



Department  
for Education

**Academies Regional Delivery Directorate  
East Midlands and the Humber**

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Cllr Phillip Owen  
Nottinghamshire County Council,  
County Hall,  
West Bridgford,  
Nottingham  
NG2 7QP

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

Dear Councillor Owen,

Many thanks for your letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July. I register your concerns about reductions in the powers of intervention of the RSC in relation to schools causing concern and have shared these with policy colleagues working on the Schools Causing Concern Guidance.

In May 2019 Damian Hinds, then Secretary of State, announced the outcome of our consultation on identifying schools for support. He confirmed that from September 2019, the DfE will no longer publish or use the floor or coasting standards, and instead will use a new single, transparent method for identifying schools eligible for improvement support – an Ofsted judgement of Requires Improvement. This was an important step in creating a clearer, simpler accountability system and helping to reduce undue pressure on school leaders, and excessive workload that distracts teachers from teaching.

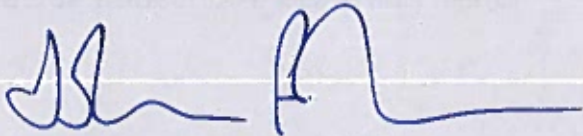
Where Ofsted have inspected a school and issued it with an inadequate rating, RSCs have the power to take decisive action to bring about school improvement. For a maintained school this will mean becoming an academy so that the school can benefit from the support of a strong sponsor. For an academy, we may transfer the school to a stronger academy trust with the capacity to deliver strong and rapid school improvement.

You also raise a question about oversight of academies. The department requires a high level of accountability and transparency of trusts and has robust processes for monitoring trusts' performance. A wide range of information about trusts is published, including MAT performance tables;

financial benchmarking tables; and Ofsted's summary evaluation letters. If you are interested in further detail about oversight of trusts, the Permanent Secretary wrote to the Public Accounts Committee on this matter last autumn and his letter can be found here:

[https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/public-accounts/correspondence/2017-19/Treasury%20Minute%20follow-up\\_Dept%20for%20Education.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/public-accounts/correspondence/2017-19/Treasury%20Minute%20follow-up_Dept%20for%20Education.pdf)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a large 'E' and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**John Edwards**  
**Regional Schools Commissioner**  
**Academies Regional Delivery, East Midlands and the Humber**