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Mr John Bradshaw
Executive Headteacher
The Cherry Trees School
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Dear Mr Bradshaw

Short inspection of The Cherry Trees School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019 with Rani Karim, Ofsted Inspector, 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 outstanding in March 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of outstanding as a result of this inspection.**

The school has faced significant turbulence since the last inspection, with changes to leadership and many of the practices of the school. You have taken on the role of executive headteacher and have worked closely with the acting headteacher to ensure continuity of education for pupils.

In the last year, leaders and governors have put in place effective systems to ensure that pupils are safe both in and out of school, and for maintaining the quality of education provided.

You told me that many pupils attending the school were at risk of permanent exclusion from their previous schools. Staff work well to maintain contact with each pupil's mainstream school and aim to return pupils to the mainstream system, wherever possible, or on to specialist provision, on their transition to secondary school.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is evident. Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding systems and procedures are fit for purpose. Regular training for staff ensures that the well-being and safety of pupils are paramount. Leaders make

sure that all the required staff recruitment checks are in place.

The ratio of staff to pupils through the school day supports pupils to feel safe at all times. A few pupils do not attend school regularly. Tighter systems need to be put in place to check their whereabouts and to ensure they are safe at all times.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at how well leaders and governors ensure that the individual needs of each pupil are met. This is because the pupils attending the school have a diverse range of academic and social and emotional needs.
- The acting headteacher has operational oversight of the school and he has supported staff well to provide lessons which address the needs of all pupils. Lessons promote well pupils' social and emotional needs as well as their academic development.
- Governors, leaders and staff are all able to explain their role in contributing to the quality of education. New governors have been recruited with specific skills to support the school. Leaders are new to their roles and work well together to focus on supporting staff. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders to maintain the quality of education.
- We next agreed to focus on how well leaders monitor pupils' behaviour. This was an area identified for improvement at the previous inspection.
- Leaders have put in place new systems, which are effective. All incidents are recorded and reported to the acting headteacher and head of inclusion. These are systematically reviewed and subsequent future interventions are carefully planned for individual pupils.
- Pupils engage well with activities and staff use a wide range of skilful strategies to prepare pupils for their learning and help them to engage in lessons.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. These ensure that pupils are able to access learning activities well. These relationships were evident throughout the school day, in lessons, on the playground and in the lunch hall. Staff know the pupils extremely well and use strategies appropriately to support individual pupils well.
- We also agreed to look at how well leaders monitor pupils' progress and share this information and pupils' successes with parents, carers and the pupils' mainstream schools.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the school's assessment processes in order to measure pupils' learning and progress.
- Progress with social and emotional skills is particularly well monitored. This is used to celebrate pupils' achievements across a range of subjects and inform their next steps in learning.
- However, the systems for recording pupils' achievements would benefit from greater attention to detail so that these capture the small steps of progress for every pupil in all areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systems are put in place to reduce persistent absence
- assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are further developed to capture pupils' all-round achievements.

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

Yours sincerely

Penny Barratt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, the acting headteacher, chair of the governing body and head of inclusion. Inspectors spoke with the divisional director from the local authority and held discussions with teachers throughout the school. Inspectors spoke with pupils and visited classrooms jointly with the acting headteacher. Inspectors scrutinised the school's assessment procedures and behaviour logs and reviewed attendance information. Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors took into account the responses to the staff survey. Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's development plan, curriculum plans, assessment information, safeguarding information and records, and the single central record of staff suitability checks and reviewed the school's safeguarding files.