

# Little Paxton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110733
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310402
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheelagh Barnes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	224
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Penny Conway
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Barbara English
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Gordon Road Little Paxton St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6NG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 375600
<b>Fax number</b>	01480 375601

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Little Paxton is an average sized school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Fewer pupils than nationally come from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than nationally, but the numbers of those with statements of special educational need is average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in one Reception class. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes to staff including to those with management responsibilities. During the inspection, the school was undergoing extension to the building and refurbishment. This includes development of new administration areas and a recently completed covered extension to the EYFS outdoor area. The school has been awarded with the Activemark, Eco Schools, Artsmark, Gold Clean Air Award, Investors in People and Healthy School awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Little Paxton Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. In questionnaires, the large majority of parents indicate their support for what is provided. There are a number of good features. The curriculum is good. It is rich and varied and supplemented well with a range of extra activities, including clubs and trips. Art is a strong feature and contributes well to developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. There is good provision for them to take part in sports and pupils have a good awareness of how to live a healthy life and stay safe.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, rather than good, because the school has been a little slow in achieving some of the required improvements since the last inspection. For example, the work of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement was identified as requiring improvement in 2005. While work on this has begun, it still requires further attention. Standards fell in all three core subjects in 2005. The headteacher and deputy head have evaluated the school's performance with accuracy and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They have then worked with all staff to reverse the dip in standards in English and science. Work is now underway to raise standards in mathematics and to increase the rigour and frequency with which pupils' progress is tracked. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, because systems to monitor and compare the progress pupils make are not sufficiently refined and are difficult to use. Hence, the school cannot yet identify quickly enough the pupils who are at the risk of underachieving. Academic guidance is developing and targets are being set to indicate what pupils must do individually to improve their own standards.

The good start in Reception is not consistently maintained. The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is variable and at times in the past has been inadequate. Currently, while teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there is still a great variation, particularly in mathematics. In some classes, too often the same tasks are set for all pupils, irrespective of their prior ability and attainment. Pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems are weak. Leaders and managers are aware there is a need to raise otherwise satisfactory teaching and learning to a consistently good quality.

Currently pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make satisfactory gains in their learning, so that standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Progress in Year 3 to Year 6 is variable, although at times in the recent past it has not been good enough. This has now been resolved in English and science, where satisfactory progress now results in pupils attaining above average standards at the end of Year 6. However, in mathematics, the school has only started to address this more recently. So that while progress is now currently at least satisfactory, and in some classes good, the standards attained in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are only average.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the EYFS. The provision is good and there is good quality care due to effective leadership by the coordinator. As a result, children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. All EYFS staff give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills. Children find the activities staff provide for them to choose from interesting and so maintain concentration on the tasks they select for quite long

periods. Activities are based on practical activities, with lots of opportunities for imaginative play, both indoors and outside. Children play well, both on their own and also with others. They work alongside each other happily and co-operate with each other in tasks with a real sense of purpose. For example, they pretend to be builders, in the covered outdoor area, 'ordering' the quantity of bricks they would need for imaginary tasks. The coordinator has identified the need to further extend children's opportunities for energetic play and learning about the world around them, through further development of the outdoor area. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of children. Awareness of safety is emphasised when children join in checking that there are no safety issues each day with the outdoor equipment. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. From their starting points, most children reach and many exceed the standards expected by the time that they move to Year 1. Hence, overall standards are above average by the end of EYFS.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in mathematics, especially pupils' ability to solve problems.
- Improve systems to track pupils' progress so that leaders and managers can quickly spot variations in the achievements of groups and individuals and take appropriate action.
- Ensure the quality of teaching and learning is more consistently of a high standard.

A small proportion of the 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**

Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make steady satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that standards are above average at the end of Year 2. Available data clearly shows that historically there has been a variation in the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6. The school has put measures in place to resolve issues in science and in English and pupils now make overall satisfactory progress in these subjects and attain standards which are above those expected by the end of Year 6. In mathematics, however, the issue is only beginning to be tackled. As a result, standards in mathematics are broadly average by the end of Year 6, despite pupils in this year group making good progress currently. This is because they have underachieved in the past and their good progress this year is helping them to catch up. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school works hard to develop this aspect of pupils' learning. Behaviour in class and on the playground is good, with pupils responding to firm boundaries, sensitive management by adults and many incentives to behave well and work hard. Pupils praise the work of the playground buddies and play leaders who help to solve problems. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils display a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and lead healthy lives. They are confident that their views are listened to and school council members are self-assured and articulate. They are able to point to a number of ways the school has changed through their input, including rubbish bins with lids to deter wasps and push taps to save water. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community and join in with local initiatives. They are genuinely interested in the

