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15 March 2019

Mrs Debbie Norbury  
Principal  
Tiverton Academy  
Tiverton Road  
Selly Oak  
Birmingham  
B29 6BW

Dear Mrs Norbury

### **No formal designation inspection of Tiverton Academy**

Following my visit with Graeme Rudland, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 5 March 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about outcomes for pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed lessons and pupils' work in books with you and the vice principal. We scrutinised action plans, assessment information and data about pupils' attendance. Meetings were held with you and your senior leadership team. I checked the single central record and held a discussion with you about safeguarding and child protection. I met with two members of the local governing board, including the vice chair, as well as the chief executive officer and a director of The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust (TEFAT). Inspectors spoke with pupils during lessons and met with two groups to discuss their views, experiences, safety, and their work and progress. Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the inspection.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The overall effectiveness of the school remains outstanding and safeguarding is effective.

## **Context**

The school is similar in size to most primary schools. Early years provision comprises a Nursery class for three-year-old children and a Reception class for four- and five-year-olds. The children in the Nursery attend part time for either morning or afternoon sessions.

The school was last inspected in March 2015 and judged to be outstanding. The trust, TEFAT appoints and holds to account the local governing board. The trust and local governing board commission support and training from within the trust across all of its 28 academies. There are also close working partnerships with other schools and institutions. For example, Tiverton Academy has close links with the nearby University of Birmingham.

You became principal in September 2018 after the previous principal left in July 2018. There have been no other significant changes to staffing or leadership since the previous inspection.

Your school serves a very mixed and diverse community. Pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. One in ten pupils are of White British heritage and others come from one of the fourteen out of seventeen possible minority ethnic groups. A large proportion of pupils, two fifths, speak English as an additional language. A significant number of pupils join the school at different times in each key stage. Many pupils who join other than at the usual entry point in the early years are in the very early stages of learning to speak English. Many of the pupils, parents and carers that inspectors spoke with explained that they joined the school from overseas and, in some cases, pupils had had little or no early schooling experiences.

The area has significant deprivation as well as a large amount of temporary social housing and accommodation for families. This accounts for the very high inward and outward mobility of families served by the school. Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with that of most schools. Most pupils with SEND have moderate learning difficulties and/or emotional or behavioural needs, including autism.

## **Inspection findings**

The inspection took place because national assessments in recent years show that pupils' progress in key stage 2 was not as strong as might be expected for a school judged to be outstanding. Assessments show significant improvement in the 2018 national tests compared with 2017 in the percentage of pupils in Year 6 who reached or exceeded age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the progress measures in national assessment information in 2018 point to only average rates of progress. Typically, for most schools nationally, these

measures take account of how much progress pupils make in key stage 2 in relation to their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. Inspection findings show that, as reported above in the context section, many pupils in Year 6 last year, and in previous years, joined the school at different times during key stage 2. A significant proportion join with skills and abilities that are well below those typically expected for their age. Assessment information, work in books and teachers' assessments show that pupils make strong progress in relation to their different starting points. Remarkably, most pupils in all key stages who are learning English as an additional language make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also the case for those pupils who are disadvantaged. In addition, a significant proportion of pupils reach or exceed age-related standards in reading and writing, despite their low starting points in language and communication when they joined the school.

Early years provision remains strong. Children make excellent progress in relation to their low starting points. The transition into Year 1 also remains strong. The teaching and support in both the early years and key stage 1 enable most pupils to reach or exceed age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. A large percentage (30%) of pupils in the current Year 2 have SEND. Those pupils who did not reach the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 are making good progress in Year 2. Phonics teaching throughout the early years and key stage 1 is outstanding and most pupils are on track to reach the expected standard this year. In both key stage 1 classes, pupils' work in books shows that they are making very good progress in writing and mathematics.

Leaders rightly identified that pupils should be making more progress in mathematics. Action plans identify the most appropriate priorities for improvement, for example in focusing on providing more challenge for the most able pupils. The actions taken to address this include more problem-solving tasks that challenge and extend learning, as well as more direct support for pupils who fall behind. As a result, pupils are making increasingly better progress in mathematics. The upturn in national assessments in 2018, compared with previous years, reflects this. Leaders' oversight of teaching and their monitoring and support for class teachers have been effective. The teaching throughout key stage 2 has been effective in increasing the proportion of pupils learning mathematics in greater depth. This improvement is reflected in the 2018 national assessments.

Leaders and staff have fully addressed the area for improvement from the previous inspection that asked for more details to be included in their assessments about pupils who join the school at different times. This has enabled teachers to assess what pupils know and understand when they join the school, especially if pupils do not have initial key stage 1 assessment information and/or have joined from overseas. You and your staff now have an accurate and coherent view of how much progress individual pupils make over time. It is this information, together with work in pupils' books, that shows very clearly that the school is maintaining strong pupil outcomes.

