

Littleport Community Primary School

Parsons Lane, Littleport, Ely, CB6 1JT

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards and rates of progress, particularly in mathematics, have been too variable over time, and most pupils have not made good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, have not, until recently, made sufficient progress in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always plan activities in lessons which are easy enough for less-able pupils, or which give enough challenge to more-able pupils.
- Practice in marking is inconsistent. Teachers do not all identify areas for improvement or ensure that pupils improve their work in the light of their suggestions.
- The targets set for pupils are too broad, and do not pinpoint the next steps that pupils need to make in their learning. Targets are not used well enough for them to help pupils make progress.
- Teachers do not always identify simple spelling and punctuation errors when they check pupils' work.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of leaders' regular checks and targeted training, the quality of teaching is improving and is beginning to bring about improved progress across the school.
- Relationships in the school are very harmonious. Behaviour is good, and pupils are consistently polite and respectful.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe.
- Recently introduced extra support for pupils falling behind and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is helping these pupils to catch up and make better progress.
- Provision in the Reception Year is good and, as a result, children make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to most classes.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with a local authority representative and the school's associate adviser.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, data regarding pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring information on school performance, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met parents informally at the start of the school day and at the invitation lunch for parents of pupils in Year 3. Inspectors took into account letters from and telephone conversations with parents, and the 40 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gay Tattersall

Additional Inspector

Mike Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is twice the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children with a parent in the armed forces) is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good, by July 2013, by making sure that:
 - teachers plan activities which give greater challenge to more-able pupils and which are not too difficult for less-able pupils, or disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to carry out without extra help
 - teachers give pupils targets which are precisely matched to the next level in their learning
 - simple spelling and punctuation errors are identified in teachers' marking
 - teachers' marking comments show pupils how to improve their work, where appropriate in relation to their targets, and teachers always make sure that pupils follow the advice they are given in teachers' marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils make the progress they should in Key Stage 1 and reach standards which are average.
- Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have fluctuated, but have been broadly average for the last two years, reflecting expected progress. Standards in mathematics have been lower than those in English and, with the exception of pupils' results in 2011, have been too low. In 2012, pupils made insufficient progress, particularly both higher and lower ability pupils, those who had special educational needs, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Due to improvements in the quality of teaching, progress has accelerated this year, and many pupils are beginning to make good progress. However, this improved progress is variable. It has not been sustained for a long enough period of time and is, as yet, too inconsistent.
- In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were the equivalent of around six months behind their classmates in English and almost a year behind in mathematics. The school did, nevertheless, reduce the gap in attainment in both subjects from 2011 to 2012 and the school's own progress information shows that the school is continuing to narrow this gap.
- New approaches to increase the progress of these groups and the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are having a noticeable effect on improving progress. These include targeted one-to-one teaching, focused in-class support from both teachers and teaching assistants and out-of-class activities such as '1st Class @ Number'.
- Children in the Reception Year have an impressive knowledge of phonics (the sounds made by letters). Pupils in Year 1 reached above expected levels in the national phonics screening in 2012. Lower ability pupils in Years 2 and 3 use their knowledge of phonics well to sound out words. They mostly enjoy reading and their reading journals show that they read a variety of books, which they are able to review well.
- Lower ability pupils in Year 6 have not had the same opportunities to learn letter sounds and this inhibits their ability to read.
- Children start in the Reception Year with skills below that typical for their age. They make good progress and join Year 1 with attainment which is above average.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching seen during the inspection was almost all good, but this quality of teaching was not reflected in pupils' work since September.
- Teachers' planning is not sufficiently refined to take account of the exact levels at which pupils are working. As a result, activities often lack sufficient challenge for more-able pupils. Less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are too often only able to succeed with help.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers show pupils how to succeed in their work and usually check in lessons on how well they are learning. In most lessons observed, teachers

matched work to pupils' abilities, but pupils' work over time did not reflect this, showing that, too often, pupils of different abilities were given tasks to carry out in mathematics which were the same or too similar.

- The teaching of literacy is also improving. Pupils are expected to use mature vocabulary, to construct sentences well, and to vary their writing techniques. Where activities are well matched to pupils' capabilities, they make good progress. However, there is not enough emphasis on applying literacy skills in subjects other than English.
- Teachers mark most work regularly. They offer pupils praise, but not enough marking includes advice to pupils on how to improve their work. In addition, not all teachers ensure that pupils make the suggested improvements. Because of this, the effectiveness of marking is too variable, and practice in marking is not doing enough to help pupils to move their learning on.
- The presentation of pupils' work is mostly acceptable, but too little attention has been paid by most teachers to the need to make sure that spelling and punctuation are accurate. In addition, pupils' handwriting is not always well formed because pupils are not joining their letters correctly.
- Pupils have learning targets for English and mathematics, but these are not sufficiently matched in all classes to pupils' different abilities. Targets are not regularly referred to by all teachers in lessons or in their marking.
- Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning because it is made interesting and links closely with the work pupils are doing in class.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons which interest pupils.
- As a result of recent training, teachers demonstrate good questioning skills and provide good opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning. These improvements to the quality of teaching enable pupils to develop their thinking skills, and gain a good understanding of what they are learning.
- Teaching in the Reception Year is good. It appropriately follows children's interests and develops their early communication and mathematical skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils cooperate extremely well in a range of situations and join in all activities with interest.
- Pupils are confident learners because of the school's focus on developing their confidence and belief in themselves.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe as a result of work in lessons and the reinforcement of safety and personal development in assemblies.
- Pupils show a good understanding of all forms of bullying. They say bullying is 'not a feature of this school' and that any incidents are dealt with 'very well by teachers'. Diversity is promoted well, and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

- The school provides a safe, attractive environment. All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements, and a good level of care is provided for pupils.
- The school works hard to promote attendance and, as a result, attendance rates have improved over the last few years. These are currently average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has ensured that staff are accountable for the learning of pupils in their classes. She has empowered senior leaders to take responsibility for the progress of pupils in their allocated key stages.
- The success of the headteacher's action is reflected in the words of one member of staff, who said: 'The team structure of the school means that individual teachers are well supported by their colleagues and helps us all to focus on the school priorities of improving teaching and learning.'
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. As a result, professional development and training are matched well to the needs of staff as well as to the needs of the school.
- Performance management is effective and is related to pupils' progress. Last year, the headteacher recognised that the rate of pupil progress set by the school was too low and would only promote expected, rather than good progress. Because of this, teachers' performance targets have been set at a higher level, setting expectations of good progress.
- Because rates of progress are inconsistent, and achievement requires improvement, the school is not yet giving pupils equality of opportunity. However, the school works hard to help pupils whose circumstances could cause significant barriers to their learning.
- The positive atmosphere in the school and the broad range of experiences planned for pupils contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good support has been given by the local authority mathematics consultants to develop teachers' questioning skills and their ability to develop pupils' reasoning and thinking skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors regularly check the work of the school, visiting lessons, joining in the range of activities provided for pupils and reviewing the school's pupil progress data. Governors have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and areas of weakness. They systematically challenge all senior leaders and, as a result, both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are improving. The governing body manages the performance of the headteacher and staff. Systems are in place for the approval of pay awards so that these are always tied to how well staff help pupils to achieve. Governors ensure that the school budget, including any additional funding, is spent appropriately to promote pupils' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110637
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	405293

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brenda Bean
Headteacher	Lesley Plant
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2011
Telephone number	01353 860235
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