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Mr Edward Bowen-Roberts  
Acting Headteacher  
Baytree School  
The Campus  
Highlands Lane  
Weston-super-Mare  
BS24 7DX

Dear Mr Bowen-Roberts

### **Short inspection of Baytree School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Deirdre Fitzpatrick, 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 October 2012.

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

Despite governors being in the process of securing the leadership of the school, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since starting in the role of acting headteacher in January 2017, you have quickly established yourself as an effective leader and have gained the respect of staff and parents. Staff share your passion and determination to drive forward improvements and to provide the very best quality of care and education for all pupils. You and your staff constantly research and reflect on ways to improve the quality of provision you provide for each individual pupil to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Fundamental to the effectiveness of your school is the utter determination of staff to ensure that pupils receive high-quality learning opportunities and the very best experiences. Your school's motto, 'Making the most of every day', shines through all activities. For example, on the day of the inspection older pupils were clearly excited as they made their way to the school garden to start preparing beds for growing produce. Other pupils were engrossed in painting the shed, doing so carefully and working well together. Acquiring such skills is preparing pupils well for their future.

The knowledge of staff on individual pupils' needs is impressive. Adults build exceptional relationships with pupils and their families. These contribute very

effectively to both the strong progress pupils make and their well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of care and education their children receive. They are extremely complimentary about the school. 'The school is amazing and my child has made fantastic progress,' and 'The staff are passionate and positive and this reflects in the achievements of children,' are typical of parents' comments to the inspectors. Parents welcome your visible presence and approachability. They are confident that you listen carefully to them when they have any concerns. Parents know that you will act quickly to support them to ensure that their children are happy and enjoy school.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included how the school ensures that pupils are safe, the impact of leaders in ensuring that pupils receive an effective education, how communication tools are used to enhance pupils' learning experiences and the effectiveness of the curriculum to capture the learning of pupils' different interests and abilities. These key lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff are extremely mindful of the vulnerability of your pupils and the significance of your role in keeping them safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding which permeates the school, with a shared understanding of the need to protect pupils from all conceivable risks. Staff, irrespective of their roles, receive high-quality training. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills to quickly identify any changes in pupils which may suggest they are at risk of harm, and be able to take action with confidence.

Staff fully understand the importance of completing risk assessments personalised to the individual needs of the pupil. You monitor these carefully to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Systems in place at the start and end of the day to ensure that pupils are safe are extremely well choreographed and help pupils keep their anxiety levels to a minimum. The school's procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust. Leaders, including governors, are well trained in order to recruit safely. All staff are vetted carefully prior to starting employment at the school.

Documents and records are detailed, clearly recorded and appropriately stored and shared. You work closely with a range of outside agencies to minimise risk to pupils and keep them safe.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors talked openly about how they feel safe in school, reflecting the high levels of care and guidance staff provide. Pupils are confident that they can talk to any member of staff about any worries or concerns, and know they will be well supported.

Parents are confident that their children are kept safe and are extremely well looked after during their time in school. They welcome the high levels of guidance and support they receive to support their child in keeping safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the time of the inspection, governors were in the process of recruiting a new headteacher. Nevertheless, in your role as acting headteacher and with the strong support of a seconded deputy headteacher and staff, you are driving forward improvements with fervour. You have quickly identified the school's many strengths but also those areas that need to improve. For example, you know that while many pupils make strong progress in their learning from extremely low starting points, they could make even stronger progress. Teachers know pupils extremely well but do not consistently use the information on what pupils can and cannot do carefully enough, to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. You are quickly taking this in hand to make sure this is tackled by closely monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable about the school. They receive high-quality training and use this to good effect to ask searching questions of leaders to ensure that pupils receive the best. Nevertheless, this challenge is not reflected in the records of governors' work. Nor do these records demonstrate carefully enough how governors monitor development plan actions, to see if they are having the desired impact on the progress of pupils.
- The previous inspection highlighted the need to improve the use of communication aids for pupils. This you have tackled with rigour and close attention to detail. Your careful research ensures that each pupil has access to the most appropriate aids, and has the ability and confidence to effectively use them.
- The appointment of a teacher who has the skills and expertise in total communication systems has been pivotal. In seeking out good practice and providing training, this teacher's work has ensured that staff have the confidence to support pupils. Pupils use a wide range of communication aids to help them in their learning and development. For example, younger pupils are able to use eye-gaze technology to make choices in their learning. The 'passports to play' communicate comprehensively to staff a wide range of pupils' emotions which include if a pupil is feeling playful, enjoying themselves, their likes and dislikes and what frightens them. Coupled with a record of their personalised targets, these passports communicate important information about each individual.
- You are constantly checking, evaluating and modifying the curriculum to ensure that it precisely meets the needs of pupils. Every pupil has a personalised learning package which is carefully designed to address the requirements recorded in their education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.
- You provide post-16 students with a wide range of opportunities and experiences so that they have more choice about their future. Students have high aspirations and demonstrate a determination to acquire the skills to secure paid

employment. They have access to a variety of work-experience placements such as retail and horticulture. Students have the opportunity to gain accreditation in a range of subjects. This provides them with increased levels of independence for their future lives. This high-quality provision is as a result of the school's high aspirations for the students and also, as parents described to inspectors, your ability to 'see the child and not the disability'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers use information on what pupils can and cannot do more carefully to enable individuals to make the best possible progress
- there are regular opportunities for leaders and governors to check that actions identified in development plans are having the desired impact on the progress of pupils
- governors' records show more precisely the impact of their challenge on improving pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection we met with you and your deputy headteacher. Together, we talked about the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. We observed the start of the day when pupils first arrive in school. We carried out a 'learning walk' through classes, accompanied by yourself or your deputy headteacher. We also held discussions with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and held a meeting with an officer from the local authority. We talked to pupils and heard some read. We took into consideration the responses on 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

A wide range of documentation was examined. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan, and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour and safeguarding were also carefully checked.

We spoke to parents during the day. We considered the six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and five free text messages were also taken into account.