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14 September 2022

Michelle Hughes
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Hughes

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Tendring Technology College

Following my visit to your school on 19 July 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school continues to be inadequate. However, leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plans are fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the Academies Enterprise multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Adam Cooke
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 19 July 2022

Context

Since the previous inspection, the Academies Enterprise multi-academies trust (the trust) has replaced the local governing body with an interim standards board to hold leaders more firmly to account. The interim standards board comprises representatives from the trust and from the local authority. There is a new executive headteacher. A new principal has been appointed and is due to take up post in September 2022.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

Leaders, trustees and governors share an ambitious vision for Tendring Technology College. Since the previous inspection, they have established rigorous systems of accountability. Trustees and governors make regular checks on how well leaders' actions secure improvement.

Leaders and the trust have provided suitable training for all staff around the construction of the curriculum. Teachers have a clearer understanding of the knowledge pupils need to learn. This knowledge links more logically to what they have learned before. Pupils are remembering and using more of their learning than they did previously. Teachers are starting to check and identify what pupils know and what they do not. Much of this work is new; teachers are becoming more confident in teaching the new curriculum.

Leaders have constructed a more coherent curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). They have ensured that there is a greater focus on teaching pupils how to develop positive, healthy relationships. Leaders have allocated more teaching time for PSHE at key stage 3. Although not currently in place, from September 2022, pupils in key stage 4 will also have more time to study PSHE.

Leaders have introduced a new system of managing pupil behaviour which staff and pupils understand well. Pupils know the consequences of negative behaviour. Leaders have adopted restorative approaches to managing behaviour. Pupils are aware of how their words and actions may affect others. Pupils can make amends for less positive behaviours. Staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved. Pupils and staff attribute this to most teachers' consistent application of the behaviour systems. Pupils' behaviour across the two sites is generally calm and orderly.

Reported incidents of homophobic bullying have fallen. Pupils report that homophobic comments among the school community have declined. Most pupils think that bullying is rare, and adults deal with it swiftly and appropriately when it happens. Leaders are supporting pupils who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) better than was previously the case. As a result of this, LGBTQ+ pupils say they feel safer. They have a stronger voice within the school community. They raise awareness about what it is like to be an LGBTQ+ pupil at the school. Leaders have high expectations around

ensuring an even more respectful and inclusive ethos within the school and local community.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff understand the local risks that pupils may face. Through recent assemblies, pupils are aware of how to identify peer-on-peer abuse and how to respond and report it. There are robust systems in the school to ensure timely reporting of concerns. Leaders intervene quickly so that pupils receive the support they need. Pupils say they feel safe. Safeguarding is effective.

The trust has provided considerable support to ensure that leaders focus on the right priorities to make rapid and sustained improvement. There has been much to do to change the very negative perceptions of the school among staff, pupils and the local community. Leaders now actively seek the views of stakeholders. They have communicated their plans to ensure a better quality of education. Teachers are happier and feel that leaders now listen and take into account their well-being. Staff appreciate the training and support they have received, reporting that 'we are now working together' and 'leaders have made a big difference'. Some teachers who had left the school have returned. Change has been rapid but leaders know they must be relentless in their pursuit of changing hearts and minds. They are in a good place to do so.

Additional support

The multi-academy trust has provided training and support in curriculum development and leadership and management. Leaders have appreciated the impact of this work.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the chief executive officer, the director of education for the multi-academy trust, the chair of the interim standards board, the interim executive headteacher, the executive headteacher, the principal, other senior leaders, staff and pupils.