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Mr Anthony Wilson  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Anthony Wilson

### **Short inspection of Lister Community School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 December 2018 with Gerard Strong and Bruce Goddard, Ofsted Inspectors, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders have high aspirations for their pupils and an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school, and areas that need development. You and other leaders have addressed the priorities from the last inspection and made strong progress in many aspects of the school's provision. Overall GCSE outcomes for pupils over the last three years have been consistently above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in line with their peers.

You are relentless in pursuing improvement and see the school at the heart of the community. An example of this is the impressive music provision, where all pupils at key stage 3 learn to play an instrument and have opportunities to perform locally. A 'community opera' based on the life of a Newham refugee was devised at Lister and performed to the community. Pupils' personal development and welfare, supported by an enriching curriculum, is central to the work of the school. Staff are committed and proud to be part of the school. Leaders, including governors, are currently working towards joining a multi-academy trust.

On the day of the inspection, behaviour and conduct of the pupils was very good. Pupils were courteous, articulate and willing to speak with inspectors, both formally and informally. Pupils said that they enjoy school and value the wide range of opportunities they are given and talk warmly about the inclusive nature of the

school. You are determined to make further improvements in teaching and learning so that all groups of learners make strong progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The governing body have ensured the arrangements for safeguarding are effective and all necessary checks are completed on staff. Leaders provide all staff with appropriate training on safeguarding procedures and work appropriately with outside agencies. Staff have a sound knowledge of current safeguarding guidance and are very clear about what they should do if they have concerns about a pupil.

Leaders are aware of the potential challenges facing young people in the wider community, such as gang affiliation, knife crime and domestic abuse. As a result, guidance is given to pupils to help them manage the risks they face in order to keep themselves safe.

Pupils spoken to by inspectors were very complimentary about the support they receive from staff. They said they feel safe in school and if they have a problem there is someone they can talk to. Bullying is rare and if it occurs the vast majority said it would be dealt with. Pupils said the school was inclusive and that homophobia and racism are not tolerated. Through the curriculum and other sessions pupils are taught how to be safe, for example online.

### **Inspection findings**

- The first area of focus for the inspection was the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes pupils who have an education, health and care plan and those pupils identified by the school as needing additional support. This was because in 2018 progress and GCSE examination results for pupils with SEND were below those of other pupils.
- The school has a range of provision to support pupils with SEND. The school has a well-led hearing-impaired support department which currently supports 13 hearing-impaired pupils. There is a learning support department which currently supports 21 pupils, who access tutor activities, music, art and physical education in the main school. In addition, the student support centre effectively supports a range of pupils, including those with education, health and care plans or pupils who receive high needs funding.
- Weekly meetings are held with the deputy headteacher and all leaders who have responsibility for SEND provision. As a result, this is useful in checking the progress that pupils with SEND are making. Leaders provide teachers with detailed information about pupils with SEND, through personal passports. The majority of support assistants have received appropriate training to effectively support pupils, for example in dyslexia and autism spectrum disorder. Teachers have access to training to support pupils they teach with SEND, through professional development 'toolkits'. However, not all teachers have received training which enables them to support the full range of pupils with SEND.
- In some classes visited by inspectors, progress of pupils with SEND was good

because activities were planned to meet their needs. This was particularly evident for hearing-impaired pupils. In some work the inspectors looked at, pupils with SEND were making strong progress in line with their peers, and show good progress in mastering everyday skills. Some teachers do not always have effective teaching strategies to help pupils with SEND. The expectations for their academic progress and achievement are not always high enough. A key area for development is for leaders to ensure that teachers receive specific training to enable them to support their pupils more effectively.

- The second area of focus was modern foreign languages. This was because for the last three years progress and GCSE examination results have been below national averages. The clear majority of pupils study for and take a GCSE examination in a modern foreign language.
- Leaders have recognised that modern foreign languages requires focused attention to bring about rapid improvement. New leadership has been appointed from next term. Additional curriculum time has been actioned for Year 7 from the beginning of this academic year, to enable more time to deepen skills and understanding. A new language, Mandarin, has been introduced into the curriculum to provide challenge for the most able.
- Pupils' work which inspectors looked at showed that most pupils were making progress over time. Teachers demonstrated sound subject knowledge. However, activities are not consistently matched to the learning needs of pupils, especially the most able. Leaders have recognised this and are addressing this through the staff professional development programme.
- The third area of focus was the progress of girls in mathematics. This was because examination results for girls in 2018 were not as strong as for boys, and below the national averages for girls.
- Leaders have recognised the need to change the mathematics curriculum to build ambition and ensure stronger pupil outcomes. Work has started in Year 7 and Year 8 and a mathematics mastery curriculum is now in place. Leaders have begun to regularly review the new curriculum to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- Inspectors found inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics. In most classes visited by inspectors, good subject knowledge was evident in the teaching. Scrutiny of pupils' books showed that strong progress was being made by both girls and boys. However, sometimes activities set did not always show a high enough level of challenge. In some classes, girls did not have as many opportunities as boys to answer questions or develop their understanding of mathematical methods. In addition, pupils' work showed that the school's assessment policy is not always followed, which meant pupils have fewer opportunities to address misconceptions and improve their work.
- The fourth area of focus was reading. This was identified as a strength of the school. Many pupils enter the school or join mid-way through the year with lower than average reading ages. Leaders have recognised the need to improve reading for pupils to successfully access the curriculum.
- Pupils in key stage 3 have an effective library lesson each fortnight which focuses on both personal and social reading. The librarian has successfully engaged

pupils in reading. Pupils were positive about their reading and how they are guided to select interesting books. Leaders in this area are knowledgeable and committed to supporting pupils' development in this area. Twice a week in tutor sessions time is dedicated to reading. Each department has a well-trained literacy champion who is responsible for language development in their subject area. Teachers are making the development of language a priority in their lessons and use subject-specific articles well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.

- Leaders have put in place detailed and reliable systems to check the progress pupils are making with their reading. Information looked at by inspectors showed that the reading ages of pupils are rapidly improving to national averages or above. Individuals who need further support are given personalised interventions, including extra teaching time.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers receive appropriate training to support the learning needs of pupils with SEND
- girls are appropriately challenged in mathematics to achieve the progress they are capable of.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Parker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspection began with a discussion with yourself and the deputy headteacher about the strengths of the school and areas you were working on. Together, we agreed the key lines of enquiry to be looked at during the inspection. Inspectors visited lessons with members of the leadership team. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and spoke with pupils. Inspectors looked at school documentation, including attendance records, behaviour and exclusion logs and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire to parents. Inspectors met with literacy leaders, staff who manage attendance and behaviour, middle leaders, new staff, the designated safeguarding lead and three groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke with two governors and a representative from the local authority.