

# Inspection of a good school: The Littletons Church of England Academy

Farm Lane, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 8TL

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Inspection dates:

8 January 2020

## **Outcome**

The Littletons Church of England Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at this small, rural first school are very happy. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which pupils live up to. They live and breathe the academy's values of caring, honesty, perseverance, respect and responsibility. Pupils are polite, kind and helpful to each other. They share and take turns. Bullying rarely happens. As a result of their positive attitudes to learning and consistently strong teaching, most pupils achieve well here.

Through the forest school, theatre visits and other activities, pupils are encouraged to broaden their horizons and take on responsibilities, such as playground buddies. Pupils all take part in active play every day, such as walking a mile or doing a yoga class. Pupils understand that this helps them stay healthy and happy.

Parents and carers say that their children flourish here, personally and academically. They say that children are nurtured and supported well to understand the wider world and their part in it as they grow up.

Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and friendly. All staff have pupils' best interests at heart. The headteacher, leaders and other staff work hard to give pupils the best support they can to succeed. Pupils, parents and governors all recognise and value this commitment.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Pupils thrive at the Littletons. The headteacher's calm, supportive approach makes everybody feel welcome. Pupils receive support when they need it for their emotional well-being as well as their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support to succeed. Pupils who find it difficult to concentrate on learning are supported well to get better at this.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is consistently well planned and delivered. They

support teachers to put these plans into action. Consistent approaches to teaching and assessment help teachers, pupils and parents understand what pupils are learning, why and when. Pupils behave well in lessons because they know what is expected of them.

In mathematics, the curriculum is well planned. Pupils practise each new topic at their own pace until they have mastered it. They frequently revise topics so that they can embed their learning. As a result, most pupils achieve the expected standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and beyond. The challenge now is to support more pupils to develop a deeper understanding in mathematics.

Pupils love reading. There is a real buzz about reading in the school. This is because leaders have raised the profile of reading. Each class has a list of recommended reading. Pupils eagerly discuss which books they enjoyed from the list and others they would recommend. The book lists include challenging, traditional texts as well as more modern titles. In this way, pupils are introduced to our rich literary heritage.

Most pupils learn to read well through well-planned phonics sessions. For those who do not quite grasp the basics in this way, leaders have put in place effective additional support. Leaders recognise that pupils need a broad range of vocabulary to be able to understand more challenging texts. Teachers pre-teach key words so that pupils recognise these when they come across them. As pupils get older, reading skills such as comprehension are taught more explicitly. Visual symbols help pupils to understand which skill to use. Pupils talk confidently about how they use inference, prediction and retrieval to help them answer questions.

Subject leaders have put in place well-structured curriculum plans in a range of other subjects, such as history and religious education (RE). Teaching is consistently strong because leaders support teachers well and share successful strategies for assessing pupils' learning. Leaders acknowledge that subject leadership is stronger in some areas than in others. They are providing support for subject leaders to develop their skills further where needed.

Learning at the Littletons extends well beyond the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. They take part in lots of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils meet at lunchtime to discuss how they can reduce plastic use in school and at home. Pupils run awareness campaigns and fundraising events such as collecting donations for the local food bank. Some pupils lead worship in school or take part in Young Voices, an annual, regional celebration of music.

The headteacher values the support and challenge provided by the local academy board and the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT). Teachers from academies across the trust collaborate. Leaders encourage and support teachers to reflect and share best practice. There is a lively culture of professional debate, support and challenge. Teachers are highly motivated to do their best for pupils. Teachers feel well supported to manage their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained and supported to recognise signs of abuse or neglect. Staff are vigilant. They report their concerns, which are followed up promptly and rigorously to ensure that pupils are safe.

The headteacher, who is also the designated senior leader for safeguarding (DSL), attends relevant meetings and updates staff through briefings. Safeguarding is regularly featured in newsletters to parents, so that they are aware of any emerging risks.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Staff are aware of their responsibilities. There is a culture of 'it could happen here'.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Outcomes in mathematics have improved recently. A higher proportion of pupils achieved at the expected standard at key stage 1 in 2019 than in the previous two years. However, very few pupils have developed a deeper understanding in mathematics in recent years. Although this is improving, leaders should ensure that more pupils are supported effectively to exceed the expected standard for their age in mathematics.
- Leadership of curriculum areas is becoming stronger as a result of the renewed focus on curriculum planning. However, there is some variability across the curriculum. Senior leaders should ensure that leaders new to subject leadership are supported effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Littletons Church of England First School, to be good on 28 September 2010.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 143816   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Worcestershire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10122525   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | First  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 10  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 133  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Hugh Richards  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Helen Brambani   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.thelittletons.worcs.sch.uk">www.thelittletons.worcs.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The predecessor school, Littletons Church of England First School, converted to become an academy on 1 February 2017, when it became the Littletons Church of England Academy and was a founding school of the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT).

## Information about this inspection

- Before the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school website as well as published assessment information and the previous inspection report. The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher on the phone about the progress the school has made since its last inspection and its approach to curriculum planning.
- An inspector spoke to parents as they dropped their children off in the morning. Eleven responses to Parent View were considered, including eight free-text responses.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime about behaviour and bullying, life at the school and how they are taught to keep themselves safe. Sixteen responses to the pupil survey were also considered.
- We spoke to teachers about the curriculum, their workload and pupils' behaviour. Ten responses to the staff survey were also considered.

- As part of this inspection, we looked at reading, mathematics and history in detail. We met with subject leaders, looked at pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils for each of these subjects. English and mathematics lessons were visited, as well as phonics teaching sessions.
- The lead inspector held meetings with one of the co-chairs of the local academy board and with the chief executive officer (CEO), the head of school improvement and one trustee of the DoWMAT.
- The lead inspector discussed safeguarding procedures and practice with the headteacher, who is also the designated senior leader (DSL) for safeguarding. Pre-employment checks and case files were reviewed. Records of incidents of bullying and behaviour were checked, as well as records and analysis of attendance information. We spoke to members of staff and pupils about safeguarding throughout the day.
- An inspector met with the SENCo and visited intervention support groups.

### **Inspection team**

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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