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13 July 2022

Joanna Tarrant
Interim Executive Headteacher
The Michael Tippett School
Heron Road
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Dear Ms Tarrant

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Michael Tippett School

Following my visit to your school on 7 and 8 June 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in November 2021. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. I discussed the ongoing impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

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

The school continues to be inadequate. Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school's action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 7 and 8 June 2022

Context

Following the last inspection in November 2021, the governing body was largely replaced with experienced governors, including the chair of governors. The interim head of school and interim executive headteacher continue to lead the school. Other leaders, including the assistant headteacher and subject leaders, have been recently appointed. Since September 2021, the interim leaders have been supported by the school improvement partner from the local authority.

Since the last inspection, discussions have been taking place to convert the school into an academy. Negotiations have been taking place between the local authority and potential academy sponsors for new arrangements to begin in September 2022.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Interim leaders demonstrate a determination to improve the safety of pupils and the quality of education. They have a clarity of purpose which is already bringing about a shift in the culture of the school. Leaders are supported by the relatively new governors and chair of governors and the local authority school improvement adviser. Leaders welcome the challenge they provide.

There is now a strong culture of safety in the school due to an overhaul of the safeguarding policies and procedures. Systems are rigorously implemented across the school. Leaders have continued to strengthen processes for carrying out the necessary checks on adults working in the school. Leaders act on any concerns about pupils' welfare rapidly. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate, for example when tackling pupil and family welfare concerns. All staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding.

Pupils feel safe and are happy at school. All parents and carers who returned questionnaires to inspectors said that their children are safe. Pupils are confident that any concerns they have are dealt with by trusted adults.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a sense of urgency in tackling the areas of weakness. They have developed a credible, structured plan to address these weaknesses. Leaders check regularly that they are working on the right things to improve the school. This is working well.

Leaders have developed a strong team ethos and set high expectations for the school community. Leaders are ambitious, and this is widely shared across the staff team. Leaders and staff at all levels have been involved in developing the new curriculum. Detailed assessments of each pupil have ensured targets are now carefully linked to their education, health and care plan outcomes. Although still to be consistently applied, the

newly introduced communication strategy is improving pupils' involvement in their learning and supporting them to make positive behaviour choices.

Leaders have set out clear intentions for the informal, semi-formal and post-16 curriculum. They aim to prepare pupils well for their next steps in education, training or employment. Leaders have sensibly prioritised development in all subjects, including the sequencing of core knowledge and key vocabulary.

Most teachers' curriculum expertise has improved. However, there is some variation in the quality of subject thinking and implementation of the new curriculum. It is not consistent across classes and teachers. Sometimes, pupils switch off because activities and tasks do not build on what pupils know and can do. The purpose of activities is not clear or challenging enough for some pupils. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils to reach and exceed their targets.

Governors are mindful of leaders' workload. They understand the need to ensure that improvements are sustainable and become part of the embedded culture of the school, regardless of its future. They are managing the process of consulting on the future carefully and sensibly.

Following a legacy of underachievement and concerns about pupil safety, leaders have quickly set about re-establishing the school's reputation within the local and wider community. Parents remain positive about the school's performance. Staff report that morale has improved because they feel valued. They also feel there is a more cohesive and clear approach from the leadership of the school. They appreciate the way in which they now work as a team. Expectations are clear, and they feel well supported through the wider professional development opportunities that are being made available to them.

The effective development of staff is supporting school improvement, including regular high-quality training and coaching for teachers. Following a focused lesson observation, teachers are provided with opportunities for professional development. They are set targets for improvement and then observed again to check that they have made progress. Teachers also know that they must adhere to the agreed formats, for example when setting targets for each pupil.

Additional support

The support from the local authority has had a positive impact. Interim leaders have provided skilled and experienced direction for the school. Lead practitioners in profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and complex needs, seconded from a local federation special schools, are supporting improvements in the curriculum. The local authority has also supported senior leaders through regular monitoring visits and support and training for governors.

Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, including visits to lessons. They scrutinised documents. They met with the interim head of school, interim executive headteacher and other senior leaders, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with subject leaders, teachers and other staff.

Inspectors met with pupils and talked to them informally around the school at breaktime and lunchtime.