

Inspection of Little Paxton Primary School

Gordon Road, Little Paxton, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 6NG

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has grown in size over recent years to serve the expanding village. Pupils welcome newcomers because they are tolerant and respectful of people's differences. Links with other countries, visits and visitors help to grow pupils' understanding of how people's lives can differ from their own.

Pupils enjoy school and are happy to 'have a go' at answering questions and to explain their thinking, secure in the knowledge that staff and other pupils will value their ideas. Most pupils behave well, and appreciate the rewards they receive for doing the right things. When bullying happens, the staff take this seriously and do all they can to resolve matters. Pupils feel safe, and they enjoy school and attend regularly.

Pupils enjoy attending the clubs on offer. They particularly appreciate the sports clubs and would like more. Older pupils can see that after-school mathematics and English lessons help them with their learning.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. Pupils say that their teachers are kind and help them to do their best. However, too few pupils make good progress through the curriculum, particularly from Year 2 to Year 6.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

It has been eight years since the school was judged to be outstanding. Leaders and governors recognise that there is much to do to ensure that pupils receive a high quality of education now. The headteacher has harnessed the support and enthusiasm of the dedicated staff team to begin to review the curriculum. Her vision is for a rich diet of learning in every year group that ensures that pupils make good progress from one year to another. This work is underway.

The headteacher has made good use of the support of the local authority to empower leaders, many of whom are new to their posts. Learning plans are in place for many subjects, but not all. The new plans in subjects such as mathematics, history, geography and science are helpful in showing teachers what pupils need to learn as they move through the school. Teachers are doing their best to implement the ambitious curriculum and to make learning relevant and interesting for pupils. In the main, they achieve this but have not had enough subject-specific training to ensure success.

The impact of changes to the curriculum is yet to be seen fully. Too many pupils have gaps in their learning because of weaker planning in the past. Older pupils do not have a secure foundation of important knowledge in mathematics to help them tackle their work. For example, pupils' weak recall of their times tables hampers their learning.

The teaching of early reading and phonics is strong. Consequently, children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 get off to a good start. They use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to successfully tackle new words. However, progress in reading slows in key stage 2. This is because the wider curriculum has not served pupils well in developing their vocabulary and knowledge across subjects. Pupils have a growing enthusiasm for reading. They also enjoy the high-quality books that teachers read to them.

The curriculum in the early years is well established. Children learn in a rich and vibrant environment, which is planned to suit their needs. However, leaders have not considered how learning in the Reception Year links with learning in other year groups.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not received the specific help they need to make strong progress. The new leader for pupils with SEND is making a difference, but again, this work is at an early stage. Staff have not had the training they need to meet the needs of these pupils well.

Most pupils behave well and so lessons run smoothly. Adults and pupils treat each other with respect. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions. They are encouraged to explore their feelings and discuss important topics happening in the wider world, as well as issues that affect their own lives. The recently developed school garden is a place for reflection and helps pupils connect with nature.

A recent review provides some helpful guidance for how governors can improve the way they support and challenge school leaders. Governors are now receiving the information they need to monitor the school's progress carefully. They did not have sufficient information to do this well in the past.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant. Adults are conscientious in raising any concerns or 'nagging doubts' about pupils' welfare. Staff understand and follow the school's systems. They know what to do if they are concerned about pupils or the behaviour of adults. The designated leaders review these concerns and take any necessary action.

The wealth of information leaders collect helps them spot emerging issues for pupils and families. Staff have regular training to help them identify any safeguarding issues for individual pupils. Staff also discuss any risks in the local area. Staff keep accurate records of the necessary checks on adults new to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for some subjects is developing, while other subjects have yet to be reviewed and improved. This means that some pupils make slow progress through the curriculum and in reading in key stage 2. Leaders should accelerate their work to ensure that all subjects are planned carefully.
- The development of the curriculum is in its early stages. Teachers are not fully secure in the demands of different subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the subject-specific training they need to implement the curriculum successfully.
- Pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need. This means that they do not progress as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the specific needs of pupils with SEND are identified and met.
- Governance has not been effective. Governors have not challenged school leaders well enough. Governors should act swiftly on the guidance of the recent review.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	110733
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10134661
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Penny Conway
Headteacher	Nickie Moore
Website	www.littlepaxton.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27-28 February 2012

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school has grown in size since the previous inspection. It is now larger than the average primary school and has two classes in each year group.
- The early years children are taught in two Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher and a range of other leaders and staff.
- We met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- We met with groups of pupils about their work and their experiences of school. We talked to pupils in lessons and during breaktimes.
- We looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document and improvement and curriculum plans.

- To inspect the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, we scrutinised the single central record of employment checks and a sample of pupils' files. We met with one of the designated leaders for safeguarding (the headteacher), spoke to staff about their understanding of the school's safeguarding arrangements, and spoke to pupils about keeping safe.
- We considered the 96 responses to Parent View and the 40 responses to the staff survey. We also spoke to parents before school.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, history, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. We spoke to curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. We also heard pupils reading and talked to pupils about their reading habits.

Inspection team

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