

# Great Paxton CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110815
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337579
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Lewis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Val Manning
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Mount Pleasant Great Paxton St Neots
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<b>Email address</b>	head@greatpaxton.cambs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six teachers were observed teaching nine lessons and meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents, governors and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's assessment and tracking data, the school development plan and governing body minutes. They analysed 36 parental questionnaires received during the inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of the school's assessment and tracking systems.

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. Most pupils live in the village. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils coming from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. The school has recently opened before and after school clubs, which are managed by the governing body. The school has been awarded the International School award and has gained Healthy School status.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Great Paxton is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. The school has improved since the last inspection and continues to do so under the enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher who provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. Her effective leadership has ensured that teaching and learning have improved and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. However, subject leaders are still at an early stage of developing a clear overview of the quality of teaching in their subjects across the school. Parents are very supportive of the school. They like the positive family atmosphere and Christian ethos. One parent wrote, 'We are thrilled with the school and our children's development.' Another commented, 'I would like to congratulate the school on their great teaching staff.'

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress. Planning, provision and resourcing for the outdoor curriculum is currently limited and, as a result, children do not have enough regular opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their time in school. Standards are above national averages in Year 6 and have been for a number of years. Teachers provide interesting activities and manage their classes well. This ensures pupils remain attentive and focused on their learning and teaching is good as a result. Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically, as is reflected in their excellent levels of attendance. Pupils have well-developed personal skills. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. A strong moral code is implicit within the school's ethos. This is reflected in pupils' outstanding behaviour and this, in turn, has a very positive effect on the good progress pupils make in lessons. They work hard and conscientiously, without the need for constant adult intervention, both independently and co-operatively.

The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils particularly enjoy the good range of after-school activities and clubs, including sports activities. Great Paxton has good links with other schools and organisations, which it uses successfully to promote a broader range of curriculum and sporting opportunities for the pupils. Pastoral care and safeguarding of pupils are strengths of the school. Academic guidance is good; pupils are tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support is provided. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next, and it has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring an appropriate balance between the indoor and outdoor curriculum, and between
  - adult-led activities and those the children choose for themselves.
- Ensure subject leaders develop a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects by providing opportunities for them to observe the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility across the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

From average levels of attainment on entry, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Results in national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 show that pupils, across the range of abilities, are consistently achieving well. The effective use of assessment data by senior managers, together with changes to the curriculum and resources, has enabled the school to effectively close the gap between the achievement of boys and girls in writing. Lesson observations confirm pupils' excellent behaviour and this ensures good relationships and a high level of attention and motivation in most lessons. As a result, the quality of pupils' learning and progress across the school is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and sometimes excellent progress because of the effective support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Late entrants to the school settle in really quickly and make good progress due to the school's good systems to ensure new pupils rapidly settle into their new school.

Pupils understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the school. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. They work well together and individually without the need for constant reminders. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and this is reflected in their excellent attendance levels. One pupil wrote, 'You will really enjoy being at Great Paxton school - in every class.' Pupils are interested in the school's health promotion activities and understand the main threats to their health and how they can be avoided. They are very proud of their school community. Pupils eagerly seize the many opportunities to show leadership skills and to contribute to the local community. They respect each others' needs and interests and are curious about the world around them, embracing new experiences enthusiastically. Pupils are well-equipped for the future with their well-developed academic and social skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and upholds the school's values well.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess learning carefully and provide work at the right level to match pupils' different learning needs. Pupils who need extra help are supported well and those who find learning easy are given more challenging tasks. This helps all pupils to learn successfully. Good classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together and there are no marked differences in the responses of boys or girls. Carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and effectively develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Support by teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Good use is made of resources, including new technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Staff work together well to ensure that pupils know how to improve. Clear targets are set to help them reach the higher standards of work. Pupils are actively engaged in reflecting on the progress they have made in lessons and considering what it is they still need to do. The marking of pupils' work is up-to-date and comprehensive, although it does not always provide pupils with pointers for improvement to help them to take the next step in their learning.

