

Littleport Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110637
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310371
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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 on roll	
School	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Brenda Bean
Headteacher	Miss Lesley Strommen
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Parson's Lane Littleport Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 1JT
Telephone number	01353 860235
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic groups and a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who claim free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average and in some year groups it is very high. The attainment of many, but not all, children on entry to the school is below that typical for their age and is often particularly low in communication, language and literacy. In some year groups a large proportion of pupils join or leave the school part way through this phase of their education. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is entering a new phase in its history. It has moved into a brand new building and has a new headteacher. Leaders correctly evaluate its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. Within this overall picture there are significant strengths as well as some shortcomings. The headteacher and her deputy provide exceptionally good leadership and have set the school on a clear course for further improvement. Their first priority was to improve behaviour and attitudes to learning and these are now good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and much is good. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and pupils make good progress so that by Year 2 most attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 are inconsistent and range from good to inadequate. Consequently, although achievement is satisfactory overall, progress is uneven across the key stage. Although teaching is good in Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science due to gaps in pupils' previous learning. However, ambitious targets have been set to raise standards. The school has rightly identified that monitoring of pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently rigorous.

The curriculum is satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught but the school has yet to design an exciting curriculum that stimulates the interests of all pupils. There are too few opportunities for active learning and first hand experiences. Pupils' personal development, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils work and play happily together. They relish responsibilities, such as acting as playground buddies, and wholeheartedly support charitable fund-raising which helps to heighten awareness of their responsibilities to the wider community. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves. They receive satisfactory pastoral guidance about healthy diets and the need for regular exercise. Pupils' growing self confidence and the basic skills that they learn provide them with a sound platform for entering the next phase of their education.

Accommodation and resources are excellent and make a major contribution to the calm, orderly learning environment that has been established. The headteacher's drive and determination to raise standards has encouraged staff to raise their sights and strive towards improving provision for all pupils. The lower school coordinator has made a strong contribution to improving standards in Key Stage 1. The role of the upper school coordinator is still developing and has yet to have a full impact on raising standards in Key Stage 2. The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and these pupils are well supported. The day-to-day management of the school ensures that everything runs smoothly. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. Finances are managed well and the school provides satisfactory value for money. There have been many improvements since the last inspection but some issues, such as developing the use of computers to support learning, are still not fully resolved. The new senior leadership team has given a renewed impetus to school improvement and the school is poised to make further advances. It has sound capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are close links with the playgroup and staff visit children in their homes before they start school which helps them to settle happily. The warm welcome they receive helps them to

