The following example is a mid-range response.

Year of Wonders

Mompellion warns the villagers: ‘Fear will be your only faithful companion, and it will be with you day and night’. How does fear affect the lives of the people in the village?

In ‘Year of Wonders’ by Geraldine Brooks, fear is something that every character has, but there are many different fears and each character has their own fear. The plague strikes fear into the hearts of every person, this transforms into fear of spreading the plague by going outside of the village. Josiah Bont is also afraid of leaving the village but this is because of the navy. Fear also transforms some of the villagers into murderers and forever affects their lives. Fear of God is the most constant fear and this creates Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants.

The fear of travelling outside the village affects the lives of the people, because they have to stay in the village surrounded by death. It was decided that everyone would stay in the village, ‘Let the borders of our village become our entire world’, so as to contain the plague from spreading. And when Maggie Bakewell and Brand went outside the village and nearly killed, ‘it's a woman from the plague village’, it cements the fear in everyone's hearts not to travel outside the village, showing how fear can affect people and the way they try to live. Josiah Bont's fear is also travelling outside the village, because he doesn’t want to join the navy again, ‘lived ever after in fear that he somehow be pressed again’, this fear and his experiences in the navy change his life he becomes a ‘violent, drunk man’ showing just how much a fear can ruin a life, it also creates an anger against him from the villagers. The fear of the plague is shown throughout, but sometimes it is disguised as fear of witches.

The townspeople fear of witches turns many of them into murderers and affects the whole village. Some of the townspeople decided to release their fear out on the Gowdies, who they thought of as witches, ‘I can’t see my reflection in her eyes, sign of a witch', showing just how far their fear had gone to the point where they didn’t even need a good reason. The fear and killing of the Gowdies by these few was to have major affects on the entire village, because with her last breath she claims that their wives, ‘have lay with the Devil’ accusing them of being witches and ‘I am the child of the Devil, mark me, I will be revenged for my life’ creating an even greater fear for the village, because they killed their only two healers and the two experienced to birth a child, by killing the Gowdies the villagers had nothing to keep them healthy. A fear that was deemed necessary was the fear of God's wrath and this fear was constant.

The fear of God affected the lives of the villagers by turning them into Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants, and bringing them to Church every Sunday. The villagers were first Protestants, then Puritan who were stricter, ‘banned bright colours’, they thought drab clothes was the only clothes God approved of. Then they turned back to Protestant which was less authoritative of what people wore, but still believed in the judgement of God, ‘fear the wrath of God’ and ‘I think He would want us to face it where one was’, Mompellion their rector believed that God had sent this plague to test them and they should face it head-on. This affects the lives of the people in the village, because they believe that they will survive if God deems them worthy, showing the control the fear of God had over their lives. Their are other people like John Gordon who are flagellants, 'Their believe is that by grievous self-punishment they can allay God's wrath', showing that some people were truly afraid of God and would hurt themselves in an attempt to save themselves, they become themselves become a fear that others will join them. The fear of God affects the lives of the villagers by making them to church and fuelling this fear that they hold.

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Assessment
Every person in ‘Year of Wonders’ by Geraldine Brooks holds at least one fear, whether it be fear of the outside like the villagers and especially Josiah Bont. There is the fear of witches, which ruins the lives of the villagers by getting rid of their healers and turning some of them into murderers. Then there is the constant fear of God held by villagers and spoken about by Protestants, Puritans and Flagellants, this fear affects all the lives in the village by telling them what to do, what to wear and going to church every Sunday.

Assessor comments
- This question elicited a wide range in terms of quality but this student remains on task throughout the essay.
- The less successful pieces simply agreed that fear was everywhere and described individual’s situations and their reactions, while this student makes detailed and often telling use of the text to support a coherent discussion.
- The vocabulary and phrasing are quite good, clearly placing this above less fluent essays.
- The conclusion gives a pleasing and thoughtful sense of completion.
- This essay is at the top end of the mid-range responses.