

Little Thetford CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110803
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	363771
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Attrill
Headteacher	Robert Litten
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
School address	Little Thetford CofE VC Primary School Green Hill Ely CB6 3HD
Telephone number	01353 649260
Fax number	01353 648365
Email address	office@littletthetford.cambs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	9–10 June 2011
Inspection number	363771

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom attended for half a day. Inspectors observed 10 lessons, taught by four teachers, and also made brief visits to four other lessons. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring, assessment and attendance records, improvement plans and safeguarding documents. In addition, 61 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were considered, together with those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Most pupils at this much smaller than average primary school are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is learning to speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has met the government's floor targets for academic performance in each of the last three years. Among its national awards, the school has International School and National Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- This is a good school in which pupils achieve well, make good progress and reach above average levels of attainment.
- Good teaching and leadership have helped to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, particularly in English. Standards are rising in mathematics too, although not as quickly as in English. The school has rightly identified the need to extend pupils' use of their mathematical skills in a wide range of situations, for example to solve problems and carry out investigations.
- Pupils enjoy school very much and feel that they learn a lot in lessons. Their outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes contribute considerably to the school's supportive and highly inclusive ethos. The very large majority of pupils report that they feel safe in school.
- Staff make good use of the information from assessing pupils' progress to match work to their needs, to identify those pupils who could make faster progress and to provide extra help for those who require it.
- Teachers usually keep a careful check on pupils' learning in lessons and tackle misunderstandings sensitively. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to review and extend pupils' understanding through probing and challenging questions.
- The marking of pupils' work is good. Particularly in English, pupils are given clear verbal and written feedback that praises and encourages their efforts and enhances their understanding of their next steps. Marking is less detailed in mathematics.
- Leaders monitor the school's work robustly, hold staff to account for pupils' performance and are strongly focused on improving provision. Parents are very supportive of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- Accelerate pupils' progress further, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve increasingly complex problems and investigations
 - using questioning more consistently to assess and challenge pupils' understanding
 - improving marking in mathematics to at least the level of that in English by providing more evaluative comments to motivate and challenge pupils.

Main report

A combination of good leadership and teaching, together with pupils' positive attitudes and their excellent behaviour, ensures that pupils make good progress in their all-round development. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school's improvement and this is shared by staff and the governing body. The drive for academic improvement is not at the expense of pupils' personal development, however, and the school welcomes pupils of all backgrounds and abilities into its highly inclusive and cohesive community. Any potential discrimination is tackled robustly. A high priority is placed on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's success in doing so is reflected in the very strong support given by parents and carers. All those who communicated with inspectors indicate that their children are happy and safe in school. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their high rate of attendance. Pupils particularly appreciate the good range of opportunities provided outside of lessons.

When pupils first start school, their skills and aptitudes are broadly typical for their age. However, the make-up of each cohort varies considerably from year to year. Whatever their starting points, children in Reception make good progress in all areas of learning. Almost all reach, and some exceed, the goals expected of them by the end of the year. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 to 6 continue to make good progress as they move through the school. One of this small school's strengths is that staff know each individual pupil well, check on their well-being and meet their learning needs. Consequently, some of those pupils identified with special educational needs, or who are disabled, make very rapid progress. This is because staff are adept at identifying pupils' needs at an early stage of their time in school, and every step is taken to provide timely and tailored support to meet their needs. Capable teaching assistants make a strong contribution to this provision and good use is made of the expertise of a range of outside services. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their classmates.

By the time pupils reach Year 6, levels of attainment are above average. Pupils' attainment is rising and their progress is accelerating, most noticeably in English, which has been the focus of the school's drive to raise standards. Reading and writing are well taught across the school. A systematic approach to teaching writing means that over half of the pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach Level 5, the level higher than that expected for their age. Pupils develop a love of books, so

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

that, by the age of six, their attainment in reading is broadly average and, by Year 6, it is above average.

