

Appendix 2d



2024-0031800

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards

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Mr Harry Catherall
Chief Executive
Oldham Council
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5 November 2024

Dear Mr Catherall,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 September, addressed to the Secretary of State, sharing details of Oldham Council's Motion of 11 September, regarding Collective Spirit Free School. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I appreciate you raising the Council's concerns with the department. Your letter has been shared with the relevant officials in the department's North West Regions group.

I have been advised that the ESFA undertook a full investigation into Collective Spirit Free School, which was published in May 2019. While the report found several significant failings in both the governance and financial control arrangements under the trust board, it was unable to reach a conclusion due to the lack of documentation and supporting financial information. To support a further investigation or inquiry, significant new information would be required. Please do confirm if any such significant new information has been made available.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours,

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards