

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



23 May 2017

Mr Andrew Mead  
Headmaster  
Lytchett Minster School  
Lytchett Minster  
Poole  
Dorset  
BH16 6JD

Dear Mr Mead

### **Short inspection of Lytchett Minster School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 June 2013.

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

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

Your leadership is successfully combining the longstanding values and ethos of the school with raised expectations of pupil outcomes. Parents, pupils and staff are proud of the school's focus on what they refer to as 'developing the whole child'. However, in recent years, the school's results have never been better than the national average. Since your appointment, you have raised expectations of pupils and of staff. As a result, pupils are getting the good-quality teaching and support they need so that their learning needs are met. Consequently, standards are rising steadily.

You have a strong and cohesive senior team who contribute well to the school's progress. Your analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is straightforward and insightful. A collegiate leadership style has enabled you to draw out the best in your senior colleagues. It is to your and their credit that staff feel well supported as you all address the changing educational landscape and new expectations.

Pupils are generally well behaved around the school site. They are good-humoured and friendly and they treat adults with respect and courtesy. Pupils enjoy their lessons, behave well and take part positively. They are proud of their school. This has been achieved while including those who have complex behavioural issues. You

have organised effective alternatives for these pupils to ensure their needs are met while they remain a part of the school community.

You have responded well to the previous inspection. School leaders were asked to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged and to raise the quality of teaching. Since your arrival, you have ensured there is a very clear focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment for all year groups across the school. You have raised GCSE standards for Year 11. However, you are acutely aware that increased expectations of all pupils from the beginning of Year 7 is the key to long-term improvement. Your improvement strategies reflect this twin-track approach. Standards of pupils' work over time in those key stage 3 lessons my colleague and I visited with your senior staff were high.

Sixth form students' progress in 2016 was in line with the national average. However, while AS-level results were strong, students did not achieve as well in some subjects at A level as a result of less effective teaching. You have acted swiftly to address this. Students feel well supported by their teachers and well prepared for the next stage of their education. They value the breadth of opportunities available. For example, they enjoy the chance to mentor and support younger pupils.

You have a strong and healthy relationship with the governing body. They ensure that they receive and interrogate the reports that senior staff provide about the performance of the school and they augment this by visits to speak with staff, pupils and parents. They question and challenge senior staff appropriately. As a result, they are knowledgeable about the school and hold you to account effectively.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding culture is strong and effective. You have built a team of staff who work together to provide a safety-net for pupils when they need help. As a result, incidents are well managed. Staff work well with parents and carers and with the local authority, when appropriate, to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils.

The school's safeguarding systems and checks on recruitment are of a high standard. All staff across the school have received the appropriate training and understand their responsibilities. Clear procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils who are educated off-site.

Pupils report that they feel safe. They know who to report to should they have a concern. Staff remind pupils about a range of potential risks to their safety, including online. Consequently, pupils know how to avoid these risks. Pupils are grateful for the support available for those who are struggling with emotional and mental health issues.

## Inspection findings

At the start of this inspection, we agreed to focus on your work to raise the quality of teaching across the school, your efforts to improve attendance and the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.

- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is strong. Senior leaders work effectively with middle leaders to bring about improvement. In mathematics and English, pupils benefit from an emphasis on tackling misconceptions and revisiting topics they found difficult. Pupils are able to articulate clearly what they need to do to improve their work. They are making good progress as a result. Leaders set high expectations for teachers. They provide teachers with appropriate training to improve the quality of teaching across the school. For example, they have put in place an effective coaching programme to improve teachers' skills. Teachers have responded well to these opportunities, which the great majority feel are well targeted and helpful in improving their classroom practice.
- Leaders are improving those areas in the sixth form where students' progress in 2016 was weaker. They monitor teaching and learning better and help students who require additional support. Leaders recognise that improvements in teaching, learning and assessment have not improved as consistently in the sixth form as in the main school.
- Leaders have made improving attendance a high priority. Pupils, when asked, were quick to tell inspectors about the importance of attending school regularly. Staff monitor attendance rates closely and intervene quickly when they spot a dip. Staff have been particularly effective in working with pupils who are at risk of becoming persistent absentees. Their efforts have been rewarded with significant improvement in the attendance of these pupils. As a result of the school's work, the attendance rate has improved overall. It is now broadly in line with the national average and the number of pupils persistently absent has reduced significantly from last year.
- In previous years, disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress they are capable of. School leaders have put a comprehensive plan in place to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress. They understand that many of this group of pupils achieve poorly because they are absent too often and they have made addressing this issue a key part of their plans. As a result of their work, the attendance of these pupils has improved markedly this year.
- Leaders review their plans regularly and refocus on areas which require more attention. It became obvious to leaders last year, for example, that weak numeracy skills were undermining the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They increased their provision in this area to successfully meet this need. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than in previous years as a result of the focus on them. However, school leaders are aware of the need to raise the achievement of this group further.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good in all sixth form courses
- disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as other pupils nationally.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lovett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, Ofsted inspector Deirdre Fitzpatrick and I met with you, senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils. We visited lessons to observe learning and looked at the quality of work in pupils' books. We considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including safeguarding, attendance and the use of the pupil premium funding. We took into account 257 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 150 written comments by parents and responses to questionnaires completed by 335 pupils and 92 staff.