Leaders have maintained good and outstanding teaching across the school. There are some areas where teaching and the support provided for pupils in lessons could still improve. There are occasions during lessons when pupils do not fully understand what they are learning because of gaps or misunderstandings in what they had previously learned. The best practice observed included teaching which takes pupils through a step-by-step approach and includes effective questioning. For example, in Year 2, the teacher explained the key features of fractions very well. She asked appropriate questions to check that pupils understood the difference between equal and unequal parts represented as shapes and numerical fractions. However, there are occasions when the questions posed by teachers and support staff do not sufficiently explain new learning or check that pupils are clear about what they have learned before. This was more evident in some key stage 2 lessons and resulted in pupils being unable to tackle some number problems in mathematics. This slows learning and pupils sometimes make repeated errors.

The support provided for pupils with SEND is very effective. There is very good oversight and management of SEND provision. The most vulnerable pupils are well supported by skilled teachers and teaching assistants. For example, pupils with specific learning difficulties, such as autism, or who have emotional or mental health needs, are fully integrated in lessons. They also receive timely and well-focused support in small groups or individually outside mainstream lessons. Pupils who find it difficult to reach age-related standards make good progress in most lessons but there are occasions when they do not receive the most effective support. For example, when pupils are expected to work independently, some pupils cannot cope with the work provided and need extra support. Work in books shows that teachers and teaching assistants provide good-quality feedback to pupils and then follow up on any mistakes to help pupils make progress. However, more could be done during lessons, in some classes, to ensure that pupils who find learning difficult are supported by adults. Leaders and staff make good use of peer-to-peer learning in most lessons. This is when pupils are organised into mixed-ability groups, enabling the most able pupils to support others who find it difficult to keep up. This is inclusive and effective, but there is still scope to include more adult support for some pupils to help them keep up with their classmates.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and at recreational times. There are warm and positive relationships between pupils and staff. The welfare, care and attention given to pupils remain strong features of the school. The staff make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents are, rightly, very pleased with the pastoral care and welfare provided for their children. There is a vigilant culture of safeguarding and child protection. I met with pupils representing the school's steering group for children's rights. You, your staff and pupils are very committed to the UNICEF values of inclusivity and respect across the world community. The pupils I spoke with from the steering group were remarkably mature and responsible young people who are excellent role models for the school and local community. As one pupil rightly stated, 'The most important thing about

this school is that everyone is included and can show their talents.' Your school also works closely with other agencies and organisations, such as Save the Children, to teach pupils to respect and care for each other. The school is working hard on respecting rights and responsibilities to achieve the next international award from UNICEF, having achieved the bronze award.

Leaders provide an excellent programme of curriculum activities and enrichment. There are numerous national awards displayed in the foyer that include recognition for the high standards reached in art and design, the performing arts, music, physical education and sport. These have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and attitudes to school and learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in improving attendance that now compares well with the national figure. The school makes very effective use of the primary physical education and sport premium. The staff are very dedicated to providing daily extra-curricular activities that include sports and team games. Teachers and support staff provide an excellent range of activities for pupils to participate in during lessons and in after-school clubs.

You and the staff have developed an innovative curriculum. Pupils are enthused by the many and varied cross-curricular themes, topics and subjects they study. Work in science, geography, history and religious education are complemented by a very good range of visits and visitors to the school. The creative, performing and fine arts are also prominent throughout the curriculum and this is reflected in the excellent, high-quality displays of pupils' two- and three-dimensional artwork. The close links with the Royal Ballet in Birmingham has also benefited pupils' experiences, with one youngster going on to perform in the most recent performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker' at the Birmingham Hippodrome.

Your staff incorporate interesting themes and activities which have a strong focus on children's literature and help pupils to read widely and often. For example, in key stage 2, pupils could recall to an inspector many examples of children's literature that they have chosen to read, as well as many interesting non-fiction subjects such as science and history. These rich experiences and regular opportunities to read in school and at home improve pupils' confidence and skills in reading and writing.

You, your staff, governors and the trust respect pupils, families and the local community. You have all maintained strong working relationships with parents, who say that they are treated with respect and dignity. The school makes a very strong contribution to pupils' welfare and safety, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **External support**

The trust, TEFAT, and local governing board are very committed and work closely to support the school. Leaders and staff continue to utilise the expertise of both the trust and other partner schools. The principal and pastoral leaders also work very

closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe in school and at home if not attending school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Make sure that teachers and teaching assistants are more vigilant in checking that pupils fully understand their learning, particularly in mathematics lessons; and ensure that teachers assess how well pupils are learning so they can identify any gaps or misunderstandings that can be addressed during lessons.
- Ensure that teachers adapt tasks better and deploy teaching assistants more effectively to support pupils who have difficulty reaching age-related standards.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board and the chief executive officer of The Elliott Foundation Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**