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Michelle Hughes
Executive Principal
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Dear Ms Hughes

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Tendring Technology College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 14 March 2023, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 2021.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the CEO of the multi-academy trust, other trustees, governors and staff the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also carried out lesson visits, met with pupils, staff and teachers, and scrutinised curriculum and self-review documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Tendring Technology College remains inadequate and has serious weaknesses. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

The new principal has been in post since September 2022.

You have taken significant steps to continue to improve the curriculum. I looked specifically at English because your evaluation of the curriculum identifies English as a strength. I also scrutinised plans for other subjects within the curriculum. Subject leaders have carefully chosen the knowledge they want pupils to learn in English. This knowledge builds well on pupils' prior learning. Teachers break learning down into manageable stages and explain clearly. This helps pupils to understand and learn better. Teachers identify misconceptions and provide pupils with support when they do not understand. This is helping pupils to grasp more complex ideas.

The 2022 results at GCSE in a number of curriculum areas were low when compared with national averages. You identified the need to ensure pupils build knowledge better in some areas of the curriculum. Across the curriculum, you, and leaders, have provided training to develop teachers' subject knowledge. As a result, teachers regularly revisit knowledge that pupils have learned before. This helps pupils to remember better. You regularly review how well teachers implement the curriculum. You continue to provide training for a small number of teachers to ensure they present knowledge more clearly.

You have made clear your high expectations around pupils' behaviour and attitudes to each other. You have established a more inclusive ethos in the school. Pupils, including pupils who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, report that incidents of homophobic bullying are now rare. Pupils know that you and your staff will act swiftly to put a stop to any bullying should it happen.

As at the time of my previous monitoring visit, pupils' conduct is contributing to a calm, orderly atmosphere in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are ready to learn. They are respectful to each other, adults and visitors to the school. Pupils and staff have noticed and appreciate this. They report that behaviour continues to improve. Most staff apply the behaviour systems consistently. Although high, the number of pupils excluded from school has decreased considerably since September 2022.

Most pupils attend well. You have taken some actions to improve pupils' attendance. You have increased support within the school and draw from outside agencies to enhance this work. As a result, more pupils now regularly attend school than at the start of the academic year. However, for a significant minority of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance rates are significantly lower than the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent also remains too high. You know that you must continue to work with parents to ensure more pupils regularly attend school.

You have allocated more curriculum time to the personal, social and health education curriculum at key stage 3 and at key stage 4. Increasingly, pupils know how to nurture

healthy relationships. Pupils understand how to respond to less-healthy behaviours. This helps them keep safe. Pupils I met with during my visit demonstrated positive attitudes towards those who are different from them. However, pupils' knowledge of other major religions is limited.

Safeguarding remains effective. Pupils know how to report a concern to an adult. Pupils also understand how to keep themselves safe when online. They appreciate how you and your staff care for their physical and mental well-being.

Most teachers find their workload manageable, although a minority still do not. A significant majority of teachers now enjoy working at the school. They acknowledge how your actions and support continue to make the school a better place to work and learn. Leaders, trustees and governors have a precise understanding of how well the school is improving. This is because you rigorously scrutinise all areas of school life. You know there is more work to do and have developed appropriate plans to achieve your aims. You are well placed to ensure further improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Cooke
His Majesty's Inspector