

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



12 October 2017

Mrs Lisa Armstrong  
Headteacher  
Lythe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School  
High Street  
Lythe  
Whitby  
North Yorkshire  
YO21 3RT

Dear Mrs Armstrong

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Lythe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 15 September 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- strengthen the effectiveness of leadership, including middle leaders, to ensure that leaders' actions accelerate pupils' progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics
- accelerate improvements in the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and raise staff expectations of what pupils can achieve and staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour for learning
- improve levels of attendance and continue to reduce the levels of persistent absence.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the leaders for English and mathematics. I also met with two governors, including the co-chair of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority and a representative from the diocese to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We visited three classrooms together, spoke with pupils and looked at pupils' work. A range of documents were scrutinised, including the school development plan and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, there have been no changes to staffing and leadership. One co-chair of the governing body has left and you are currently in the process of appointing a new co-chair of governors to the vacant position.

## **Main findings**

You have begun to put in place systems to support the evaluation of the school's performance. Supported by a national leader for education (NLE) you are now beginning to check more systematically on the quality of teaching across the school. There has been some involvement with subject leaders in monitoring for improvements but this is not well established. Moreover, leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics have not been timely enough. As a result, there is little evidence that pupils' progress is improving promptly.

Leaders' efforts to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence have had a variable impact. The headteacher, supported by governors, has implemented a more rigorous approach to enforcement of the school's attendance policy. However, while there has been a reduction in persistent absence, particularly for boys, overall attendance has not improved. Leaders would benefit from analysing absence more regularly and reporting this to governors.

Governors continue to provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders. The curriculum and standards committee have increased their scrutiny of school improvement by meeting on a more regular basis. Links with the subject leaders for English and mathematics are not yet fully developed. This means that the holding of these leaders directly to account is not sharp enough.

Leaders and staff have taken steps to improve communication with parents and to involve them more in their children's learning. Parent workshops on reading and mathematics offer opportunities for parents to better understand how they can support their children's learning. The introduction of termly written reports provides parents with more regular information about their child's progress. The subject leader for English has analysed the English grammar, spelling and

punctuation assessments and pupils' writing and has identified that the quality of pupils' spelling needs to improve. Some actions, such as a more focused approach to improve the teaching of spelling and a revised approach to feedback and marking, have been introduced. There is some evidence that teachers are using the revised marking and feedback approaches to improve English grammar, punctuation and spelling in writing. However, these approaches have been rather slow to get off the ground and are not used consistently. Consequently, in the 2017 provisional results, Year 6 pupils' outcomes in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling fell from the previous year. Progress information for current pupils shows that too often pupils' progress in writing is not strong enough. The samples of pupils' writing I scrutinised during the inspection indicated that teachers' expectations are not high enough.

There is emerging evidence of improving opportunities for pupils to develop the quality of their writing across a range of subjects. For example, when we visited classrooms, older pupils were engaged in a writing activity about a Stone Age axe, which was linked to their history topic. This is beginning to provide a purposeful context for pupils' writing activities.

The mathematics subject leader has taken steps to improve classroom mathematics resources and to develop homework approaches. However, pupils' progress in mathematics is not improving quickly enough across the school. This is evident in the school's 2017 end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 provisional mathematics results, the school's assessment information and in samples of pupils' books. A plan is in place for the subject leader for mathematics to receive training on the teaching of mathematics through a mastery approach. The intention is for the subject leader for mathematics to train other teachers across the school in how to use this method.

A specialist leader for education (SLE) has provided support to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. While your evaluations indicate that this has brought about some improvements in the quality of teaching, there is little evidence that pupils' progress is improving sufficiently as a result. Furthermore, more needs to be done to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.

You have taken steps to revise your timetables to increase the time available for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. However, teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour for learning are not high enough. As a result, some pupils do not make the best use of the time provided; they do not pay enough attention to the important learning points made by staff.

You and your staff are beginning to use assessments more effectively to identify where pupils, including the most able, are underachieving. However, this is not improving sufficiently how well teachers plan for pupils' learning or pupils' progress over time. For example, during our visits to classrooms, we noted some pupils who had achieved well in mathematics in the previous year completing activities that lacked the challenge to move their learning forward. Across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, your records show that too many pupils are not making

good progress.

At the previous inspection, the effectiveness of early years provision was judged to be good. Consequently, we did not focus any time to look at the early years provision during my visit. However, in 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years fell from the previous year. It is important that leaders and governors keep a careful eye on this area of the school while maintaining the focus on improving key stage 1 and key stage 2.

You have put in place a plan that aims to address the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. While the plan includes actions linked to the areas for improvement, it could be improved by identifying more specific timeframes, being clearer about the measures for success and providing greater detail about arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. This would help the plan to be more directly linked to improving pupils' outcomes in a timely fashion.

The actions taken in the plan have done little to improve the provisionally reported pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6. Similarly, there is a variable picture in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics lags behind that found nationally. In key stage 1, in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 and the proportion achieving the expected standard in mathematics at the end of Year 2 both fell. However, there was some improvement in the proportions of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing.

### **External support**

The school has received extensive external support from the local authority. This has included leadership development from an NLE, teaching, learning and assessment support from an SLE and monitoring checks by the local authority adviser. This has helped the school with improvements in the introduction of a more systematic approach by the headteacher to monitoring school improvement. While the SLE support has been appropriately targeted, this support has not had a sufficient impact on improving pupils' outcomes. The local authority adviser checks the school's progress on a termly basis. Consequently, the local authority holds an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**