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8 February 2016

Mr John Repton
Headteacher
Tilery Primary School
St Ann's Terrace
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Stockton-on-Tees
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Dear Mr Repton

Short inspection of Tilery Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your leadership team have created a 'welcoming place' where everyone is valued. You strive to meet the diverse needs of your community in a sensitive, caring and respectful manner, providing a safe and stimulating environment where relationships and trust are nurtured. There is a strong ethos based on mutual respect and openness. Relationships and teamwork are central to the school's success. You encourage staff at all levels to be leaders and play their part in moving the school forward.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They are respectful of visitors and show care towards each other. Pupils say bullying hardly ever happens and that they feel safe in school. In lessons, they settle quickly to their work and listen attentively. The school has a safety curriculum and, as a result, pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe in school and outside the school, including when accessing the internet.

Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Documentation reviewed during the inspection confirms that parents believe pupils are well cared for and thrive in the school. Parents recognise the openness of school leaders and teachers and feel confident that they could approach staff with any issues. As noted by one

parent, 'they give all the children who pass through their doors a good standard of education and a positive outlook on life'.

You and your leadership teams ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remains consistently good over time. Leaders and governors analyse strengths and weaknesses in performance and are prompt in acting on issues to bring about improvement. You know the strengths and weaknesses in the school and, as a result, have identified a wide range of improvements, but it is not always clear which are the key priorities. As a result, the planning for improvement shared with governors does not always prioritise clearly enough which outcomes will take the school to the next level.

The school has continued to provide the strengths noted at the previous inspection, being an inclusive community, which is warm and friendly with excellent pastoral care. The school acted promptly following the last inspection to ensure that assessment information is used consistently well to set appropriate targets for all groups of pupils. Governors have worked hard and have been successful in establishing new working practices and building capacity to ensure a more thorough understanding of the school and now challenge school leaders more effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are relentless in ensuring that pupils are safe. Where pupils are vulnerable or at risk, the school takes action to support them and works with families and other agencies to make sure that pupils are kept safe. School leaders receive frequent training, keep up to date with lessons to be learnt from serious incidents elsewhere and review practice frequently to ensure that processes are secure. The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You recognise the significance of attendance and the potential risks associated with pupils being absent, and track this systematically. Systems and procedures are kept under review to ensure best practice is maintained. For example, recent training on homophobic bullying and additional training on tackling radicalisation are beginning to inform and enhance the curriculum you provide. Robust systems are in place that go beyond what is required and promote a culture in which pupils say they feel safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement. When issues arise, you take immediate action to address them. For example, work to ensure that shortcomings in pupils' understanding and skills in phonics (linking sounds and letters) by the end of Year 1 have largely been addressed by the end of Year 2 and now match national standards. Phonics is taught regularly, systematically, accurately and in an engaging way. Opportunities to apply this learning are evident in other lessons.

- Pupils make good progress across the school. As a result, those who need to catch up are doing so quickly. Leaders recognise that outcomes at the end of early years are still not strong enough for some children, and despite recent improvements, need to improve further. By the end of Key Stage 2, the standards that pupils reach in reading and mathematics mean that pupils are prepared well in these aspects to make the most of their secondary education. Outcomes in writing are not as strong but are improving rapidly.
- Early years provision has recently been extended to include 2-year-olds. The care and welfare of these children are paramount. Effective systems are in place to track the progress of individual children and to intervene and help them where necessary.
- The quality of teaching is generally of a high standard, and has improved since the previous inspection. The teaching of writing and linking sounds and letters is prioritised and pupils have positive attitudes to these aspects of learning. Improving standards of writing are evident in pupils' work. Work is well matched to pupils' ability, and they have a good understanding of the next steps needed to improve their work. Teachers work effectively with all pupils, providing learning opportunities that develop key literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils enjoy their work and find it challenging. They have positive attitudes to their learning and school life in general. They contribute to a calm and purposeful atmosphere in and around the school. Pupils understand that they need to be resilient and they have a strong 'can do' attitude to their work. They say that silliness in lessons is rare and teachers are quick to deal with any concerns that they raise.
- The working relationships between teachers and pupils are of the highest quality. This is because of the emphasis given to the personal development and welfare of the pupils by school leaders.
- Senior leaders have an effective system for collecting information about the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This level of information allows class teachers and senior leaders to see very quickly where the pupils are making or not making progress. School leaders at all levels use detailed monitoring to support and challenge staff and hold them accountable for the progress that pupils are making. In addition, training and support are targeted to meet the particular development needs of individual teachers.
- Governors have worked hard to review their own practice and improve their level of challenge to school leaders. A restructure of governance arrangements has sharpened the impact of governors' work. Governors hold you and your senior leaders readily to account by asking searching questions based on a clear understanding of daily life in the school and

what is happening in the classrooms. Governors now have a better strategic overview of the school and rightly focus on the difference that actions have on the outcomes for pupils. A lack of sharpness in school plans, on which outcomes are current absolute priorities, hinders governors' ability to hold school leaders more effectively to account and drive the school forward to the next level.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a sharper focus on prioritising areas for improvement and better track the impact of key activities more precisely
- recent improvements in outcomes for children in early years are accelerated so that they more closely reflect those seen nationally
- the relentless focus on writing is maintained to ensure that attainment closely matches that currently seen in reading and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Brown
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, and a group of governors. I visited several classrooms with you and your assistant headteacher to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. I spoke with some pupils in lessons and a selected group of pupils about the school. I reviewed information from Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. I evaluated recent information about progress that pupils make across the school and the how the accuracy of assessments is secured.