

# Inspection of Littleham Church of England Primary School

Littledown Close, Littleham, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2QY

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils are receiving a poor standard of education. Leadership is not effective. Governors have been too slow to intervene to remedy the weaknesses in the school. The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have not ensured that staff are well trained in delivering the school's curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well.

Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Most pupils feel safe and happy. They have confidence that staff will provide the right support and guidance when they need it. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that bullying is rare and feel supported by staff. However, pupils complain that behaviour is not always positive, and learning is regularly disrupted. This frustrates them as it interrupts their lessons.

Pupils value the extra-curricular clubs that are on offer, like boxercise and pottery. Pupils also learn about water safety. They say that they enjoy learning about how to stay safe on the beach and how their confidence with swimming in the sea has improved. Parents are positive about the work of the school. Leaders know pupils and their families well.

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

Senior leaders, including governors, have done too little to tackle the significant shortcomings of the school. Leaders are not ambitious enough for all pupils. They have not ensured that the curriculum identifies the knowledge pupils should learn in all subjects and when they should learn it.

There have, however, been recent improvements in the early years. Children now have better access to a range of different activities. However, leaders have not prioritised resources that support children's learning well enough. This means that children are not learning the most efficient way. Changes in staffing have meant that basic routines for learning are not firmly established. As a result, children are not prepared as well as they could be for future learning in key stage 1.

Teachers do not use assessment well enough to check on what pupils know. In most subjects, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and misconceptions are not effectively addressed. Consequently, pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught previously. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they should and are not ready for the next stage of their learning.

A small number of pupils with SEND, who are part of the school's nurture base, receive a bespoke curriculum which is meeting their needs. However, for the remaining pupils with SEND, the provision is poor. Leaders have not supported staff with useful information to help them to support these pupils. Staff do not adapt the

curriculum or teaching to meet their needs. Most pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should.

Many subject leaders have not had the opportunity to develop the curriculums they are responsible for. They have not had sufficient direction from senior leaders. They do not have strong enough subject knowledge to support teachers and other adults to deliver an effective curriculum. Due to the turbulence in staffing, leaders have been unable to realise their vision for the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not learn well.

Leaders have not been able to bring about enough improvements in early reading. While leaders have taken some recent actions, there is not a consistent approach to teaching reading. Pupils' reading books are not routinely matched to the sounds they are learning. Staff are not trained to deliver the phonics programme well enough to ensure that it is of high quality. As a result, pupils do not learn to read well.

Some pupils benefit from wider experiences, such as residential visits and after-school clubs, like boxercise and pottery. Yet, these opportunities do not broaden pupils' experiences well enough. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures and fundamental British values is not well developed by the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are not being sufficiently well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Until recently, governors have not sufficiently challenged senior leaders to improve the school, including the quality of education. There has been a significant breakdown in communication between senior leaders and staff. Turbulence in staffing has hindered school improvement and interrupted pupils' learning. This means that actions to improve the school are not happening quickly enough and involve a high workload for teachers. As a result, staff morale is very low.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of vigilance, where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders ensure staff have regular training. Staff have a thorough understanding of the risks relating to safeguarding, particularly the signs that may indicate that a pupil is in danger of harm.

Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders take effective action to follow up concerns. Leaders seek the right support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders ensure that appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they are appointed. Pupils learn how to keep safe when using the internet. Pupils know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school.

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

## (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for early reading and phonics is not implemented well. Weak teaching expertise hinders pupils' progress. As a result, too few Year 1 pupils are meeting the standard in the phonics screening check. Books are not consistently well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils are not building confidence and fluency. Leaders should urgently improve the implementation of all aspects of the early reading and phonics curriculum.
- The school's curriculum is not clearly sequenced or strategically planned. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, do not build secure knowledge over time. Leaders need to be systematic in their approach to planning the curriculum. They need to ensure that all subjects have a clear progression of knowledge, so that pupils know more and remember more.
- Weaknesses in leadership have led to high staff workloads and low staff morale. This is hindering the capacity to bring about much needed improvement. Governors must ensure that urgent action is taken to strengthen leadership throughout the school and to ensure that staff are provided with the support that they need to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Leaders have not established a clear and effective approach to assessment and feedback. Pupils do not always benefit from helpful feedback. Leaders must ensure that they establish clear expectations for assessment and feedback and that staff apply these consistently.
- The school's provision and ambition for all pupils with SEND is not high enough. The curriculum is not suitably adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND not following a bespoke curriculum. As a result, most pupils with SEND do not benefit from a high enough quality of education within the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, so that all pupils with SEND learn well.
- The quality of subject leadership is not yet consistent in every subject. This means that pupils do not follow a well-developed curriculum across all subjects. Leaders need to strengthen subject leadership across the school, so it has the expertise and skills to implement strong subject curriculums.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113370
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268215
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Vanessa Briggs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katharine Gray
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.littleham.devon.sch.uk">www.littleham.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates an eight-place resource base for pupils with complex needs within the local authority.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above the national average.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school is part of the Jubilee with Pebblebed Federation of schools.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of learning, members of the leadership team, including curriculum leaders, the chair of governors and an education officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and the responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Hannaford

Ofsted Inspector

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