

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



5 June 2019

Ms Claire Lillis, Executive Headteacher and Ms Trin Jefferson, Headteacher  
Ian Mikardo School  
60 William Guy Gardens  
Talwin Street  
London  
E3 3LF

Dear Ms Lillis and Ms Jefferson

### **No formal designation inspection of Ian Mikardo School**

Following my visit with Joy Barter, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 21 May 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 the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. We met with you, the executive headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of the local governing body, and groups of staff. I spoke on the telephone to the local authority safeguarding lead. Inspectors considered information about attendance and behaviour management in the school. We toured the school during the working day and spoke to groups of pupils both formally and informally.

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

Safeguarding is effective.

### **Context**

Ian Mikardo is a special school for boys who have complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties. There are currently 51 pupils enrolled at the school from 17 local authorities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan and almost

all are eligible for pupil premium funding.

You took up your post at the predecessor school in January 2018 and receive support from the previous headteacher, who is now the executive headteacher. In February 2018, the school opened as an academy.

### **Safeguarding arrangements**

Ian Mikardo School provides education for some challenging pupils with complex backgrounds. The school is a safe and welcoming environment which is often pupils' only point of stability and consistency. Pupils say they can use the strategies they learn at school to manage their emotions and feelings at home. The strong and well-regarded welfare team supports pupils and their families all year round so that situations do not deteriorate as a result of intermittent contact.

All staff meet at the beginning and end of each day to make sure that everyone is updated in changes to pupils' contexts or behaviours. Plans, including adaptations to timetables, are made to ensure that pupils' needs are met, and that pupils and staff are safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and attribute this to the positive relationships they have with staff.

The school site is well organised and secure. Staff are vigilant in supervising pupils both indoors and outdoors and skilfully defuse any potential crises. Most sixth-form students regularly attend provision or work placements off site. In the initial stages of their placement, they receive full-time support from school staff, which is only reduced once they are settled. Leaders use a range of methods to check on students' whereabouts while they are off site and make sure they are safe. For example, one student routinely sends a 'selfie' of himself to leaders on arrival at his workplace.

Staff members receive regular training in relevant aspects of safeguarding. They know whom to report any concerns to, and staff at all levels recognise their personal role in safeguarding pupils.

Staff record any behavioural incidents, referrals to services or interventions. These records are detailed but lack structure and do not enable leaders to analyse accurately the impact of their work.

The single central record is fully compliant; all the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed and recorded. Visitors to the school are selected carefully. Leaders generally make sure that visitors have a clear purpose for their visit and are from well-regarded organisations. However, the school does not have a formal process for checking the suitability of visitors and their presentations.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders have embedded an open and transparent safeguarding culture at the school. Members of the trust board and local governing body prioritise safeguarding and it is discussed at every meeting. Those responsible for governance demonstrate a deep understanding of pupils' needs, their vulnerability and the risks they pose. For example, when discussing maintenance costs, governors asked how leaders were tackling the underlying causes of behaviours that resulted in the damage.

A member of the trust board has strategic oversight of the school's safeguarding practices. More recently, a designated safeguarding governor has been identified and is being trained to undertake this role fully.

The trust's director of safeguarding works closely with you and the designated safeguarding lead to make sure that individual pupils' cases are managed well. Leaders report any concerns to local authorities in a timely way. They are persistent and diligent in following these up, escalating concerns where appropriate.

Leaders provide excellent support for staff well-being. For example, a psychotherapist supports all leaders and staff both individually and collectively. Staff say this 'helps us to manage our feelings and make sense of what is happening'.

Leaders have planned and implemented a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to develop resilience to the risks they face in the community. For example, people affected by knife crime have visited the school to talk about their experiences and the impact of these crimes. Pupils told inspectors how this had made them think about knife culture. The informal 'social' curriculum has an emphasis on safeguarding and is tailored to the needs of individual pupils. For example, experiences in the school salon enable pupils to develop trust, grow in confidence and develop pride in their appearance.

### **External support**

Leaders work closely with the local authority safeguarding team. Leaders take advice from the local authority and act on it. Leaders also receive support and advice, as needed, from the designated officer.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Improve recording systems so that leaders can analyse the impact of their work and identify any emerging trends.
- Implement a structured process to check the suitability of visitors to the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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

Gaynor Roberts  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**