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Mrs Vicky Whittingham
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Whittingham

Short inspection of Badger Hill Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Over recent years, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. Since 2016, there have been significant changes in leadership. The previous headteacher left the school in September 2017. The trust deployed an executive headteacher and a school improvement adviser to lead the school in the interim period until your appointment in January 2018. In April 2018, the deputy headteacher left the school. In September 2018, governors appointed two newly qualified teachers in Year 1 and Year 3. You, supported by the trust, restructured the school's leadership team and you internally promoted staff in the new roles of: an assistant headteacher leading attendance and behaviour and pupil premium, phase leaders for key stages 1 and 2 who also lead English and mathematics, and a pastoral leader. As a result, leadership and management have been strengthened further.

Since your appointment, you have been relentless in your ambition for continuous school improvement through the school's motto of 'Together we will grow'. You and your leadership team have reviewed all areas of the school, correctly identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. Your determination and passion have ensured that leadership, at all levels, is focused not only on the progress of pupils, but also on their whole-school experience. As a result, over recent years, the progress pupils make from their starting points has been good overall.

Governance is a strength of the school. The membership of the local governing committee has been stable over the last two years. The chair leads the governing committee effectively. Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise and are routinely involved

in school life. They provide robust challenge and support to leaders and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. The trust and its representative with an overview of primary school performance provide effective support and challenge to staff at all levels. You, supported by the trust, have successfully managed the relocation of the school to a new building for September 2019. There is strong capacity in the school's leadership to achieve the improvements you aspire to.

Since your appointment, you reviewed the curriculum and placed a particular focus on the teaching of English and mathematics. You ensured that all middle leaders, including the leaders of these areas, received appropriate training. Staff value and support your determination to bring about improvements in teaching and learning and professional development. Your passion has created a very strong culture of collaboration and a team ethos among your staff. You and your senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and have put in place effective monitoring systems and procedures to support further improvement. As a result, all teaching across the school is now strong.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your deputy designated safeguarding leader have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. You and your staff know the pupils well and monitor pupils' welfare thoroughly.

The school's administration officer supports you effectively and together you ensure that you carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of all staff who work with pupils. Your safeguarding governor evaluates all areas of safeguarding thoroughly. You, with the support of the trust, have ensured that staff and governors receive appropriate training in child protection, including the dangers of radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

All staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have any concerns about the children and pupils in your school. Staff meet regularly to discuss the latest updates on safeguarding policy and practice, and any concerns raised about pupils. The school shares information with external agencies effectively.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school, including online, and know who to go to if they have any concerns. They also say that bullying is very rare and when it does happen, teachers deal with it effectively. Inspection evidence and the views of parents, carers and staff also support this.

Inspection findings

- Over recent years, and more specifically since your appointment, you have strengthened further monitoring systems which show that the quality of teaching is good and better. Together with your leaders, you check the impact on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils, based on a carefully planned schedule. You and the trust provide effective support to staff that need it. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and they support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. As a result, most teachers provide appropriate challenge for most

pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, and use targeted questioning effectively to probe understanding and support pupils' progress. However, some learning activities do not match the needs of the most able pupils and so more work is needed in this area.

- Since 2016, the progress of pupils from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has significantly improved and over the last two years has been strong and in line with national averages. However, in 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards at the end of Year 6, including the most able and the disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics combined, was below national averages. You acted quickly and, working with the trust, ensured that all staff received appropriate training in improving the quality of questioning and challenge across the school. You also ensured that teachers' aspirations and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. As a result, the progress and attainment of current pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics are rapidly improving. School assessment information, inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm this. We agreed that continuing to improve further the progress of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged pupils, should remain the focus of leaders' work.
- You and your leaders have made the teaching of phonics and reading fundamental to the progress of all pupils. You have a clear focus on making sure that pupils who struggle with their reading are identified early and are given the time and support to help them catch up. The school fosters a love of reading. Pupils read widely and daily. I listened to several pupils read and they did so with expression and confidence. Pupils demonstrate an excitement and love for reading and as they put it: 'We love reading because it transports you to another world.' Leaders make sure that there is a clear structure and sequence for the teaching of phonics. This enables pupils to learn how to decode words before they move on to develop greater fluency and comprehension. Pupils read a range of books that are appropriate for their age and ability. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards at the phonics screening checks is improving year-on-year and in 2018 it was above the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils, at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, who achieved the expected standard in reading is continuously improving.
- Following your review of the curriculum, the teaching of writing and mathematics has been strengthened further. Pupils are excited about writing, they stay focused and work hard on their activities. There are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in extended pieces of writing, through planning, drafting and editing. Teachers use a wide range of resources very well, including the 'working walls', to support pupils with their learning. Pupils in mathematics quickly move on to appropriate reasoning and problem-solving tasks and are confident in explaining their answers to complex questions. In science, pupils use their mathematical skills well in scientific investigations. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in writing and mathematics is increasing. Similarly, the progress pupils make from their starting points, in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, is strong and improving. Inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm this.
- The appointment of your assistant headteacher with responsibility for attendance and behaviour has been instrumental in reducing rates of absence in the school. Leaders

regularly monitor the attendance of all pupils and take proactive action when necessary. The breakfast club is well attended and contributes positively in improving pupils' attendance and punctuality. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that the importance of good attendance is communicated effectively. As a result, the attendance of current pupils in the school is in line with the national average and the rate of persistent absence has significantly improved compared with the previous year and is now in line with the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to be absent than their peers. There is more work to be done in this area.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the good quality of teaching and learning is improved even further to ensure that learning activities match the needs of all groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils
- the progress pupils make at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, especially the disadvantaged pupils, continues to improve
- the rate of persistent absence of the disadvantaged pupils is reduced further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Pathfinder multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for York. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dimitris Spiliotis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, staff and governors. I also held discussions with the chief executive officer and the head of primary education from the trust. I spoke to a range of staff, pupils and parents. I listened to pupils read and together, we conducted tours of the school and lessons, looking at pupils' work and observing their learning. I also, alongside you and middle leaders, conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in a range of subjects.

I scrutinised and evaluated a range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, school improvement and the school's own surveys of parent views. I took account of the 136 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 36 free-text responses from parents. I also took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 20 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.