

Lynsted and Norton Primary School

Lynsted Lane, Lynsted, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0RL

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|--|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There have been significant changes to leadership since the previous inspection, both in the school and trust. Until recently, the trust had not acted fast enough to address the school's weaknesses.
- Current pupils have gaps in skills and knowledge because of previous weak teaching, inaccurate assessment and many changes in staff. The new leadership is addressing these successfully but it is too soon for their actions to have improved pupils' outcomes sufficiently.
- Leaders and governors have yet to secure the full support and confidence of the school's community regarding the changes made. Some parents say that leaders do not communicate well or listen to their views.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is too variable. The work set for pupils does not always meet their learning needs. It can be too difficult or not challenging enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In a very short time, the headteacher has delivered significant improvement in early years provision and pupils' behaviour. She works tirelessly to ensure sustained improvement in attainment and progress.
- The trust's new chief executive officer quickly allocated high-quality support to the school. Accurate priorities for improvement have been identified and the detailed action plan is improving pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are well behaved, happy and feel safe at school. They enjoy their learning and relish the opportunities given to them.
- This is a fully inclusive school. Leaders use the pupil premium and special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities funding effectively. The careful approach to identifying pupils' learning and pastoral needs has resulted in pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities making better progress than previously.
- The early years provision has improved significantly and is now a strength of the school. Good teaching and effective support ensure that children have a good start to their learning.
- Staff work well together. They are a positive and dedicated team, willing to develop their skills further and work hard to ensure that pupils achieve well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to secure better outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers use information about pupils’ starting points to plan learning that builds on what pupils already know
 - staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils, and pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate their understanding by applying it in various contexts
 - leaders identify and share the good practice that exists across the school and the multi-academy trust (MAT).
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels evaluate improvements to the school by the impact on pupils’ progress and attainment.
 - developing the curriculum to improve pupils’ achievement in a range of subjects.
- Improve relationships between staff and parents, so all stakeholders understand the responsibilities of leaders, feel they are listened to and have a positive role to play in raising standards in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has brought rigour and stable processes to the school. With support from the chief executive officer of the MAT, she has been resolute about challenging any underperformance by staff. Leaders have not shied away from making tough decisions to ensure that pupils have a better learning experience.
- Leaders have begun to implement carefully considered plans to improve the school. Monitoring shows their efforts are well focused and are resulting in better teaching and improved standards for pupils. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this consistent improvement, across all aspects of the school's provision, on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have responded to weak performance decisively, ensuring that responsibilities are allocated to capable staff. The expertise offered by the MAT has supported improvement in early years and led to a positive reorganisation of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that regular support and training opportunities deliver the skills that staff need.
- Parental views of the school are mixed, and often negative. Leaders' hard work to move the school forward has resulted in many changes. These have created some turbulence in staffing and amendments to policies and procedures. Leaders have not always communicated the rationale or consequence of their actions effectively. This has caused parents to express frustration with the quality of the school's communication as well as with the turnover of staff.
- The headteacher has set high standards for teaching and learning and established effective ways of monitoring the quality. The recently appointed English leader demonstrates a good understanding of these higher expectations. The feedback to teachers, following the monitoring of English teaching, is accurate and the advice is quickly acted upon.
- The additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used effectively. Pupils are supported well and the effective additional teaching they receive ensures that their progress is equal to or better than the progress of others in the school. The use of pupil premium funding is carefully documented and supports the well-being of these disadvantaged pupils well. The progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school is similar to others.
- The plans to deliver better progress for pupils across the wider curriculum have been introduced but are not fully embedded. Pupils' progress is not consistent across the year groups and the difficulties arising from the school's vertical grouping of pupils have yet to be overcome. However, links are now being made between subjects. For example, extended writing is now a feature of geography and works of art are used as sources of evidence in history.

Governance of the school

- Governors in the small local academy council take their role seriously. They are

passionate about the school and ambitious for the pupils. They have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities for development but there is a lack of clarity around their responsibilities. These are currently being redefined by the headteacher and the trust.

