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Ms Kirsten Macleod  
Headteacher  
Tunmarsh School  
The Tunmarsh Centre  
Tunmarsh Lane  
Plaistow  
London  
E13 9NB

Dear Ms Macleod

### **Short inspection of Tunmarsh School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018 with Mark Dale-Emberton, 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 good in June 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have driven school improvement through your high expectations and aspirations since taking up your post as headteacher in September 2016.

You and your senior team ensure that pupils' personal development and welfare are at the heart of everything that you do. Pupil voice is actively promoted at every opportunity, as pupils reported, 'You get a chance to say what you think'. You care passionately about improving the life chances of your pupils and do your best to remove the barriers to learning that they may experience.

Your school is a pupil referral unit, providing education for pupils who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to attend mainstream schooling. Placements may be for six weeks, a term or longer, depending on individual circumstances. Pupils are initially assessed during admission meetings. Precise targets and provision are then planned to meet their individual needs. This is a strength and means that pupils have the best possible start to be successful in their placement with you.

You and your senior leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your school evaluation document and development plan are detailed. Sharper and more precise priorities and performance criteria in the development plan would benefit leaders when holding others to account. Importantly, you have identified the need to improve the re-engagement

of key stage 3 pupils when they arrive at the school. You have started to tackle this through developing a more appropriate curriculum that matches their needs and stimulates their interests. You have also identified the need to develop middle leadership capacity within the school. This is a crucial factor in securing further school development to improve outcomes for all pupils.

You work effectively to engage and involve parents and carers. You collect their views of a range of aspects of school life through surveys. The responses are overwhelmingly positive. Your specialist staff team is currently establishing a family therapy group.

The management committee has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Committee members are knowledgeable and possess the necessary skills and expertise to challenge and hold leaders to account.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. You and your team provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. Pupils say they feel safe within the school. All staff are extremely aware of the difficulties that pupils may face outside school, within the local community. This has ensured a continual focus on working closely with external agencies. You have recently developed additional off-site provision for your most vulnerable pupils if they are unable to travel safely to the school's location. While in the early stages of development, outcomes for this group of pupils are already improving.

All adults working within the school undergo the appropriate checks. Staff regularly have relevant and effective training in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation, gang culture and knife crime. Any concerns are followed through efficiently and records are well kept. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to look at how well pupils make progress during their time at the school. We looked at pupils' academic progress and their personal development, behaviour and welfare. We also agreed to look at how leaders ensure that the school's culture and ethos promote good behaviour.
- Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points. Each pupil has a passport that accompanies them throughout their time at the school and, where appropriate, back into mainstream schooling. The passport contains detailed information about all aspects of a pupil's progress and achievements.
- Pupils' progress within subjects is tracked effectively using a system of skills statements that are also used in planning and target setting. Information from this system shows that increasing numbers of pupils are making good or better progress over time. Pupils that remain in the school until the end of key stage 4 achieve increasingly well at GCSE examinations and other qualifications. There is

an upward trend of improving outcomes in English, mathematics, science, art and other subjects.

- Visits to classrooms showed that many pupils are actively engaged and eager to answer teachers' questions. Teaching is mostly very focused, and staff are skilled at asking questions that challenge pupils. Most classroom activities proceed at a swift pace, which ensures that pupils are motivated to learn and kept on task so that they make good or better progress.
- Older pupils are often focused on preparing for their examinations. They are keen to share their subject knowledge and persevere with answers to the toughest questions. Pupils' work in books and folders shows clear progress over time. Pupils are proud to show their work, especially in art and mathematics.
- Pupils are generally very well behaved in classrooms and at breaktimes. They are polite to staff, visitors and each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and mutually respectful. You and your team have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and provide excellent role models. This has resulted in a culture that actively promotes good behaviour. Consequently, most pupils' behaviour improves during their time at the school.
- You and your specialist staff team have successfully developed a set of short personal development courses for pupils. They complete a course in resilience plus one other based on the reason for their referral from mainstream school. Progress in personal development is closely tracked. Many pupils show great improvements in managing their own behaviour and regulating their emotions.
- Working closely with the relevant outside agencies, you and your team do everything you can to ensure that pupils attend regularly. From when they enter the school, pupils' attendance improves markedly when compared to their previous settings. Overall attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how well pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education or training. The curriculum at key stage 4 includes a broad range of subjects and qualifications, including a GCSE in preparation for working life. All pupils receive impartial careers advice and those in Year 11 complete a work experience placement. Pupils are supported well to apply for courses at a range of colleges. Your teacher responsible for work-related learning tracks applications carefully and checks that pupils are attending colleges successfully after they leave.
- At key stage 3, pupils on shorter placements are able to return to their mainstream schools when they have made the necessary progress. Pupils are well supported through personal development programmes. You have already identified the need to develop the curriculum at key stage 3 to improve the re-engagement of pupils in their learning.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leadership capacity is further developed to ensure that outcomes for all pupils continue to improve
- the curriculum, particularly at key stage 3, continues to be developed so that it matches pupils' learning needs and interests more closely
- the holistic approach to assessment, including the involvement of the specialist staff team, develops further so that all interventions are precisely matched to pupils' needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tarrant  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The inspection team met with you, your senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and members of your multi-agency team. We met with members of the management committee, including the chair. We also met with the school's improvement adviser and the local authority safeguarding lead.

We visited classrooms, accompanied by senior leaders, to collect a range of evidence relating to teaching, learning and assessment. We met with a group of pupils to talk about their experience of school and aspects of safeguarding. We scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, and pupils' books, files and folders. We took account of the 33 responses to the staff survey and one text response to Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.