The school provides a good curriculum which successfully meets pupils' differing needs and interests. Carefully adapted activities ensure all groups of pupils experience success and staff successfully link subjects to make learning more meaningful. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors and a wealth of extra-curricular activities which are much enjoyed by pupils. Collaboration with other schools further enriches the curriculum. Links with extended services support the development of the wider curriculum very well. The quality of care, guidance and support for all pupils is

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exceptional. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. The support for those who need additional pastoral care, or help with their work, is outstanding and the care for those pupils with medical and/or physical disabilities is a strength of the school. This gives them confidence to learn and enables them to make the same good progress as others.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate strong drive and ambition, firmly focused on securing improvement. Good use is made of a range of rigorous monitoring activities and, since the last inspection, the headteacher has secured clear improvements. Performance management targets, drawn from the outcomes of regular monitoring, have resulted in consistently good teaching. Assessment systems have been further refined and are easy for teachers to access and interpret. Consequently, the school is able to identify potential underachievement more rapidly and target ways of bringing about improvement quickly. Staff are strongly motivated and have a clear sense of direction, including a strong commitment to improving provision even further. However, subject coordinators have not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching across the school and, as a result, do not have a full view of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Teamwork is promoted strongly and is reflected in the school's well-focused improvement plan. The governors have a good overview of the school's work and future priorities, and fulfil their roles effectively. The school has a positive relationship with parents, regularly asking for their views and acting on the responses. Good links with local schools and community organisations provide experiences the school cannot offer and these contribute well to improvements in pupils' achievement, well-being and development. This fully inclusive school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work. Where there are minor variations in achievement, for example, between boys and girls in writing, the school acts promptly to adjust the curriculum to narrow the gap. The school has good safeguarding procedures which meet recommended good practice across all areas of its work and are in line with government requirements. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion through its very strong links with the local community, its established and developing links with a number of schools working in different circumstances around the United Kingdom, and with schools in India, Peru and

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Kenya through email and video links.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for the youngest children is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although, due to the small cohorts, this can vary from year to year. Children clearly enjoy school, have settled into the routines well and play happily together and individually. They undertake a variety of whole class and group activities and, in most cases, co-operate well when working with others. They delight in learning and seeing new things. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective. Consequently, children are safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, are very well-supported and are integrated well into all activities. Staff have positive relationships with children and activities, such as music and movement sessions, are fun. Skilful questioning and good modeling by adults encourage good listening skills and reflective responses. Adults encourage children to respond individually to questions and to talk to each other, helping them to make good progress in their speaking and communication skills. However, although the classroom has a small, secure outdoor area that is directly accessible from the classroom, there is insufficient equipment or adult support to allow children to explore things with purpose and challenge. There is an imbalance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to freely choose activities for themselves and this hampers the development of their independent learning skills. The two part-time Early Years Foundation Stage teachers have made a



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good start in developing systems and routines. Good relationships have been developed with parents and carers through daily contact. They have a sound knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults manage children and their behaviour appropriately. Progress has been made in developing purposeful systems for the long-term assessment and tracking of children's progress and staff monitor and record children's progress on a day to day basis effectively.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents' response to the questionnaire was extremely positive. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children enjoy coming to school, are safe at school and are happy with their children's experiences in the school. The vast majority agree with all the other statements. A very small minority feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and that the school is not managed and led effectively. The inspection team investigated these issues and found that the school provides a good level of information to parents and that the good leadership and management of the school is the driving force behind its continuing improvement.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Paxton CofE 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 117 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	44	20	56	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	44	20	56	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	22	26	72	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	25	20	56	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	42	17	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	28	19	53	5	14	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	25	24	67	2	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	22	24	67	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	22	22	61	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	25	23	64	0	0	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	22	19	53	3	8	3	8
The school is led and managed effectively	7	19	21	58	3	8	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	31	24	67	1	3	0	0

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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



28 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Paxton CofE Primary School, St Neots, PE19 6YJ

Thank you so much for helping us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and at play. You made us feel very welcome and made our short visit very enjoyable. Together with your parents, you think it is a good school. We agree with you.

You clearly enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. You make good progress and achieve above average standards. Your behaviour is excellent; you have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel safe and secure in school. Your attendance is excellent and you told us that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve the school.

Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. All the adults in school take excellent care of you. Your school is well led and managed and is continually improving but to help you to make even better progress we have asked the school to do two things. These are:

- make better use of the outdoor area to provide more activities for the youngest children
- find time for teachers who have responsibility for subjects to find out as much as they can about the way their subject is taught.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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