

Littleham Church of England Primary School

Littledown Close, Littleham, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2QY

Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, the standards pupils have reached as they leave the school have not been good enough. Leaders and governors were slow to react to the decline.
- Progress rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are too variable in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school are not sharp enough. As a result, improvement is not as brisk as it should be.
- Across the curriculum, some subjects are not taught in enough depth. This means that pupils do not build sufficient subject-specific knowledge and skills, in order to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies too much. Inconsistent teaching means that pupils do not make as much progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning are not high enough. As a result, there is low-level disruption in some lessons.
- The outside provision in early years does not enable children to flourish. Children in the early years are not sufficiently challenged to reach their full potential. The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. This hampers children's progress.
- Leaders' work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence has not been successful.

The school has the following strengths

- A significant number of parents have positive views of the school.
- The teaching of reading has improved.
- The nurture hub is effective in supporting the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- The recently appointed executive headteacher has led improvements to the quality of leadership and teaching.
- Leaders promote the school's Christian values well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan the curriculum more efficiently so that pupils secure appropriate knowledge and skills across all subject areas
 - evaluating the impact of additional funding more rigorously to check that planned actions are having an impact on improving pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that the school's plans for improvement are precise and rigorously reviewed and evaluated
 - ensuring that the approach to the teaching of mathematics is effective across the school
 - making sure that governors have an accurate view of the school's performance, so that they are effective in holding leaders to account for the quality of provision
 - improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils by:
 - accelerating pupils' progress so that it is at least in line with national figures in reading and mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils with SEND make the progress that they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2
 - diminishing differences between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and other pupils nationally.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and well-being of pupils by:
 - improving attendance, including for pupils who are persistently absent, so that it is at least in line with the national average
 - ensuring that low-level disruption is eradicated.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure teachers:
 - teach mathematics in a way that systematically builds on and deepens pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding
 - use what they know about what pupils can already do to match work with greater accuracy so that pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- Improve the early years by:
 - ensuring a systematic approach to teaching phonics
 - challenging children to reach their full potential through well-matched activities
 - ensuring that the outside learning environment provides children with sufficient opportunity to achieve the early learning goals.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following the last section 5 inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment declined. In response to the next steps identified at the section 8 inspection in May 2018, senior leaders and governors have not secured improvement in all of the areas identified as priorities for improvement. As a result, long-standing weaknesses continue to exist.
- Historically, some pupils have not made sufficient progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and mathematics. In mathematics, pupils are not catching up with their peers quickly enough. Leaders are dedicated and fully committed to improvement, but their actions have not had a strong enough impact on the progress that pupils make.
- The recently appointed executive headteacher has quickly established a secure understanding of the strengths and areas of the school that require further improvement. Plans are underway to improve the quality of teaching. However, the plans for improvement she inherited are not rigorous or specific enough to secure strong outcomes for pupils. Additionally, evaluations of the school's effectiveness are overgenerous.
- Leaders have not developed a curriculum that is rich and varied. Although there is a well-thought-out curriculum for some subjects, such as science, it is not broad enough for all subjects. It does not give pupils opportunities to build systematically on prior knowledge or to develop necessary skills across all subjects.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is well developed. This is because leaders ensure that pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their understanding in areas such as democracy and the rule of law. The school council members feel valued and that their work helps improve the school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they greatly enjoy finding out about different faiths and visiting different places of worship. Members of the school community visit the school to share their cultural differences and talk about diversity. This means pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Since her appointment in April 2019, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND has not yet been able to have a discernible impact on pupils' progress. Nevertheless, leaders recognise this and have secured further capacity to provide additional support in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.
- Leaders ensure that equality of opportunity is at the forefront of their decision-making. They often provide schooling for pupils who have not been able to settle in other settings. At times, this has caused disruption to daily routines. Nevertheless, leaders are determined to meet all pupils' needs.
- Leaders do not use additional funding to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND effectively. There is a lack of strategic oversight to ensure that these pupils are reaching their full potential. However, the school's nurture hub is effective in improving outcomes for the small proportion of vulnerable pupils that attend. This is because the adults that work in the hub foster good relationships with pupils and understand their specific needs well.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Whole-school assemblies focus on Christian values that weave through all aspects of school life. An inspector joined staff and pupils during an act of collective worship. During the assembly, pupils were keen to participate and share their successes from outside of school through their 'sports personality of the week'. Many displays provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their moral and social development. Pupils benefit from a spiritual garden that provides 'awe and wonder' and a quiet place for pupils to reflect on their experiences. Pupils contribute to many local and international charities, such as 'Mary's Meals', providing food for the less fortunate, Water Aid and Children in Need.
- Leaders have not responded swiftly enough to concerns raised by staff from the local authority. The local authority's view of the school is accurate. However, because leaders have not addressed recommendations, pupils' outcomes declined, and teaching has not improved swiftly enough.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly complimentary about the leadership of the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, would recommend the school. One parent's comment, that encapsulates many, said: 'The leadership team work tirelessly for all children and families. They know every child, their strengths and weaknesses and what matters to them.'
- The leader responsible for physical education (PE) and sport makes effective use of additional funding. It has been used to purchase high-quality equipment, upskill teaching staff and to enable pupils to participate in a wider range of sporting activities. The school is currently going through an assessment process for a nationally recognised award in this area. Pupils speak positively about the provision for sport in school and after-school opportunities. One parent told an inspector: 'There are so many after-school sport clubs, my child does not know which one to attend.' Nevertheless, a small proportion of pupils raised concerns about some pupils' behaviour in the after-school clubs.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in securing good outcomes for pupils. Minutes of meetings held by governors indicate that too much focus has been placed upon future plans for the federation. Governors have not ensured that leaders' evaluation and strategic planning to bring about improvements have been effective enough. This has hampered school improvement.
- More recently, the chair of governors identified that the structure of the governing body was not effective. As a result, the governing body is currently being restructured to enable governors to have an all-round holistic view of the quality of education. Governors welcome an external review.
- Governors are fully conversant with their statutory responsibilities and ensure that they are completed diligently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school places great emphasis on safeguarding its pupils. The school has had to take robust action to protect some of its most vulnerable pupils and work closely with external agencies.