become confident about class routines quickly. Accommodation is exceptional and includes a well equipped outside play area. The curriculum and teaching are good and meet the children's needs well. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning. Staff have high expectations of children's performance and pay particularly close attention to developing communication skills and extending vocabulary. Learning is fun and children make good progress in the Reception classes. The Foundation Stage leader is enthusiastic and knows exactly what is needed to make the learning even more exciting.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress and raise the standards pupils attain by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- Frequently monitor the work that pupils in Key Stage 2 produce in order to identify how it can be improved.
- Develop a more exciting curriculum that includes more first hand experiences and greater use of computers to support teaching and learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Children's achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Communication, language and literacy is not as well developed as the other areas of learning due to the low starting point of many. Pupils' achievement is mostly good in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 pupils do well to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is mostly satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but it is uneven across the key stage. Standards are below average by Year 6 because there are gaps in the amount that these pupils have learned in previous years. Pupils' work is not monitored rigorously in order to identify where improvements are needed. The unevenness in pupils' learning means that in some classes there is much catching up left to do. Pupils' writing in Key Stage 2 is sometimes marred by poor spelling and presentation because teachers do not always pay enough attention to detail when marking work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Relationships amongst pupils and staff are friendly and this supports their learning well. Everybody says that behaviour has improved dramatically this term and that the new buildings have helped to create an aura of purpose and productivity. Staff give plenty of praise and encouragement which helps pupils to develop good levels of self-esteem. Some are not self-assured but there is a growing feeling of confidence and pupils are beginning to believe in their abilities as learners. Pupils are eager to please and keen to learn. Attendance is satisfactory. The school does as much as it can to encourage attendance but some parents continue to take pupils out of school for family holidays. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles through their increasing understanding of balanced diets and the importance of exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well. Sometimes, teaching methods and activities are not varied or stimulating enough to meet the full range of different interests and needs. Opportunities are missed to inject creativity and excitement into pupils' learning but when it happens pupils respond with great enthusiasm. For example, when a bicycle was brought into the classroom there was a real buzz and pupils saw a purpose for their writing. There is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure improvement in standards. Some pupils become restless if tasks are undemanding or teachers talk for too long. Because relationships are good, there is always a pleasant atmosphere in classrooms. Good systems to keep track of pupils' achievement have been introduced and teachers have clear targets for the amount of progress pupils are expected to make in each class. Classrooms are exceptionally well equipped and all have interactive white boards which are used well by most teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy but science has not been given enough attention. Pupils' investigational skills in mathematics and science are underdeveloped as are opportunities to use computers. The school has identified the need to make learning more enjoyable through linking subjects and giving more opportunities for pupils to be creative. Involvement in the Ely Schools' Partnership local history project boosted pupils' interest. Visitors and visiting places of interest add another interesting dimension to pupils' learning and residential trips for older pupils extend personal development well. The school provides a satisfactory range of after school activities that enrich pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff are very caring and pupils' safety is always a top priority. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and consistently implemented by all staff. Pupils receive sound guidance about safety and how to lead healthy lifestyles. Academic guidance has shortcomings because pupils do not always know precisely what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive the help that they need and so make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The move to superb new accommodation has boosted morale and provides a well designed learning environment. The headteacher and her deputy are working together with staff towards developing a curriculum that is equally impressive. Whilst the headteacher and her deputy provide exceptionally good leadership, the roles of subject leaders, some of whom have recently accepted specific responsibilities, are still developing. Good plans have been made to reach

this goal but there is much hard work ahead before it can be achieved. The leadership of the school has successfully identified the key priorities for improvement and how to manage this stage by stage. The school is maintaining a determined drive to raise standards. A good system for measuring pupils' progress has been introduced. Challenging targets for the amount of progress expected each term are set, although these are not yet communicated clearly enough to pupils. Data is used well to determine whether enough progress is made in each class each term. Any underachievement is investigated and extra support provided where necessary. The governing body is well informed but several governors are new and the role of the governing body in monitoring the school's performance is currently underdeveloped.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Littleport Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire CB6 1JT

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. The new building is wonderful and the grounds are great. They have made a huge difference to the learning environment and add to the buzz of excitement and optimism that we sensed throughout the school. There have been so many improvements recently and several people agreed that this term is like 'the beginning of a new dawn'.

We think that there are many good things about the school. You said that one of the best things about the school was how kind the teachers are and we agree. They certainly work hard and, with the support of the teaching assistants, help you to learn. You also said that you particularly enjoy making friends. The school is certainly a friendly place and you all work and play happily together. Everybody agrees that behaviour has improved and you told us that you feel very comfortable and secure in school. You know how to look after yourselves and stay safe. You know that you need to take regular exercise to keep fit and you understand what food makes a balanced diet. You are willing workers and want to do your very best.

There are several things that we have asked the teachers to do to make things even better. The standards you reach by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science could be higher and there's nothing to stop you doing much better so we are asking the teachers to help you to aim even higher. We also think that the work that pupils complete in Key Stage 2 should be checked more regularly to see exactly what you need to do to improve it. Lastly we have asked staff to think hard about how they can make lessons even more exciting. It would be great if you could also offer suggestions about how to make your learning even better.

We think that there are exciting times ahead and we wish you every success in the future.

John Messer

Lead inspector