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Mrs Sara McCallum  
Executive Headteacher  
Badger Hill Academy  
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Dear Mrs McCallum

### **Short inspection of Badger Hill Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 July 2016.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment as executive headteacher in September 2018, and subsequently to substantive headteacher in March 2019, you have promptly identified the school's priorities. You have provided determined, well-focused leadership. Your actions have had a positive effect on ensuring that pupils behave well and are ready to learn. In addition, you have been successful in improving pupils' attendance levels, developing the quality of teaching and improving assessment approaches. Your self-assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is accurate and well understood by governors and Teesside Learning Trust (TLT) trustees. Your regular meetings with TLT leaders have ensured that the trust has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Along with support from your leadership team, you have established suitable plans to improve the school.

Leaders have partially addressed the next steps for improvement found at the previous inspection of your school. They have established assessment systems to record and analyse pupils' progress. Since your appointment, there have been more recent revisions to the school's assessment approaches to help teachers plan more effectively from pupils' current learning. However, this approach is not consistently used across the school and there is further work needed to embed this system.

The subject leader for science regularly checks the quality of work in pupils' books. Her feedback to staff has a positive effect on pupils' learning. My review of a sample of science books, completed with the science subject leader, and visit into a Year 6 science lesson, found that staff have maintained the strengths found previously in key stage 2 science teaching. Furthermore, there is evidence in books that key stage 1 pupils' science knowledge, skills and use of scientific vocabulary are improving. However, the school's approach to assessing science was not consistently followed in the key stage 1 books sampled.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, staff, governors and the trust give a high priority to keeping pupils safe. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders complete appropriate safeguarding checks for all staff, trustees, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The trust's human resources leader completes regular audits of the school's record of checks, known as the single central record, to ensure that the information is up to date.

Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training. As a result, they know, and follow, the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to secure the necessary support for pupils and their families where needed. Parents' responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, show that all parents who responded believe that their children feel happy and safe at the school. The pupils who I spoke to during the inspection were confident that if they had any concerns, including about behaviour or bullying, there are adults in school who they are confident they can rely on for support.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a period of turbulence to leadership and staffing. During our discussions, you explained the arrangements which will be in place for September 2019. These include a reconfigured leadership team, some changes to the staffing organisation in classes, and transferring from your current multi-academy trust, TLT, to Northern Education Trust (NET). This places the school on a secure platform for making a positive start to the new academic year. The positive responses to the staff survey indicate that the staff are confident in the school's leadership and the plans for improvement.
- Your assessment analysis shows that there is some variability in pupils' progress and attainment for current pupils. In some year groups, the proportions of pupils working at the expectations for their age, and those who are working at the higher standards, is lower than that found typically at your school. This is more evident in key stage 1. However, there is evidence of a recent acceleration of progress in the summer term. Furthermore, some year groups have shown consistently secure progress. For example, your school teacher assessments indicate more positive pupil attainment, including at the higher standard, at the end of Year 6. At the time of the inspection you were awaiting the results from the key stage 2 national assessments.

- Your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is relatively new to the role. To support the leadership of this aspect of the school, you have engaged an external consultant. Your plans aim to ensure that leaders and staff promptly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and that the school addresses these successfully.
- You have adopted a structured approach to the teaching of phonics. However, in 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was below the national average. Furthermore, your provisional results for this year indicate that this will be the case in 2019. This term, your staff are receiving training to develop their skills in phonics teaching further.
- I listened to a sample of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils reading, both individually and within class, and we considered a sample of pupils' exercise books. The texts provided to pupils were not reliably well-matched for pupils' reading knowledge and skills. For example, less able pupils' books were not specifically matched to their current phonics knowledge. This made it difficult for pupils to tackle unknown words. Sometimes, middle-ability pupils had several examples of incomplete work, or too many errors, as the work was overly difficult. Some higher-attaining pupils had not developed comprehension skills to enable them to work at greater depth. The quality of the texts provided was variable and did little to motivate pupils to have a love of books.
- Our consideration of a sample of pupils' work in reading from key stage 2 showed a stronger picture. However, there were still examples where the match of the work to pupils' needs, particularly less-able pupils, was not well planned to ensure their success. Overall, inconsistencies in the quality and delivery of the reading curriculum show that it would be beneficial for leaders to review this promptly.
- This term, you have introduced assessments and recording approaches to assist with teachers' assessments and planning for reading. However, our review of pupils' reading exercise books demonstrated that this approach is not well embedded.
- The review of reading and science books shows that expectations for handwriting and presentation are too low. Consequently, pupils sometimes present work in an untidy fashion and not using sufficiently developed handwriting for their age.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6 was significantly above the national average. However, the proportion working at the higher standard was below that found nationally. Your subject leader for mathematics has a clear understanding of the priorities for improving this aspect of pupils' outcomes. He has accurately identified that there is a need to develop pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills further. There are clear plans in place for developing teachers' skills in teaching this aspect of the mathematics curriculum.
- Your clarity of expectations for pupils' behaviour, and resolve that staff will provide a consistent approach to behaviour management, has had a positive effect. In the vast majority of lessons that we visited, pupils were well behaved and worked diligently. Pupils moved around school sensibly and their behaviour at playtime was very positive. The pupils that I spoke to believed that behaviour

overall was good, and that several recent assemblies had made clear the school's expectations for behaviour. Your records show that the numbers of recorded incidents of poor behaviour have fallen substantially across the academic year. Leaders use exclusions as a last resort and the proportion of exclusions has fallen to low levels this term.

- A determined approach to reducing pupils' absence levels is bearing fruit. The attendance officer provides parents with clear guidelines, expectations and support to reduce pupils' absence levels. This has improved overall levels of pupils' attendance. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with high levels of absence has fallen.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the planned transition arrangements to move from TLT to NET are completed successfully
- leaders who are new to their roles receive relevant training to develop leadership capacity across the school
- pupils' behaviour continues to improve through consistent adherence to the recently introduced behaviour management approaches
- the SENCo receives training and support so that provision for pupils with SEND improves
- the reading curriculum improves, and that teachers plan work which is better matched to pupils', including the most able pupils', needs
- the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics improves, and that key stage 1 pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonics knowledge
- opportunities for pupils to improve their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning develop further
- developments to assessment and recording approaches and using the information to plan pupils' learning are embedded
- expectations for handwriting and presentation are increased.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the head of school, subject leaders for English, mathematics and science and the attendance officer. My meeting with three members of the local governing body provided me with additional information. I held a meeting with the interim chief executive officer of Teesside Learning Trust and the chair of the board of trustees to determine the support and challenge provided by the trust. I observed and spoke with pupils throughout the day. I considered school documentation, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 20 parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the 12 responses to the staff survey. Alongside you, I visited lessons to observe the teaching of reading, mathematics and science. I listened to pupils read within lessons and individually. I looked at a sample of pupils' reading, mathematics and science exercise books. I considered information relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, exclusions and bullying.