range of cultures and beliefs that exist in our country and the wider world, although their views of developing countries tend to be stereotypical at times. Overall progress in core subjects is satisfactory and this combined with very good attitudes to work and an ability to work effectively with their class mates in groups and teams means that they are well-prepared for the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Consistent good features in teaching include the good relationships which teachers have with pupils and the good working relationships which they nurture between pupils. Marking is regular, but variable in the helpfulness of information it provides. Teachers are developing skills in using interactive white boards to explain tasks to pupils and this helps to make lessons interesting and appealing. However, in too many cases, lessons, particularly in mathematics, are planned with insufficient regard to the differing levels of ability within the class. As a result, the levels of challenge and the pace of pupils' learning is only satisfactory at these times. Teaching assistants provide a good level of extra support for pupils. They are particularly good at ensuring that pupils who need extra support are fully integrated with their peers and so enabled to take a full part in all activities.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The vast majority of pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school. They say one of the best things about school is that lessons are interesting. They particularly enjoy art, which is a strength, and also physical education, another strength which is enhanced with specialist teachers made available through the local sports partnership. The curriculum is further enriched by a good range of clubs and activities and residential trips in Year 4 and Year 6. Work in class has enabled pupils to have a good knowledge about how to keep themselves safe and lead healthy lifestyles. The school has been innovative and recently employed another specialist to develop choral singing across the age ranges. The school also takes advantage of other local initiatives such as the 'Inter Faith Project', which has supported work in developing community cohesion, and has also joined in with a consultation by the parish council to design a new playground. The core curriculum is well-planned and relevant links are being drawn between subjects particularly in Key Stage 1. However, the degree to which work is matched to differing ability groups is inconsistent between year groups across the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral support is good and contributes to the good personal development and well being of pupils. 'Golden Time' ensures that all pupils are rewarded for behaving well and working hard on a regular basis. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop the skills of citizenship. Support for pupils who find learning difficult enables them to take a full part in school life and achieve in line with their peers. Systems for safeguarding pupils are robust and a health and safety committee including staff and governors actively review the school site on a regular basis. Academic guidance is currently satisfactory. A number of new

initiatives have been introduced to improve academic guidance including a new system to track progress and a new marking policy. These are at an early stage of development and are not yet being applied consistently across year groups. Pupils have targets for mathematics and literacy but only a minority are able to say what they are. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given appropriate support. Pastoral support is good and contributes to the good personal development and well being of pupils. 'Golden Time' ensures that all pupils are rewarded for behaving well and working hard on a regular basis. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and develop the skills of citizenship. Support for pupils who find learning difficult enables them to take a full part in school life and achieve in line with their peers. Systems for safeguarding pupils are robust and a health and safety committee including staff and governors actively review the school site on a regular basis. Academic guidance is currently satisfactory. A number of new initiatives have been introduced to improve academic guidance including a new system to track progress and a new marking policy. These are at an early stage of development and are not yet being applied consistently across year groups. Pupils have targets for mathematics and literacy but only a minority are able to say what they are. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given appropriate support.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection and all data indicates a satisfactory capacity to improve and sound value for money. The headteacher and deputy have a good level of awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The dip in standards in English and science have been tackled effectively and now a sound plan has been developed to raise standards in mathematics. Key to this is establishing an efficient and rigorous system whereby class teachers and those with management responsibility can quickly evaluate the progress of individuals and groups. The current system is labour intensive and does not provide information swiftly enough. A new system is at early stages of implementation. Consolidation of those aspects of the school that remained strong, such as the school's involvement with, and impact on, the local and wider community is good. Governors are supportive and a visible presence. They are aware that they need to undertake further training to in order to carry out their role of critical friend more effectively.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Paxton Primary School, St Neots, PE19 6NG

Thank you for being polite and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking with you, coming into your lessons and hearing about the things that you do. This letter is to let you what we think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. There are many good things about your school. Some of them are:

- You have a good range of exciting and interesting things to do in lessons and after school.
- Children in Reception make a good start to their learning.
- You learn a lot about staying safe and keeping healthy.
- You all take good care of each other and work and play together well.
- You enjoy learning and come to school regularly.
- You get on well with your teachers and with each other and your behaviour is good.
- Mrs English and Mrs Brown know your school well and have sound plans to make it even better.

There are some things that could help to improve your school. They are:

- for you all to make even better progress in mathematics
- for the teachers who are in charge of subjects to have easier systems to check that you are all doing as well as you could
- for more of your teaching to be like the best lessons we saw.

We hope you all carry on doing your very best and enjoying your learning.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector