



Department
for Education

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The Members and Trustees of Minerva Learning Trust
Unit P3 Sheffield Business Park
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By email only

5 October 2026

Dear Mr Doyle

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of the Minerva Learning Trust (“the Trust”) in respect of Stocksbridge High 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 22 June 2026 confirming that the Academy was judged to require significant improvement. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

The Ofsted report published on 2 July 2026 highlights the following areas for improvement:

- Leaders must ensure that their attendance strategy leads to increased rates of attendance and reduced persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders and those responsible for governance must ensure that highly effective action is taken to increase pupils' achievement and ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.
- Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, so that gaps in foundational knowledge are addressed and pupils achieve well.

- Leaders should ensure that pupils' barriers to learning are identified precisely and that staff make effective use of information and strategies to support pupils' learning and adapt their teaching.
- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently model and maintain high expectations for behaviour so that pupils develop the resilience and self-discipline to thrive.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the personal development curriculum, particularly knowledge of those who are different and of fundamental British values.

As set out in [Support and intervention in schools](#), there is a presumption that academies that require significant improvement will receive Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) intervention, delivering a bespoke package of challenge and support to target areas of weakness identified in Ofsted report cards, instead of moving directly to structural change. This presumption may be set aside in exceptional circumstances, in which case I will consider terminating the Academy's funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative academy trust.

I am grateful for the open conversations we have had already about this school and the others in the trust. The Trust currently has 3 academies in the Department's targeted RISE programme. I acknowledge that 2 of these academies joined the trust with existing performance challenges following the closure of their previous trust. However, given the number of schools within the trust currently receiving targeted RISE support, I would ask that any representations include assurance on how capacity will be managed to support and sustain the improvements required at Stocksbridge High School while continuing improvement activity across the wider trust.

In making the decision on whether to enter the Academy into RISE or 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 26 October 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 Sheffield City Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely



Alison Wilson
Regional Director for Yorkshire & the Humber

CC: Ofsted, Bev Matthews (CEO Minerva Learning Trust), Meredith Dixon-Teasedale (Sheffield City Council)