- Governors regularly visit the school to monitor the initiatives and changes. This dedication ensures that they are well informed about teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Despite the recruitment issues, for both the school and local academy council, they have worked hard to support the school since the previous inspection.
- Governors ensure that the school has good financial practice. They have a detailed knowledge of how additional funding is used for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They scrutinise its impact and recognise where the school can improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records of the school's recruitment checks and procedures are regularly monitored by representatives of the local academy council to ensure that they meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' welfare is a priority. They are vigilant in their work to keep pupils safe. The family liaison officer (FLO) provides additional support for families who experience difficult circumstances. The processes to support vulnerable pupils are effective. Pupils value the FLO and know that they can talk to her if they are worried or upset about anything.
- Staff receive regular training and updates about how to keep pupils safe. As a result, they are confident and quick to follow the school's safeguarding procedures if they have a concern. Pupils talk about the many ways they are taught to stay safe, including when online. For example, pupils have a good understanding of road safety, cyber bullying and 'stranger danger'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Numerous changes in teaching staff have hampered pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. The skills of current staff are improving, particularly in the teaching of English, in response to the support and guidance from school leaders.
- Teachers' assessment is now accurate. They use the school's assessment systems effectively to help them plan pupils' next steps in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' current attainment, and how best to support and challenge pupils.
- Pupils respond to adults' encouragement to talk about their learning. They are keen to tell others what they know and understand. This was seen during a writing lesson when pupils were using adventurous vocabulary creatively to add atmosphere to their writing. Pupils show commitment to improving their work and often self-edit and explain their thinking to their teachers.
- Staff's expectations of pupils have not been consistently high, leading to the quality of

teaching and learning being too variable across the school. Some pupils have not made fast enough progress and are behind where they need to be in the development of their knowledge and skills. However, teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils should achieve and, as a consequence, pupils' books show a recent improvement in the quality of their learning.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and productive. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants. Teaching assistants support all pupils well, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. They use questioning effectively to help pupils plan how they will tackle activities. They teach pupils how to use a range of resources to support their learning, and encourage pupils when tasks are difficult.
- The teaching of writing has been a focus for improvement. Leaders have introduced high-quality texts which are having a beneficial effect on the quality of writing. Pupils also have more opportunities to strengthen their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Nevertheless, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' writing is sufficiently ambitious.
- Recent developments to improve teaching across the wider curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers carefully plan activities. However, as yet, there is little evidence of pupils, particularly the most able, deepening their knowledge and understanding across the wider curriculum.
- Phonics is taught effectively and younger pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and have access to a range of books that appeal to their different interests.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The recent appointment of a family liaison officer (FLO) has improved relationships with some parents. She works closely with the attendance officer to address the persistent absence of some pupils and overall attendance. Too many pupils take holidays during term time but the school is doing all it can to address this.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know who to talk to if they feel worried and value the FLO for helping and providing support. 'How to stay safe' is taught well and pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and in the local community.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies encourage pupils to think about and discuss a range of values. Displays in the school's environment provide further encouragement and advice. Many pupils show a high degree of empathy for others and recognise that some of their peers find school and other situations difficult. Pupils are quick to give examples of how they can support vulnerable pupils to ensure that everyone enjoys school.
- Pupils are keen to share their learning and their experiences with adults. They talk enthusiastically about the clubs they attend and the responsibilities they have. Older pupils particularly enjoy helping with the gardening at school and having lunch with the children from early years.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school with consideration and are polite and respectful to each other and adults.
- Pupils play well together across all age groups. In the playground, they organise their own games and take part enthusiastically. A high level of adult supervision at breaktime and lunchtime ensures that pupils who require adult support have easy access to it and can be fully included in activities.
- Most pupils are motivated and engaged in lessons. They contribute well to discussions and are willing to grapple with ideas to find answers and come to conclusions. In some classes, low-level disruption occurs, particularly when activities do not fully address the pupils' needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The many changes in teaching staff have had a negative impact on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Leaders and teachers have addressed this recently and there are early signs that pupils are now catching up, particularly in key stage 1. The work in pupils' books shows some marked improvement in the quality of pupils' learning over recent months. However, pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6, in 2018, are lower than the national average for reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- In key stage 1, pupils are making good progress and attaining well across the core subjects. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth in writing was larger because of the changes made by leaders. However, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in mathematics remained well below the national average.
- Across the school, teachers do not routinely provide the most able pupils with enough challenge in their learning to enable them to make good progress. Pupils sometimes spend too much time repeating what they can already do.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities typically make strong, and sometimes very strong progress from their starting points because teaching in class and in small groups supports their learning well.
- Pupils learn how to use their phonics skills and knowledge well to help them read and write successfully. The Year 1 phonics screening checks for the past two years show that a growing number of pupils are achieving the expected standard. This is an improvement following on from the previous drop in standards.

