

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Julie Barton  
Headteacher  
Bradley Barton Primary School and Nursery Unit  
Ogwell Mill Road  
Bradley Barton  
Newton Abbot  
Devon  
TQ12 1PR

Dear Ms Barton

### **Short inspection of Bradley Barton Primary School and Nursery Unit**

Following my visit to the school on 11 May 2017, 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 February 2012.

#### **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 led the school through a period of significant change since the previous inspection. In particular, you have overseen a major rebuilding programme and managed a high turnover of staff due mostly to successful promotions. This has made it hard for you to drive forward improvements and embed consistency in leadership and in pedagogy practice. You have maintained a determined focus on developing and distributing leadership responsibilities within the school since the previous inspection. For example, some leadership weakness in key stage 1, which had an impact on lower than anticipated outcomes for pupils, has now been successfully resolved. With the support of your senior leaders and governors, you have successfully steered the school through this challenging time and managed the necessary changes well. Through well-focused and effective professional development you have maintained an appropriate focus on the academic challenges facing the school. Staffing is now stable and teaching is typically good throughout the school. Strategies to address the dip in standards, reflected most recently in the 2016 key stage 1 end of year assessments, have been successfully implemented. As a result, most pupils are making better progress in lessons and more are achieving in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they complete key stage 2.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils are safe in the school. There is a strong culture of restorative justice embedded within the school. Staff know the needs of pupils and their families well. School leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are compliant with current regulations and are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained in ways to keep pupils safe and training is regularly updated. Safeguarding teams possess a thorough knowledge of the pupils in their care and are particularly vigilant to spot any child who might be at risk from harm. Records show examples of how leaders take effective action to address safeguarding concerns.

The school monitors pupils' absence rigorously and it is now in line with the national average. Leaders work effectively with pupils and their families who sometimes find attending school a challenge. The school maintains good communications with parents in order to keep children safe and to stop issues escalating unnecessarily. Transition arrangements, especially for pupils who come into school at different times during the year, are well embedded. Parents particularly appreciate this support. A comment written by a parent sums up the views of the majority: 'The teachers at the school are all very passionate about teaching and developing our children's knowledge and instilling good values.'

Staff work closely with external agencies, when needed, to ensure pupils are well looked after and their needs are fully met. Pupils know there is an adult in the school to whom they can turn if anything is worrying them. They also said that some pupils do not always behave well in school. However, pupils were quick to acknowledge that teachers deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively when it does occur. For example pupils who spoke with me agreed, 'The dinner ladies are very good!' Behaviour records are carefully maintained and monitored by senior leaders.

## **Inspection findings**

- One of my key lines of enquiry in helping me to decide whether the school remained good was to find out how well the school had addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. To this end I looked to see how effectively assessment information is being used to further improve pupils' rates of progress, especially in English. I looked at how well teachers engage pupils in learning and how best practice is being shared throughout the school.
- You possess a thorough understanding of pupils' learning and progress. A tight and comprehensive assessment and monitoring cycle is in operation throughout the school. Subject leadership is firmly distributed within the school because you have been effective in developing your staff to take up leadership responsibilities. For example, you have introduced teams of staff, from across the school, to take responsibility for leading English and mathematics. This approach has secured better communication and more effective planning between staff. Those who spoke with me agreed that they work well together and are confident they can track pupil's progress and offer better intervention support. Furthermore, this

year, teachers have agreed to plan their mathematics lessons on a daily basis with teaching assistants also carrying out daily conferencing with focused groups of pupils. Pupils are set targets that match more closely to their learning needs and abilities. You have noticed that pupils are more engaged with their learning and, as a result, behaviour in lessons has improved. Pupils who spoke with me appreciate the extensive grounds and outdoor learning environment. One enthusiastic pupil said, 'The outdoor classroom is the best. We learn a lot about science and nature out there!'

- Another line of enquiry looked at the learning and progress of pupils at key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. The improved assessment arrangements ensure you and your senior leaders, including governors, receive comprehensive progress reports following the half-termly checks teachers make on pupils' learning. The achievement gap between boys not performing as well as girls is closing, although at key stage 1 girls still outperform boys in English. You have secured the full support of staff because they see that the work you are leading is clearly helping to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- I also looked for evidence of how well pupils in the current Year 1 classes are being supported because many of them had not made the expected good levels of development last year, when they were in Reception. Additional resources have been used well to adapt teaching provision in Year 1. For example, leaders have prioritised reading for homework, used monies to buy resources and engaged more effectively with parents so that more now come into school to support reading. The good transition arrangements between Nursery, Reception and Year 1 ensure that no time is wasted and the learning needs of individual pupils are well provided for. This is leading to more pupils making rapid progress in learning to read. The school's most recent monitoring checks on pupils' reading show that by the time they reach the end of key stage 1 many more pupils are making good and often rapid progress in learning to read and write.
- The learning and progress of children in the early years and their transition into Year 1 was a further line of enquiry. Leaders in the early years and in key stage 1 were able to demonstrate with confidence that they possess a good understanding of children's learning needs from when they transfer from the Nursery to the Reception. A stimulating learning environment for children is appropriately focused on strengthening their personal, social and emotional skills in order for them to be receptive to learning. Children's literacy skills then become a key priority. I saw many good examples of children's writing skills being encouraged while they engaged in stimulating play-based activities. For example, a group of boys, who had built a large model zoo which they filled with a variety of toy animals, were able to confidently use their knowledge of phonics to write and label the different 'pens' of animals they had created.
- Governors are well informed and have effective strategies in place to hold the school to account. The minutes of meetings show governors ask insightful questions of leaders. A governor representative attends 'data surgeries' with you each half term. This approach ensures that you and your governors are well informed and able to identify remaining weaknesses and what the issues might be for further intervention work. Teaching assistants are well trained and highly

valued in the school. The impact of their work is also closely monitored by governors.

- My final line of enquiry looked at the learning and progress of pupils in key stage 2, especially in mathematics and writing. You are confident that staff have a much clearer understanding of pupils' age-related expectations, especially for pupils working at the higher 'mastery' levels. Similarly, you have strengthened provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well led and managed. Your special needs leader is highly experienced and passionate about her work. She has successfully redesigned how the school now supports those pupils who require additional support in order to succeed. For example, intervention work and other strategies to support pupils are now carefully administered. This year a strategy adopted by staff, to prepare some pupils in advance of new learning about to be taught, is proving effective. As a result these pupils make accelerated progress in lessons, leading to more pupils working at age-related expectations. Additional resources for disadvantaged pupils are used wisely to enhance their learning. However, teachers do not check sufficiently on the learning of disadvantaged pupils in lessons in order for them to make accelerated progress. In a similar way the use of assessment information by teachers to promote the rapid learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils is not so well embedded. These pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics continue to trail behind those of their peers.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment information is used to promote the rapid learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils so that their achievements in reading, writing and mathematics match more closely those of their peers
- teachers check the learning of disadvantaged pupils in lessons in order to accelerate their rates of progress.

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

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met regularly with you as part of a professional dialogue. I also met with representatives of the governing body. I held meetings with senior

and middle leaders. I also spoke informally with other members of staff. Together we undertook observations of learning in lessons. We spoke with pupils about their work and examined pupils' work, focusing on reading, writing and mathematics. I observed younger pupils learning to read. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records to monitor pupils' behaviour. Before the inspection, I examined a variety of documents, including the school's website, published performance information and a summary of its self-evaluation. I spoke with four parents at the start of the day and also took into account 108 mainly positive responses to the online survey, Parent View.