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13 December 2023

Tristan Muller-Forster
Principal
Tavistock College
Crowndale Road
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Dear Tristan Muller-Forster,

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Tavistock College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 7 November 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 May 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, 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 observed the school's work, visited lessons, scrutinised documents and met with groups of pupils. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as having serious weaknesses.

The progress made towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

This was the second monitoring visit since the school's section 5 inspection in May 2022. Since the previous monitoring visit, a director for social inclusion has been appointed on a

one-year secondment. The focus of this monitoring inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the personal development curriculum, leaders' management of behaviour and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has identified clearly how it will rectify the areas of weakness identified in the previous inspection. Its own self-evaluation is supported by commissioned external validation. This gives leaders an accurate insight into how well their strategies are securing the improvement needed.

The school has continued to embed the revised personal, social and health education curriculum. Through diligent planning, the school has developed a well-structured programme to enable pupils to learn about the society in which they live. For example, Year 10 pupils learn about the importance of human rights, such as the 'right to assemble'. However, pupils do not fully engage in discussing these complex concepts and how they impact on their lives and their behaviour towards others.

The school has ensured that pupils have a robust understanding of the importance of creating a culture in school and beyond where pupils with protected characteristics are safe and well supported. Consequently, pupils have a strong understanding of the protected characteristics, outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Some pupils note the positive changes to pupils' behaviour. One pupil's view echoed that of others when she stated that there are many 'pure souls' who demonstrate empathy and respect to others. However, there are still some pupils who state that bullying persists and is not reported and resolved effectively.

The introduction of the 'College Charter' has resulted in a marked reduction in suspensions and internal sanctions. Leaders have established clear expectations and have an oversight of pupils' behaviour and attendance. As a result, the school responds swiftly to concerns, with solutions tailored to the needs of pupils.

The school has refined the support provided to pupils with SEND. All staff have information about pupils' needs and how best to support these. In addition, all staff receive ongoing training on how to adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND learn successfully. However, leaders acknowledge that this is not yet reflected in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the CEO of the Dartmoor multi academy trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
His Majesty's Inspector