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John Cavadino and Kate Mahar
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Dear Mr Cavadino and Ms Mahar

Requires improvement monitoring inspection of Conisborough College

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 1 February 2024, 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 took place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous graded (section 5) inspections. I was accompanied by Sue Maguire, His Majesty's Inspector.

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 we discussed with you, other senior leaders, members of the interim executive board and representatives from the United Learning 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. We met with curriculum leaders including the leader for personal, social and health education (PSHE), visited a sample of lessons, met with groups of pupils and staff, and considered documentation related to school improvement. We have considered all this in coming to our judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.

Main findings

Since the last graded inspection of the school in April 2022, there have been several changes to the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders. In June 2023, the school appointed two co-headteachers to lead the school. Also at this time, an interim executive board of governors was set up by Lewisham local authority to provide support to the school. The school is in the process of joining the United Learning Trust.

The school has increased the breadth of subjects in the curriculum for pupils to study to meet the ambition of the national curriculum. You have made changes to the subject-options selection process for pupils in Year 9 to encourage more pupils to take the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects at GCSE. Curriculum thinking in many subjects is undergoing development. You have expanded the PSHE curriculum so that pupils in Year 11 now receive age-appropriate information including relationships and sex education through weekly lessons.

Teaching staff have received training on the effective use of assessment to check what pupils know and can remember. Staff use formative assessment to identify and address with greater confidence misconceptions that pupils may have. You have swiftly put in place a new literacy strategy to help identify and support any pupils who need additional support with their reading. Teaching across subject areas has an increased focus on developing pupils' skills in oracy and literacy.

You have relaunched the school's behaviour policy. Teachers have been trained to be more consistent in following and applying the school's behaviour policy. Behaviour in the school is typically calm and orderly. Staff and pupils commented that behaviour in lessons is generally improved. However, low-level disruption continues to impact pupils' learning in some lessons. You have improved systems to track and manage instances of disruptive behaviour. Some staff raised concerns about the inconsistency of actions taken when pupils are removed from lessons due to poor behaviour.

You have provided a clear programme of professional development for staff. Staff commented that they have seen the positive impact of the training they have received. The interim executive board has prioritised the wellbeing of staff when making important decisions. They have provided robust support to the school during this time of change. Staff feel well-informed about changes that happen at the school.

The United Learning Trust has provided external support to develop the school's curriculum and assessment practices. The trust has also worked with you to improve the management of pupils' behaviour. This support has been received well by staff at the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Lewisham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Annabel Davies
His Majesty's Inspector