

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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9 September 2016

Mrs Heather Rowe  
Headteacher  
Badger Hill Primary School  
Marston Road  
Kilton Lane  
Brotton  
Saltburn-by-the-Sea  
North Yorkshire  
TS12 2XR

Dear Mrs Rowe

### **Short inspection of Badger Hill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 2016, 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 September 2010.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your commitment to ongoing improvement is shared by staff and governors. You have strengthened leadership by restructuring the leadership team and giving more responsibility to middle leaders. You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Hence, teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved and pupils have a better awareness of other cultures. In addition, you have built strong partnerships with local schools in order to share good practice, and compare how accurately teachers are assessing pupils' work.

You have trained teachers and leaders through effective professional development and by enabling colleagues to innovate and take risks, such as the recent curriculum changes in key stage 1. As a result of effective professional development and partnership work, middle leaders are now more effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and assessment. They carry out focused reviews to check the work set for pupils and the standards of work in books. This has led to consistently high standards of writing in books across the school. Leaders track pupils' progress through regular progress reviews and target support to address underperformance. Pastoral leadership has created a positive culture that has contributed to high rates

of attendance and good standards of behaviour across the school.

Governors are extremely committed to the school's development and have the appropriate expertise to hold leaders to account. They make regular visits to school to check how leaders judge standards of teaching and question leaders thoroughly about progress. Governors hold leaders to account by reviewing their performance and ensuring that ambitious targets are set for pupils' progress. They have worked closely with leaders to explore long-term plans for future development ahead of their decision to pursue academy conversion in the autumn of 2016.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders actively promote a culture of safeguarding and take pupil welfare extremely seriously. Staff and governors receive up-to-date training on key safeguarding issues and the headteacher provides safeguarding training to other organisations. Rigorous checks are made on the suitability of staff. Leaders' vigilant approach to safeguarding is reflected in the regular external audits they commission to continually check that systems are robust. Leaders use trained staff from within and outside the school to support pupils' social and emotional welfare. Pupils feel safe and could talk about the actions teachers take to help them to keep safe, such as their work on internet and road safety. The school follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and pupils act as 'Rights Counsellors' to put these values into practice. Parents value the 'warm and caring ethos' in a school that is 'a happy place to be'.

### **Inspection findings**

- Staff plan lessons rigorously, providing clear guidance and structures that help pupils learn. Planning takes account of pupils' abilities and work is set that enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers share non-negotiable expectations for writing with pupils and this is contributing to consistently high standards of writing across the school. Class teachers work closely with teaching assistants to plan learning that meets pupils' needs. Teachers use questioning to deepen understanding and challenge any misunderstanding. In English, questioning enabled pupils to show their understanding of the differences between different types of adverbs, while in science teachers probed pupils' understanding of digestion. In the majority of cases, teachers' verbal and written feedback supports pupils' progress. However, some teachers do not follow the school's marking and assessment policy closely enough and this was reflected in slower progress evident in some mathematics books.
- As a result of better planning and coordinated support, teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved. This has resulted in these pupils making consistently improving progress across key stages, such that in 2015 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made better progress in reading and mathematics than other pupils. Effective use of pupil premium funding, additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils, has helped to raise achievement for disadvantaged children, resulting in their continuing improvement in the early years and key stage 1. This good progress has continued at key stage 2 where disadvantaged pupils have made

consistent improvements in reading and mathematics, outperforming their peers in 2015.

- The most able pupils make good progress over time, although their progress can be variable. The most able pupils made good progress in writing and grammar in 2015, but their progress was less strong in mathematics and reading.
- Progress for all groups is improving in the early years and at key stage 1. Standards of writing are extremely strong across the school. However, the good progress evident in key stage 2 books has not been reflected in the provisional results of the 2016 national curriculum tests in reading, and particularly in mathematics.
- In the early years, leaders have improved planning and assessment and this has contributed to a significant increase in the number of children achieving a good level of development. Overall, standards are above those achieved nationally. Leaders' work with early years experts has led to improvements in the learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Children's learning journeys provide a detailed insight into the progress they make and help teachers plan activities for the next steps in their learning. A balance between children choosing activities and more formal teaching creates an engaging environment where children enjoy learning and develop skills that prepare them well for key stage 1. One parent writing about her son described how the early years had provided a 'wonderful start to his learning journey'. Teachers have reviewed activities to include more tasks to stimulate learning for boys because while gaps between the performance of boys and girls reduced in 2016, they still remain higher than those seen nationally.
- The school's work on the rights of the child has contributed to a positive culture where pupils show respect for one another and adults. Pupils across all phases demonstrate a high level of concentration as a result of stimulating teaching and clear classroom routines. House points and other rewards encourage positive behaviour but clear sanctions are in place when needed. Pupils have the confidence to contribute to discussion and participate in activities. Pupils believe that bullying is extremely rare and that if it did occur, teachers would take effective action to address this. Pupils and parents believe behaviour is good and this was evident in the orderly atmosphere in classrooms and on corridors. Pupils enjoy school and this is further reflected in their good levels of attendance which are above the national average.
- Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum that combines creative opportunities to explore new ideas alongside well-structured routines to develop key skills. The teaching of writing is a key strength. Pupils have a strong awareness of grammatical features that they use meaningfully to create effective pieces of writing in a number of subjects. At key stage 1, teachers are introducing innovative new ways to create links between different subjects, although key stage 1 science activities lack the challenge evident at key stage 2. Pupils have opportunities to progress through increasingly challenging material as they progress through key stage 2. Leaders have added further breadth to the curriculum by adding more opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures and holding visits and residential trips that have widened pupils' cultural understanding.
- You are strengthening leadership at all levels. Through effective coaching, professional development and partnership work, teachers improve their practice

in the classroom and their abilities as leaders. As a result of this development and the improving progress pupils have made, a number of teachers have progressed to senior leadership positions internally and at other schools. Middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of literacy and numeracy work in books. Leaders are aware that their ability to use emerging tracking systems to monitor pupils' progress is less well developed.

- Governors show a passionate commitment to the school. They continually explore routes for additional improvement and ways to build greater capacity. These have included the creation of a cooperative learning trust in 2013 and planning for academy conversion in autumn 2016. Phase and subject leaders are invited to governor committee meetings to account for pupils' progress and the impact of improvement strategies. Governors work with the headteacher to review teacher performance targets to check that they match their own ambitions for the school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- refine assessment processes to accurately reflect the demands of the new national curriculum, particularly in mathematics
- improve the quality of work in science books in key stage 1 to match standards in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. I also met a group of governors. As part of the process, I undertook learning walks with yourself and your deputy headteacher. In addition, I looked at pupils' work along with middle leaders. I held a meeting with a group of pupils. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation and assessment information. I also looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress and scrutinised safeguarding documents, including the single central record. I took into account 35 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, along with 15 free text responses.