Teachers ensure that there is a clear focus on what pupils are expected to learn and share these objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson. In most lessons, teachers provide clear criteria for pupils of different abilities to judge their success. Occasionally, the objective for the lesson focuses too much on what pupils will do, rather than what they will learn. In these instances, it is difficult for teachers and pupils to judge how well they have done. Although parents are unanimous that behaviour is good, a few indicated that lessons are sometimes disrupted by bad behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy their lessons, learn a lot and do not feel that they are interrupted, and inspectors found that lessons invariably run smoothly because pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well and are ready and willing to learn. Pupils behave impeccably out of lessons, too, and this adds to their enjoyment of break-times and their sense of being safe. Pupils report that instances of bullying are very rare and, when they do occur, they are dealt with effectively by staff.

Comprehensive systems are used to assess and track pupils' progress. Very detailed records enable leaders and teachers to keep a close check on how individuals and groups of pupils are doing. Assessment records show that any differences in performance between boys and girls are quickly closed. Similarly, assessment information is used well to provide an appropriate challenge for more-able pupils, an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers usually keep a close check on pupils' understanding during lessons. In a successful mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher's careful questioning, and well-thought-out strategies for pupils to display their answers during discussions, enabled the teacher to identify those who needed extra help. As a result, all pupils made good progress in learning about equivalent fractions. In Reception, the teacher quickly recognised that a few children had misunderstood some of their learning from the previous lesson. The teacher successfully modified the introductory activity, so that the misunderstanding was tackled swiftly and all children made good progress. Occasionally, teachers' questioning is not sharp enough, so that opportunities are missed to check on, or challenge, pupils' understanding. Teachers mark pupils' work well, although the marking in mathematics is not as helpful as that in English.

The small number of staff share the responsibility for leading a wide range of areas and there is a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to sustaining improvement. Systems to evaluate the school's effectiveness are robust and wide ranging. The well-organised governing body has good systems for checking on the school's work and for holding leaders to account. Consequently, leaders have an accurate understanding of what needs to improve. They have made good use of the results of comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning to improve pupils' reading and writing, and to establish attainment above that expected in subjects such as art, information and communication technology and history. Staff are now turning their attention to attainment in mathematics which, although improving, is at a slower rate than that seen in English. Teaching in mathematics is good and pupils'

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

skills have improved, but leaders have rightly identified that there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills to solve increasingly complex problems and carry out investigations. Leaders' successful track record shows the school is well placed to secure the necessary improvement. Parents and carers share this view, with the overwhelming majority feeling that the school is well led and managed. As one parent put it, 'Overall, a fantastic school, a team of dedicated staff to help and support both children and parents'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Thetford CofE VC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	47	77	14	23	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	51	84	10	16	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	37	61	22	36	2	3	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	36	59	25	41	0	0	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	45	74	16	26	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	44	72	17	28	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	42	69	19	31	0	0	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	24	39	28	46	6	10	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	30	49	20	33	3	5	1	2
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	41	67	19	31	0	0	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	40	66	18	30	1	2	1	2
Q12 The school is well led and managed	43	70	16	26	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Thetford CofE VC Primary School, Ely, CB6 3HD

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with us to give us your views. You were very helpful. This is what we found.

- You go to a good school. Your teachers provide you with interesting and challenging lessons that help you to make good progress and reach above average standards.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. This means that you are always ready to learn and you get on really well with each other. Very well done, and please keep it up.
- You and your parents and carers told us that you enjoy school very much and feel safe. Your attendance rate is high. Again, well done!
- Your headteacher, staff and the governing body work well together as a team. They have introduced lots of new ideas to help the school to improve. They have worked particularly well to improve your reading and writing.

Even though your school is good, your headteacher and the other adults want it to be even better. There are three ways in which it can improve.

- We have asked your teachers to give you more chance to use your mathematical skills to solve problems and carry out investigations.
- We would like your teachers to make sure they keep a regular check on your understanding in all lessons.
- We want them to give you as much information when they mark your mathematics work as they do in English.

All of you can help by continuing to try your best at everything you do and behaving so well.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**