- Staff training is relevant and up to date. During the inspection, inspectors checked staff's knowledge of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, neglect and radicalisation. Staff were able to articulate the signs of a pupil who may be at risk and what appropriate action they would take. The school site is well secured. All record-keeping about vulnerable pupils is detailed and robust.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know the importance of staying safe when using the internet and the risks associated with social media and mobile phone technology. Pupils say that if they are concerned, they can talk to teachers, who will listen and respond to their concerns. Inspectors' discussions with staff highlighted that there is a shared sense of safety within the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching does not consistently promote good progress for pupils. This is because the quality of teaching is inconsistent throughout the school. Too often, tasks set do not routinely challenge pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils do not always reach their full potential, particularly in mathematics.
- Changes to the teaching of reading have had a positive impact. There has been significant investment in reading. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils have access to high-quality books in classrooms that develop pupils' reading skills. They promote fiction and non-fiction texts well to engage the interests of both boys and girls. Pupils who are behind in their reading have access to programmes that are helping them catch up swiftly. One parent told an inspector: 'My son's reading has improved so much he is now reading books I would read.' Current pupils' progress in reading is improving rapidly.
- Learning in mathematics is not consistently effective, particularly in key stage 2. This is because the curriculum does not build progressively on what pupils know, can do and understand. Therefore, too often, pupils are provided with work that does not deepen their understanding further. This is because there is a distinct lack of opportunity for pupils to use and apply what they have learned in different contexts through reasoning and problem solving. Similarly, pupils complete work that they have already achieved. As a result, current pupils' progress in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- The teaching of writing is improving. The quality of teaching in writing across the school has resulted in improved outcomes for current pupils, particularly for pupils in key stage 1. Teachers are using a range of strategies to engage pupils and inspire them to become writers. For example, pupils in Year 2 used their learning on the Great Fire of London to convey mood and describe settings.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting the learning needs of small groups of pupils who need additional support. They skilfully question pupils to deepen their understanding and adjust work as necessary to ensure that they make good progress.
- The teaching of some of the foundation subjects is not thorough enough and does not provide pupils with the relevant knowledge and skills required. Pupils' knowledge of humanities and the arts is limited. Nevertheless, pupils' enthusiasm for subjects such

as PE, science and wider learning opportunities is clear to see. One pupil told an inspector: 'Forest school is fun, we build dens and learn how to make things.' The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences, including residential visits.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils who spoke with inspectors say that on occasion bullying does happen. This view was shared by a very small minority of parents. However, they also say that teachers are effective in dealing with bullying concerns. A large proportion of pupils who responded to the pupil survey also share this view. Leaders are working hard with pupils and their families to eradicate all incidents of bullying.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have varied opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle. Most recently, a whole-school 'healthy living' week was successful in promoting pupils' awareness of leading a healthy life. Pupils were keen to share with inspectors the fundamental elements of a healthy lifestyle.
- Leaders place great emphasis on pupils' physical and mental well-being. The support the school provides, particularly in pastoral care through its nurture hub, ensures that pupils' mental health is a priority. This enables pupils to be receptive to the teaching they receive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. During the inspection, many pupils were well behaved, but low-level disruption also occurred. Pupils say that this is a frequent occurrence in some year groups. This view was also reported by pupils who completed the pupil survey.
- Rates of absence and persistent absence have been above the national averages for the past three years. So far, during this academic year, absence rates have remained below the national average. Leaders have not paid close enough attention to improving pupils' attendance.
- Pupils are adamant that they feel safe in school. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. At social times, they play happily and enthusiastically in the playground with each other and adults alike.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Most pupils join the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. The progress of current pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics is variable. This is due to weak teaching over time and pupils having to catching up.
- Since 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has either been broadly in line with or above that seen nationally.

