



**Lord Nash**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

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Shazia Parveen  
Chair of Governors  
Al-Madinah Education Trust  
Norman House  
Friar Gate  
Derby  
DE1 1NU

8<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Dear Ms Parveen,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Al-Madinah Education Trust (“the Trust”). I am writing to underline the scale of my concerns about the Al-Madinah Free School. Unless swift action is taken to address these concerns in a comprehensive way I will be compelled to terminate the school’s funding agreement.

Two Departmental investigations, by the Internal Investigations and Audit Division and an External Assurance team from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) have been initiated. Ofsted also completed an inspection.

I list the specific problems identified below. Unless these problems are addressed promptly and in full I will terminate the funding agreement. This letter gives the Trust formal notice of this intention, under clause 83 of that agreement.

This letter also gives formal notice under section 165(3) of the Education Act 2002 for breach of the independent school standards prescribed by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. Again, I am giving the Trust the opportunity to rectify those breaches with an action plan.

## **1. Breach of funding agreement**

The Trust has manifestly breached the conditions of its funding agreement by failing to ensure the safety of children at the school; delivering an unacceptably poor standard of education; discriminating in its policies and procedures towards female staff; and failing to discharge its duties and responsibilities in respect of the governing body. I will not tolerate breaches of the commitments you gave when entering into the funding agreement.

## Action required to remedy breaches

I require the Trust to take the following urgent steps by **15 October 2013**:

- a) Provide me with a full list of all staff employed by the Trust, along with the date of their employment, their qualifications and training and comprehensive evidence that CRB / DBS checks have been completed and written references taken up for every employee.
- b) Provide me with written confirmation that you have ceased any practices and procedures that have as their reason, cause or effect that women and girls are treated less favourably than men and boys.
- c) Provide me with written confirmation that you are in compliance with equality legislation for any proposed practices and procedures where girls and boys are separated and / or treated differently.
- d) Notify all staff that they are not required to cover their hair if contrary to their religion or beliefs (the text of the notification to be provided to me for approval before sending to staff).
- e) Write to all the parents of pupils of the school confirming the notification given to staff and provide me with a copy of the letter to parents. Communicate the change publicly, including on the school's website. Provide me with written confirmation that at the first possible opportunity all guidance (staff handbook, School Prospectus) will be updated to reflect the change.

I require the Trust to take the following specific steps by **22 October 2013**:

- f) Satisfy me that the governing body and membership of the Trust are both adequately and appropriately constituted with the requisite skills, experience and commitment necessary to govern the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.
- g) For each existing or proposed member and governor, provide a signed statement setting out and providing evidence of the skills, experience and commitment they will bring to the school. Completed "Section I" forms (available to download from Department's website) must be submitted for each new proposed member or governor so that necessary checks can be conducted. Subject to this information I may require the urgent replacement of some or all of the members or governors.
- h) Advertise the post for the permanent appointment of a new Principal.
- i) Implement an accurate Single Central Register.
- j) Implement a robust system to monitor, evaluate and review pupils' progress.
- k) Identify all vulnerable children at the school, such as those with special needs and looked-after children and satisfy me that their needs have been identified and provide a plan setting out a clear set of actions with timescales as to how these needs will be met.

- l) Satisfy me that your curriculum is broad and balanced.
- m) Provide me with a plan setting out a clear set of specific actions with timescales as to how the Trust will address the many and significant failings with regards to financial management. It is clear that there has been a significant breach of many of the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook. You have already had a verbal summary of those breaches on 2 October 2013 and the EFA will be sending a written report detailing the breaches on 8 October 2013.
- n) Provide me with a document setting out how the school will ensure that it is welcoming and attractive to students of all faiths and none.

Finally, I require the Trust to provide me with a plan by **1 November 2013**, setting out a clear set of specific actions with timescales to:

- o) Satisfy me that there is a clear management structure that will ensure effective, high quality teaching in both primary and secondary education.
- p) Satisfy me that there are systems, processes and policies in place to ensure children are kept safe, well-educated and supported with a broad and balanced curriculum.
- q) Satisfy me that there is a clear and transparent system of good governance within the school.

You should note that I reserve the right to impose further conditions on the Trust should other matters come to my attention. In particular, Ofsted has yet to finalise their inspection report and it is possible that it will give rise to further remedial action being required.

## **2. Failure to meet independent school standards**

I attach a schedule that lists the independent school standards which are not being met. The Trust must submit an action plan specifying the steps that will be taken to meet the standards and the time by which each step will be taken. This action plan must be submitted on or before **1 November 2013**.

I am deeply mindful of the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those sharing protected characteristics and those who do not share such characteristics (Equality Act 2010, section 149). Ensuring that the Trust meets the requirements and conditions set out in the funding agreement, as well as the standards for independent schools, positively promotes these aims.

Yours sincerely,



JOHN NASH

## SCHEDULE

The following independent school standards are not being met in relation to the school

<i>Paragraph:</i>	<i>Content:</i>
Part 3 of Schedule 1- Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils	
7	<p>The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-</p> <p>(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and</p> <p>(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.</p>
Part 4 of Schedule 1 - the suitability of Proprietor and Staff	
<p>This paragraph (paragraph 19) relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school other than the proprietor and supply staff.</p> <p>...the proprietor must ensure that:</p>	
19(2)(c)	<p>an enhanced criminal record check is made by the proprietor in respect of any such person and the resulting enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after the person's appointment</p>
<p>This paragraph (paragraph 19) relates to the suitability of supply staff at an independent school.</p> <p>In order to comply with the standards the proprietor must ensure that:</p>	
20(2)(a)(ii)	<p>a person offered for supply by an employment business to the school only begins to work at the school if the proprietor has received-</p> <p>a copy of any enhanced criminal record certificate obtained by an employment business before the person is due to begin work at the school, and where it discloses any matter or information, or where any information was provided to the employment business in accordance with section 1138(6) of the Police Act 1997, a copy of the certificate;</p>