

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 December 2022

Melanie Hall-Judd
Headteacher
The Michael Tippett School
Heron Road
Herne Hill
London
SE24 0HZ

Dear Mrs Hall-Judd

Special measures monitoring inspection of The Michael Tippett School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 19 and 20 October 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in November 2021.

During the inspection, I discussed with you, other senior leaders and staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also observed the school's work, including visits to lessons, and scrutinised documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

The Michael Tippett School remains inadequate and requires special measures.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

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

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Following the last inspection in June 2022, most members of the governing body have been replaced. This includes the appointment of an acting chair of governors. Following your recent appointment as headteacher, you are leading the school supported by the interim-executive headteacher. Other leaders, including the acting deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher, have been appointed. Until recently, the school's interim leaders have received support from a local authority school improvement partner.

Since the last inspection, discussions have been taking place to convert the school into an academy. Negotiations between the local authority and the preferred academy sponsor have resulted in new arrangements which will begin in January 2023.

You, leaders and representatives from the local authority continue to demonstrate a sense of urgency in tackling the areas of weakness identified by the previous inspection. Together, you have implemented a credible, structured plan to address these weaknesses. You and other leaders check regularly that you are working on the right things to improve the school. This is working effectively to overcome barriers such as staffing vacancies.

You and your leaders have developed a strong team ethos and set high expectations for the school's community. Together with leaders, you are ambitious and have shared this ambition widely across the staff team. Leaders and staff at all levels have been involved in developing the school's new curriculum. You have been supported by experienced specialists from successful local schools. You have ensured that pupils with education, health and care plans have detailed assessments. Targets for these pupils are now carefully linked to their outcomes. You have recently introduced a communication strategy. This is beginning to improve pupils' involvement in the curriculum and help them make positive behaviour choices.

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

Most teachers' expertise in communication has improved. However, there continues to be variability in the implementation of the new curriculum. Sometimes, pupils do not concentrate on their learning because tasks do not build on what pupils know and can do. Despite improvements, some teachers do not have high enough expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievements. Together with leaders, you have begun to develop pupils' wider interests. This includes working with other schools to promote opportunities for pupils' wider personal and social development, including in sport, science and horticulture.

You have improved consistency in the school's communication approach. All pupils have individual targets for communication. Pupils have more confidence using signing systems, for example. The consistent application of these strategies is helping to secure a calmer atmosphere than was previously the case around the school. However, inconsistencies remain, including during break times.

You and interim leaders demonstrate a determination to improve the safety of pupils. You have a clarity of purpose which improves the culture of the school. You and leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have improved the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Systems to keep pupils safe are implemented rigorously across the school. You and leaders with responsibility for safeguarding act rapidly in response to any concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate. All staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding. The recently appointed governing body has not had the opportunity to develop effective oversight of safeguarding or school improvement.

Pupils are safe and happy at school. Parents and carers typically commented that they feel that their children are safe here. Pupils are confident that any concerns they have are dealt with by trusted adults.

Members of the governing body are mindful of leaders' workload. They understand the need to ensure that improvements are sustainable. The governing body carefully manages the process of consulting on the future direction of the school.

Additional support

The support from interim leaders and the local authority have provided direction for the school. Lead practitioners seconded from a local federation of special schools are supporting improvements in the curriculum and the development of your middle leaders and teachers. The local authority has supported you and senior leaders through regular monitoring visits and training for the governing body.

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 local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
His Majesty's Inspector