excellence in everything we do by holding exacting high standards that are modelled by all.

Derogatory language, including homophobic language, is commonplace among too many pupils. Some pupils feel that staff do not always deal with this. Leaders must ensure that an ethos of respect and tolerance is instilled across the school through the further development and embedding of their new personal development and character education plans.

Action being taken:

- Establishing a robust anti-bullying culture where all students feel safe, know how to report their concerns and who to report them to and feel their concerns are addressed in a timely and effective way;
- Registered with the Anti Bullying Alliance - Unite Against Bullying - programme;
- Providing training for key staff on anti-bullying culture and for students on what to do if they are being bullied so that expectations are routinely met;
- Establishing an anti-bullying approach that is understood by all staff, students and parents / carers;
- Ensuring the use of derogatory language, including homophobic language by students is not tolerated in the school and consistently challenged;
- Reviewing bullying incidents and the actions taken to resolve issues for the victim so that it is both timely and effective with accurate records and follow up;
- Raising the profile of not tolerating bullying clearly defining what constitutes bullying and the programmes such as the Diana Awards, Toot Toot and Random Acts of Kindness etc that encourage student engagement in the agenda;
- Engaging students and teachers in discussion to agree on acceptable language, discourage swearing and encourage respectful language with the aim to produce and share a "Respectful Language Stakeholder Charter";
- Training staff in agreed ways to tackle and report incidents of derogatory and homophobic language to improve consistency and modelling for students;
- Strengthening our reporting practices and the effective monitoring and tracking of victims; and
- Applying the Positive Discipline for Learning and Life Policy consistently and robustly to target high, medium and low category disrespectful language both in class and around site.
- Increasing communication regarding actions being taken with all stakeholders to secure an informed community.

The use of assessment is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or pick up on misconceptions quickly enough. This means that some pupils move on to new topics without having relevant knowledge in place. Leaders should ensure that effective assessment strategies are used consistently. They should check that teachers routinely identify where pupils have gaps in knowledge so that they can address these and ensure pupils have a secure recall of the most important content.

Action being taken:

- Reviewed the curriculum to assess the appropriateness of the curriculum to explore curriculum pathways to better support engagement and need;
- Introduced a consistent promotion and application of the Five Teaching Pillars for learning approach used in our Central and primary academies to better support effective teaching and learning: I. Clarity of learning intentions - II. Recap & recall - III. New information – IV. Practice - V. Feedback;
- Providing ongoing training and director support for middle leaders and teachers to ensure assessment is coherently aligned to curriculum plans to assess what students know and can do and is used to inform future teaching, differentiate to meet the need and address gaps in learning;

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- Departments reviewing schemes of learning and use of formative assessment for learning to check that students are securing essential components, procedural knowledge and subject disciplinary vocabulary into long-term memory;
- Strengthening teachers' assessment practice to better assess students' learning against the intended curriculum so gaps in understanding can be ameliorated promptly before moving forward;
- Ensuring planning makes clear the core knowledge milestones and expectations to support teachers' assessment and future planning;
- Reviewing how KS3 assessment is reported to students, parents and carers to ensure it is meaningful whilst managing teachers workload;
- Providing regular department standardisation time to assess the impact of their curriculum on students' work across each year group and better ensure gaps are promptly identified to inform future teaching;
- Implemented consistent line management structure and protocols for SLT line management;
- Promoting the importance of developing and focusing teaching expertise developing research led practices and establishing a coaching culture that proactively develops effective teacher practice and develops subject expertise; and
- Successfully implement a new quality assurance system and relevant training and support.

Partnerships between the school and home are not as effective as they should be. Some parents have negative views of the school. Leaders must further develop their work on engaging with parents, so they have a better understanding of the school's expectations and priorities. Leaders should take steps to build effective communication with parents, to build confidence in the school and encourage a partnership in the improvement journey.

Action being taken:

- Secure confidence of current and future parents and students in Outwood Academy Ormesby and the Outwood Grange Academies Trust by improving communication and engagement with students, parents/carers and the wider community to better promote the value of education, the importance of attendance and the support the academy provides;
- Reviewing best practice in community engagement;
- Formulating a robust community curriculum plan underpinned by the by the Outwood character development curriculum to support and engage parents in their child's education and help ameliorate barriers that cause disengagement;
- Establishing a robust calendared provision engaging local support groups, providers and agencies in the wider support and development of students so that they feel valued and well supported both in school and in their community that is aligned and underpinned by the Outwood character development curriculum;
- Establishing half termly parent focus groups to assess and evaluate the quality of our communication with parents and how it could be further strengthened;
- Strengthening the recruitment of parent governors to our Academy Council and ensure they have a strong community portfolio;
- Building a stronger primary transition programme from Y5 to engage families early in the academy's expectations and approach to education, behaviour, attendance and community;

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- Linking with external support agencies to offer parenting support i.e. Middlesbrough Environmental City Saturday morning etc;
- Producing a half termly newsletter / Podcast highlighting the positives within school and Publish a half termly community curriculum programme to advertise and promote community events/ classes/ support etc. with stakeholders;
- Survey stakeholder engagement through parent and students focus groups to evaluate and revise provision to meet need; and
- Utilising Groupcall to send positive text messages and regular reminders about the value of education and importance of attendance.

We held two parents' meetings on Wednesday, 12th October to present the Ofsted inspection outcome and discuss our Action Plan with parents. We were heartened by the positive responses we received.

A new Academy Improvement Board (AIB) has been established to strengthen local governance and we are delighted that the very experienced governor and chair, Susan Maidens, has agreed to lead this AIB. We would be only too pleased to welcome any suggested people you may have for additional members to this AIB, including from members of your own team, if this provided you with further assurance.

As the Department for Education has deemed Middlesbrough an Education Improvement Area (EIA), we are committed to supporting you in driving up standards in not just Ormesby but in all of our Middlesbrough academies and supporting other schools and groups in the borough too. As you know, there are very significant challenges facing public services in the borough. Gemma Trattles, our Associate Executive Principal who is leading Ormesby's Action Plan and works across our Middlesbrough academies, and Lynn James, Regional Executive Principal who has written the Action Plan and will lead its monitoring. She will support your meetings and share our improvement journey regularly. Our CEO will also happily update you on this in your regular meetings with him.

The Trust Board believes that Outwood Grange Academies Trust can determine an excellent future for their school, as we have previously when we first took it from Special Measures, Serious Weaknesses to Good, and quickly ameliorate the challenges the school is facing. This work has already begun.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if we can provide further assurance.

Yours sincerely

David Earnshaw CBE
Chair, OGAT

Sue Hague
Vice Chair, OGAT

Cc: Martyn Oliver, CEO, OGAT
Susan Maidens, Chair of Ormesby Academy Improvement Board (AIB)
Rob Brown, Director of Education, Prevention & Partnerships, Middlesbrough Council

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