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Mrs Kelly Ann Brown and Mr Gregory Forster
Acting headteachers
Tabor Academy
Panfield Lane
Braintree
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Dear Mrs Brown and Mr Forster

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern, Tabor Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 28 January 2025, 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 meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, 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, the chair of the trust, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the chair of the academy committee, other senior leaders 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 met with pupils, visited lessons and reviewed the school's systems and school improvement documentation. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

At the time of the last inspection, the acting headteachers had been in post for three weeks. They have since continued in their roles. The senior leadership structure has also remained the same. The trust's local academy committee, to which it delegates some responsibilities for oversight of the school, has expanded. It now includes more members with an education background.

The school's curriculum has been overhauled. The school has expanded its offer in the creative subjects. This now includes graphics and textiles. More pupils have access to woodwork and food technology. Pupils are of the view that the changes are welcome. Staff are working with the trust's curriculum plans. There is careful consideration of the content and order of what pupils learn. This includes the ambitious subject vocabulary pupils are expected to learn. Staff are receiving training to best deliver the trust's curriculum. They are enthusiastic about the network opportunities available and appreciate the visits to other trust schools to see how to apply curriculum plans in practice. Teachers are consistently applying 'pop backs'. These are opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on prior learning. As a result, pupils are remembering more of the subject content. However, it is still the case that some teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do. While there is consistency with how teachers use end of unit tests to check pupils' work, some teachers are unclear in their feedback about how pupils are to improve. A few teachers are not providing feedback.

The work to adapt the curriculum for pupils' needs is in progress. The trust director for SEND has worked with the school to improve the information that teachers receive for pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Parents and pupils have contributed to individual support plans. Staff are starting to use the information to inform the strategies they choose to help pupils learn the curriculum. Ongoing training on how best to support pupils with SEND is having an impact. Teachers are more skilled at deploying additional adults in the classroom. Pupils with SEND who are learning to read receive helpful support. The school continues to prioritise reading in its curriculum. This was a recognised as a strength in the last inspection report.

There is clarity and rigour with regards to accountability. Leaders at all levels understand their role to play to ensure the school drives improvement forward. The mentoring from trust staff provides leaders with an expert sounding board. This is complemented by the forging of stronger relations across trust schools, thus enabling the sharing of leadership practice. As a result, leaders feel valued, trusted and empowered to fulfil their roles. The school development plan and its associated documentation provide a sharply focused blueprint for leaders to follow. The trust and external consultants make regular checks on progress against the milestones outlined. The local academy committee has improved its role in holding the school to account. As a result of the improvement in the leadership of the school, staff report that the school is now a 'happier place to be'. They share in the school's vision and understand how their contribution makes a difference.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of Loxford School Trust Limited, 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

Liz Smith
His Majesty's Inspector