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that seen nationally over the last three years. In 2018, this was also the case for pupils achieving a greater depth. Nevertheless, there are green shoots of improvement in key stage 1. This is because in key stage 1 teaching is now having a positive impact on current pupils.
- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was well below that seen of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, since 2016, pupils' attainment has steadily improved and in 2018 was broadly in line with the national average. Nevertheless, the work in pupils' books and assessment information for current pupils suggest that this improvement will not be sustained this year.
- In 2018, the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics was below that seen nationally. Current pupils' performance information provided by leaders and work in pupils' books found that pupils' progress in mathematics is not consistently strong across the school. Progress in reading is a much stronger picture.
- By the end of 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading was well below that seen nationally. Current disadvantaged pupils are making inconsistent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because leaders' actions are having minimal impact on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. As a result, pupils' progress remains below that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils achieve well in science. Work in pupils' books shows that they have a broad range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject.
- In 2018, the progress of pupils with SEND in reading, writing and mathematics was below that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that these pupils are making inconsistent progress between classes and subjects.
- The quality of work in pupils' exercise books in other subjects shows inconsistent progress and standards between subjects. This means that pupils are not always ready for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The vast majority of children join the school with abilities that are below those typical for their age. Since 2016, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has declined below the national average. The current work undertaken by children in the Nursery and Reception Years shows that most children are making progress from their starting points.
- Leaders, supported by the local authority, identified that the outdoor learning environment is not sufficiently resourced and does not provide children with opportunities to excel in all of the early learning goals. In 2018, leaders created action plans to improve aspects of the outside provision. However, these plans for improvement have not been fully executed.
- Transition to and from early years ensures that children are well prepared for their learning journey. The leader responsible for early years provides a range of themed open afternoons and workshops for parents. This is to ensure that they know children

well and can provide early support if necessary. Parents value opportunities to visit the school and to talk with teachers. Parents who spoke with inspectors said that their children love coming to school.

- The children are happy in early years. They enjoy their learning and behave well. This is because staff quickly establish routines and high expectations. During the inspection, an inspector observed a child in Nursery carefully pouring a drink for a younger child. Children's personal development is a strength of the provision.
- Teaching and learning are inconsistent. Where teaching is stronger, well-planned activities are matched effectively to the children's needs and adults skilfully question and probe children's thinking. For example, during snack time in the Nursery class, staff asked children about the different shapes their toast could represent. However, this is not consistent and, too often, most-able children's thinking is not challenged.
- Leaders report that the vast majority of children who enter the early years do not have the speech and language skills expected for their age. Leaders have worked closely with external agencies and put in place additional support. However, the teaching of phonics is not effective. The approach to teaching phonics is not systematic and some staff do not pronounce sounds correctly. Furthermore, children who have been identified as having weak phonic knowledge do not always engage with the teaching of phonics and this hampers their ability to read.
- Relationships between adults and children are strong in early years. Where children are focused, they show good attitudes to learning. They are polite and well-mannered and are inquisitive to find out more about the world they live in.
- All statutory requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 113370 |
| Local authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 10056193 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 181 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Clare Rooke |
| Executive headteacher | Katie Gray |
| Telephone number | 01395 266 535 |
| Website | www.littleham.devon.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | admin@littleham.devon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 29–30 January 2014 |

Information about this school

- Littleham is a smaller than average-sized primary school and is part of the Pebblebed Heath Federation. The federation was formed in May 2015 and is made up of two primary schools. The work of the federation is overseen by an overarching governing body.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including with an education, health and care plan, is above the national average.

- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in May 2016 when the school was graded as outstanding.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in April 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with the head of school and executive headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at social times.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the leader with responsibility for pupils with SEND, early years and a sample of support and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three governors including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally during their break and lunchtimes and in class. Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, pupil premium strategy and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors examined a large sample of pupils' books from across the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with a sample of parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. The lead inspector also considered 23 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, 12 responses to the staff survey and the 19 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Adam Matthews

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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