Early years provision

Good

- Children have a positive start to their education in early years because they are taught effectively by well-trained and enthusiastic staff. Activities are carefully planned to meet children's specific needs and ignite their interests. The early years team are ambitious for all children to achieve well and be happy.
- The early years leader has worked hard, since her appointment a year ago, to improve

the provision. She has built good relationships with the independent pre-school that shares the site and, as a result, the assessment-on-entry processes for new children have been strengthened. In addition, pre-school children are regularly welcomed into the classroom to share story time and take part in 'wake-up, shake-up' time with the class.

- Adults build strong relationships with parents. The leader manages children's transition into the school very effectively and ensures that children and their parents are aware of the school's expectations through a series of meetings and workshops. Parents of children in Reception Year are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel well informed about their children's progress and enjoy contributing to their children's ongoing assessments.
- The assistant principal of the MAT with responsibility for early years has a clear vision for further developing the provision in Reception. She supports the early years leader and ensures that she has access to training and development opportunities.
- In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year was above that seen nationally. This followed a dip in outcomes in 2017. Work seen in children's books indicates that they make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Reception children develop positive attitudes to learning. They are curious and able to concentrate for sustained periods of time. Adults skilfully extend children's learning through thoughtful questioning, encouraging children to think deeply as they play. The impact of this was seen in the outdoor area as children counted boys and girls and then created charts to record their counting. They also enjoyed using the 'building-site' role-play area.
- Children's early reading and writing skills are developed very effectively. For example, children thoroughly enjoy a variety of activities linked to their experience of being part of a family. Leaders continue to develop the early years provision to ensure that the quality of children's learning in mathematics matches the high-quality provision for their English development.

School details

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 137467 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10053274 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 84 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mrs Katharine Perkins |
| Headteacher | Miss Helen Stevens |
| Telephone number | 017955 21362 |
| Website | www.lynsted-norton.kent.sch.uk |
| Email address | h.stevens@villageacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 19–20 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- The school has been sponsored by The Village Academy, an MAT, since 2012. Lynsted and Norton is one of six primary schools in the MAT. A new chief executive officer has been appointed recently.
- The school has an academy council, which forms the local governance level within the MAT. The MAT delegates certain functions to the academy council.
- The MAT provides support to the school at all levels, for example the school improvement lead and MAT early years lead have worked alongside leaders.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is higher than the national average.

- The school met the 2017 government's floor standard which is the minimum requirement for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector met with members of the academy council, the chief executive officer and other senior leaders from the MAT.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their views of the school and their learning. The lead inspector met with parents on the playground to gather their views.
- A range of the school's documentation was examined, including: information on pupils' performance across the school; school improvement plans; self-evaluation documents; behaviour logs; the MAT's monitoring and action plans; and minutes of the academy council's meetings.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of pupils' books, some with senior leaders, to consider the progress that pupils have made in a range of subjects. She talked to pupils at breaktimes, in the lunch hall and during lessons.
- The lead inspector had meetings with senior and middle leaders to discuss different aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector also considered 39 responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View, the views of seven staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire as well as the responses of two pupils to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Good, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018