

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



7 November 2016

Joyce Rhodes
Headteacher
Lympne Church of England Primary School
Octavian Drive
Lympne
Hythe
Kent
CT21 4JG

Dear Joyce Rhodes

Short inspection of Lympne Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 October 2016, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leadership, including governance, is strong at senior and middle leadership level. Parents and staff are fulsome in their praise of you in particular and all aspects of the school. Parents say that their children have settled into their new classes and are doing well. Staff are proud to be a part of the school and enjoy working here. The culture and ethos of the school are very positive and underpinned by strong, shared values.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics was a cause for concern in the past and the school has really upped its game over the past two years. The changes made resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the standards reached by pupils last year. The work in pupils' books suggests that these improvements are continuing this year. The staff implemented the new mathematics curriculum and this helped them to develop a better understanding of what the pupils know already and what they need to do next. Outcomes rose across the school, and not just in mathematics. The proportions of children leaving Reception having achieved the standards expected for their age rose sharply to above the national average. There was a similar improvement in the Year 1 phonics screening check and across all subjects at the end of key stage 2.

At the previous inspection, the inspector recommended that the school should improve the clarity of purpose in lessons and the quality and usefulness of teachers'

feedback. These aspects have been addressed effectively. Teachers give useful feedback which helps the pupils to review and improve their learning. The curriculum changes and the adoption of a tracking system are increasing the clarity of purpose further so that adults and pupils are clear about what successful learning should look like. There is evidence in lessons, books, and in discussions, that pupils are experiencing greater challenge. The emphasis on reasoning and explanation in mathematics and reading comprehension supports this. There is further work to do to make sure that all pupils, particularly the most able, really achieve their potential.

There remain wide gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in the younger age groups. Boys achieve less well than girls in language and literacy. The gaps narrowed a little last year and boys made faster progress than girls in some classes but they need to be making even faster progress earlier to achieve as well as they should. You have identified this as a key priority for improvement this year and already some of the strategies for involving boys in speaking, listening, reading and writing appear to be bearing fruit. The provision in Reception is lively and stimulating. All of the children are fully involved in a wide range of stimulating experiences. The strategies being used to develop writing such as acting out well-known stories are encouraging the development of vocabulary, story-telling skills and enjoyment across key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View and the school's own survey, and those who spoke to me at the start of the day are highly positive. They believe strongly that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school. All staff are also confident that pupils are safe in school. There are rigorous systems for checking the identity of staff, volunteers and governors and their suitability to work with children. Staff training on aspects of keeping pupils safe is carefully recorded and up to date. Three senior leaders have undertaken the training for designated safeguarding leaders and several members of staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding practice.

Staff know the systems well and understand their responsibilities. You keep careful records of training and have planned future training events to make sure that all staff are fully informed. You and the adults in school know each child, and their families, very well and are alert for any concerns. You have strong and valuable relationships with external colleagues such as the school nurse and early help providers. Online safety is highlighted throughout the school. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well attended and you and your staff provide valuable individual support for families experiencing difficulties. Parents are very positive about the interest you show in them and the quality of your support. Behaviour is good and attendance is well above average.

Inspection findings

- The staff feel well supported by leaders, motivated to improve and encouraged to try new ideas. Staff are proud to be part of the school and keen to do their best for the pupils. They all enjoy working in the school.
- Leadership, including governance, has become stronger, with clear roles and responsibilities. Actions taken last year resulted in measurable improvements. Governors are well organised, knowledgeable and proactive. Middle leaders are also influential and support their colleagues. They make incisive use of feedback from data and pupils to identify actions for improvement, for example, using the outcomes of assessment to strengthen teaching, learning and provision in geography.
- Action taken to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics resulted in a sharp rise in attainment and progress in mathematics as well as in reading and writing last year.
- Teachers renewed the curriculum in line with national requirements and, in doing so, became more aware of the expectations for each age group. They are building more practical work and opportunities for explanation and reasoning into everyday mathematics. Cross-curricular and real-life examples are evident in the books and lessons; for example, history and mathematics were linked in the Year 6 work on Roman numerals. Pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply mathematical concepts and there is evidence in their books that they are challenged to extend their learning.
- The pupils take pride in their work and that supports accuracy in their calculations. However, they often spell mathematical terms incorrectly and this is not addressed rigorously enough by the teachers.
- You and the other leaders analyse assessment information well and identify gaps where more could be done to address weaknesses, for example, by providing small-group activities to promote fluency, involvement and confidence in mathematics. The group of Year 6 girls I saw were keen, interested and proud of their increasing mathematical understanding.
- There are lots of opportunities to read to adults especially for targeted pupils. Most-able pupils are eager readers and keen to discuss the books they are reading. The use of a class novel with older pupils is working well and developing their higher order reading and comprehension skills. They can discuss the authors' strategies and styles. Year 6 pupils benefited from a coherent approach to reading last year and made very rapid progress.
- There is more to do to really push all of the pupils to achieve as well as possible. Across the school, there is a tendency for work in lessons across all subjects to stop at the bottom of the page. This may not be school policy but it seems to be embedded across the school and demonstrates an unspoken message about limits to learning.
- The school improvement plan has appropriate aims but, in places, it is a little woolly. It would be easier for governors and staff to check whether the school was on track to achieve the end-of-year aims if the plan were simplified and the milestones and targets were sharper and more measurable.

- A key priority in the improvement plan is, quite rightly, to improve the attainment of boys, especially the younger boys' achievement in reading and writing. This is leading to more engaging, boy-friendly activities, for example, using a superhero theme. During the visit, boys appeared to be as involved and attentive as the girls, particularly in Reception.
- There are lots of opportunities for language development in the early years, with a good range of stimulating activities, inside and particularly outside. There are planned opportunities for reading and writing across the different activities, inside and outside. For example, in the wooded area, a boy and girl were deep in discussion. They had constructed a hedgehog home together, and were writing their names on it. Adults promote speaking and listening through good questioning and prompting.
- The school's strategy for developing writing, using drama and retelling of stories, appears to be encouraging all of the pupils to join in and promotes the development of vocabulary and writing skills well. However, there appear to be some practices that may restrict the boys' experience of engaging in incidental, high-quality speaking and listening activities, for example, gender divisions in the dining hall chosen by the pupils, and the apparent will of staff to limit pupils' discussion when lining up for their lunches.
- The school has a lovely atmosphere and the evidence of shared values is strong. Behaviour is good, and pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. They listen respectfully to each other and to adults. Pupils are confident that, if they have problems, they will be taken seriously and action taken to resolve any difficulties. They point to the current work being done to strengthen friendships as evidence of the school's commitment to their well-being. The pupils are confident that they are listened to and that they contribute to the ethos of the school and its direction.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the pace of learning and challenge increases in order that a higher proportion of pupils achieve above national expectations
- the attainment and progress of boys, particularly in the younger classes, accelerate in language and literacy.

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

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, five governors and an improvement adviser from the local authority. A representative from the diocese joined us for the feedback. You and I toured the school during the day to observe the quality of teaching and learning and to look at the pupils' books.

I focused on:

- teaching and learning in mathematics
- the involvement and achievement of boys and most-able pupils
- the effectiveness of the school's work to improve reading comprehension
- the impact of teachers' feedback and clarity of purpose in lessons.

I took account of 24 staff questionnaires, 36 responses to the online survey, Parent View, two written comments and a recent school survey of parents' views. I met some parents at the start of the day. I met a group of older pupils and discussed the books they were reading and I had lunch with younger pupils. I looked at a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also looked at, and discussed with you, the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the current improvement plan.