

Great Paxton CofE Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Great Paxton, St Neots, PE19 6YJ

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and their attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. They make good progress across the school.
- Teaching engages pupils well and makes learning exciting. New skills are introduced systematically and subjects are brought alive by the imaginative use of resources.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe. They have good manners and enthusiastically take responsibility.
- The school successfully promotes creativity and sport, and provides pupils with many memorable experiences. Consequently, pupils develop a love of learning as well as good confidence and self-esteem.
- The school is improving quickly again after a period when pockets of underachievement had begun to emerge. The new headteacher sets high expectations and does not willingly accept second best. His guidance and challenge are ensuring that both teaching and pupils' progress are improving at a rapid pace.
- The governing body supports the school well and provides good levels of challenge to other leaders.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the school and recent improvements. They especially like the way that the school focuses equally on both social and academic development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in reading. Teachers do not make consistently good use of marking and targets that identify next steps to show pupils how to improve their writing.
- There are a few occasions when the more able are not challenged well enough in mathematics lessons.
- Not all pupils take enough care with the presentation of their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons. Most of these were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also talked to some parents and carers individually.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector analysed eight questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is well below the national average. In this school, there are no pupils in the last two categories in the current year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An after-schools club is managed by the governing body.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in writing so that it is as consistently good as it is in reading by making better use of marking and the setting of targets to give pupils clear guidance about what they need to do better.
- Ensure that there is always enough challenge for more-able pupils in mathematics lessons.
- Ensure that pupils understand the importance of always presenting their work neatly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well across the school. When they start school, a minority are working at the expected levels for their age. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 in most years, although there are some variations in attainment owing to the variations in size of cohort, which in some years are comparatively small. Pupils make good progress, improving skills quickly as they get older, whatever their starting point.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children read confidently and produce lengthy pieces of writing, for example, when retelling the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Children's personal and social development is supported well. They become independent and confident and they learn the value of working together sensibly.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' literacy and numeracy improve quickly. Pupils use these skills effectively to support their learning in other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' overall attainment is generally above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. In the Year 1 phonics (the sounds linked to letters) screening, nearly all pupils met the expected standard in the current year. By the end of Year 6, pupils write and read confidently and they show good mathematical understanding when solving problems or carrying out calculations.
- The school ensures that all pupils do equally well, although just occasionally in numeracy lessons, the most able are not expected to do work that is hard enough. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given high quality support both in and out of lessons and make the same good progress as others.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. Leaders use the pupil premium to employ additional staff to support eligible pupils in small groups or individually. This helps to close the gap, with eligible pupils making the same good progress as others from their different starting points.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are taught well in all classes. Teachers are very enthusiastic and they have extremely positive relationships with their pupils. They make good use of resources including modern technology such as netbooks to ensure that pupils are absorbed in their learning in most lessons.
- There is a good pace to learning and work usually provides the right level of challenge for all. Although some classes are mixed-age, teachers organise lessons to take good account of differing needs, although just occasionally in numeracy lessons, the most able pupils are not fully stretched because they do the same work as others at the start of lessons.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between activities that pupils choose for themselves and those where the adults lead learning in small groups. Writing is taught especially well. Children are able to write for a range of purposes and are supported well at these times, with key skills taught systematically.
- In Year 6, where teaching is sometimes outstanding, pupils are expected to think for themselves and are consistently challenged well. For example, work in a numeracy lesson promoted high quality discussion amongst pupils as they debated how to solve number problems that explored their understanding of dimensions.

- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to talk about their learning. However, the quality and use of marking and the setting of targets are not consistently strong. When feeding back on writing in particular, teachers do not always make clear enough to pupils how to improve their work. Pupils say that they would like more information on their 'next steps' because 'if we know how to improve, we can do even better.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents are very pleased with how well the school manages pupils' behaviour and enables them to develop a love of learning. Pupils' positive attitudes towards their work make a strong contribution to their good learning in lessons. Their great enjoyment of school is reflected in high rates of attendance. Pupils do not want to miss school because, as they say, 'Every day is fun.'
- Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to learn. They work hard nearly all of the time, although just occasionally they lose concentration when expected to sit on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons. Despite some recent improvements, not all pupils take enough care to present their work neatly.
- Behaviour in and around school is never less than good and is sometimes outstanding. Pupils are polite and courteous and play together very sensibly. Pupils understand why good behaviour is important. They follow school rules very carefully, for example, when working without support in the gardening club.
- Pupils feel very safe. They say that there is only very occasional 'falling-out' but if it does happen adults 'sort it out quickly'. Pupils have a secure understanding of e-safety and talk confidently about how to avoid dangers in later life.
- The school fosters good relationships between pupils and tackles discrimination rigorously. Good use is made of the pupil premium to ensure that eligible pupils can participate fully in activities such as residential visits. This contributes well to their social development.
- Pupils keenly take responsibility. Pupils in Year 6 like working with younger pupils, for example, when they help them with their writing. Pupils feel that teachers listen to their views and are pleased with the way that school councillors are, in their words, 'their eye on the school.' In areas such as improving playground resources, the benefits of their efforts are appreciated by other pupils.
- The after-school club is greatly enjoyed by pupils and gives them a happy and purposeful end to the school day. Pupils are well cared for and behave well. They play together happily on different activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has brought a renewed drive and energy to school improvement and is building successfully on its strengths. There is no complacency. Although containing too many targets for such a small school, development planning is based on thorough systems for checking provision, including the very sharp use of data to identify pupils who had fallen behind in the past. The headteacher has ensured that these pupils have been given the support they needed to help them catch up.
- The headteacher is supporting teachers well to help them to improve so that more teaching is

outstanding. Regular visits to lessons help him to set challenging targets which are then followed up diligently. There is a good match between the needs of individual teachers, the pupils and the school when setting the next steps for teachers to improve.

- Middle leaders who are in charge of subjects are becoming increasingly involved in checking provision in their subjects now that they have time out of class to do this. They are beginning to visit lessons and to check their work and this is helping them to play a bigger role than in the past in identifying priorities.
- The rich and varied curriculum (topics and the subjects taught) greatly enriches pupils' learning and very successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are committed to supporting charities. For example, on their recent residential trip pupils decided to donate their ice-cream money to sponsor a lioness. Pupils are encouraged to think about moral issues through the 'Thunk' board, where they write their responses to complex questions.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. Recent help in establishing local partnerships is already proving beneficial in enabling staff from different schools to share ideas about curriculum development.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. Their views are summed up by one who wrote, 'Lessons are stimulating and fun' and 'The new headteacher has made a great difference.'

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have improved their role in supporting the school since the previous inspection. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and are doing more to check things for themselves by visiting the school regularly to talk to staff, talk to pupils and analyse data on pupils' progress. Recent training on how to use this data to check school performance has sharpened practice. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison with others. Financial planning is very thorough. The pupil premium is used well to support eligible pupils. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how it is improved, and ensure that only good teaching is rewarded financially. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very thorough and are checked regularly by governors.

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	110815
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	413066

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Guy Fairbairn
Headteacher	Lee Frost
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2010
Telephone number	01480 472132
Fax number	01480 471735
Email address	office@greatpaxton.cambs.sch.uk

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