

# South Witham Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120389
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358754
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Edwards

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Peter Rush
<b>Headteacher</b>	Thomas William Emery
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Water Lane Grantham NG33 5PH
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<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@south-witham.lincs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons and four teachers were observed. Inspectors scrutinised policies, analysed pupils' work, checked numerical information on their progress and talked to them about it. The team also analysed school improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and met parents, carers and governors. Questionnaire returns were considered from 43 parents and carers. The views of staff and pupils were also taken into consideration.

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

- What is the impact of initiatives to raise standards of writing?
- How effective is the curriculum in meeting the needs of pupils?
- How well do leaders use all assessment information about pupils' progress to raise achievement?
- How effective are leaders and managers in creating a good capacity for sustained improvement?

## Information about the school

South Witham Community Primary School is a smaller than average school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly lower than seen nationally, as is the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in other schools nationally as is the percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. A greater proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals than is seen nationally. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception class. There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. A children's centre and a pre-school playgroup are on the school site. They are not managed by the governing body and are inspected and reported on separately.

**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

This is a good and improving school, where parents, carers and pupils feel valued and appreciate the family ethos that the school has created. As one parent said: 'The teaching staff is always there to support the family as well as the children. The staff always seems to do that extra bit for the children and in doing so create a really happy place to be in.' The leadership has been effective in driving up the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. As a result, attainment across the school is rising, as inspection evidence shows. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage leads to good outcomes for pupils. The improvements that have occurred in teaching and learning reflect the effective leadership of subject leaders. However, they do not yet have enough opportunities to observe lessons to help them to have a greater understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their subject.

All pupils in the school are respected as an equal. They are well nurtured and supported to become well-rounded young people who are well prepared for their future. Governors and senior leaders have ensured that the school is a safe and happy place, where pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils learn to deal with difficult choices such as staying safe and being healthy. They know how to keep themselves and others safe and are very aware of the dangers posed by using the internet. They also have a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. By fully accepting their role as learners, pupils make a strong contribution to the improving attainment that is evident in lessons and in their work. Their good attitudes are clearly demonstrated in their good behaviour in lessons. The school is a cohesive community and pupils gladly take on responsibilities for their personal development, such as being playground buddies, reading buddies or being on the school council. These aspects contribute to the good care, guidance and support all pupils receive. They have a good understanding of lives and cultures other than those of their own White British heritage, both in Britain and around the world.

The good curriculum is improving, so that it is enhancing pupils' enjoyment of learning. This is achieved by making meaningful links between subjects and by giving pupils opportunities to use their skills in different situations. Visits and visitors to school enrich the curriculum, as do the after-school clubs on offer to pupils. The good quality teaching is well planned. Time and resources are used effectively and activities are generally well-matched to pupils' needs. However, higher attaining pupils are not always adequately challenged in some lessons, so that their progress is not as rapid as it could be, especially in writing. There are some good examples of the way teachers use marking to inform pupils how well they are doing and to set the next steps in learning, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work.

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Staff are quick to identify and act upon the needs of pupils. Good links with outside agencies and the effective work of the learning mentor ensure that the needs of pupils are met well. This is particularly true of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The governors and leadership team know the school well, through accurate self-evaluation. They have identified the need to improve pupils' writing skills and this is being achieved by a consistent approach to the planning of teaching and learning. This is having a real impact upon standards in the subject. However, governors do not have sufficiently robust monitoring and evaluation systems to check the quality of the school's work. The improvement that the school's leaders have made since the last inspection and the success that they have had in improving pupils' progress and achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, show the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise attainment further across the school so that more pupils reach or exceed the nationally expected levels by:
  - always ensuring adequate challenge in lessons for all pupils, particularly for higher attainers in writing
  - setting the next steps in marking so that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve further
  - teaching pupils how to assess the quality of their own work.
- Enhance and strengthen the role of subject leaders by:
  - giving them more opportunities to observe their subject being taught in lessons so they have a greater understanding of how the quality of teaching is impacting on standards in their subject.
- Strengthen the role of governors by:
  - ensuring that they have effective systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>2</b>
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From their various starting points, pupils achieve well and make good progress by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Attainment is average, though it varies from year to year because of the small number of pupils in each cohort. Currently, attainment is rising across the school and progress is good. This was evident in the lessons that inspectors observed, in the work of pupils and in the school's assessment data. National progress measures show that pupils have made above average progress in the last three years; in 2010, it was significantly above average. These pupils exceeded the challenging targets set by the school. Not enough pupils achieve the higher levels in writing of which they are capable at both key stages.

Pupils enjoy lessons and work at a good pace. They show they can reflect on their work and how they are doing in response to the learning objectives they are given. They apply themselves well and show interest in what they are doing. For example, in an effective Year 6 mathematics lesson, the quick-fire mental mathematics activities engaged,

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interested and motivated pupils to move on in their learning quickly. All groups of learners, including the higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, made good progress. Effective questioning by the teacher challenged their thinking and pupils demonstrated their growing confidence in working with decimal fractions and problem solving.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Adults provide good guidance in helping pupils to learn about tolerance and acceptance of diversity as important elements of living together. They have a very clear understanding of how to look after themselves. They understand well what it is to lead a healthy lifestyle. They readily accept their share of responsibility in daily routines, such as being reading partners, performing helpful tasks for teachers and being playground buddies. They gain considerably in their learning and personal and social development through the good links the school has with the local community. They are not afraid to become involved with issues that affect their community, such as the problem with speeding cars in the village. Their improving basic skills in mathematics and literacy and their growing business enterprise skills, coupled with their good skills in the use of information communication technology, make a strong contribution to their future economic well-being. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in their love of art, music and literature, the strong, harmonious relationships within the school and their growing first-hand knowledge of minority ethnic culture, faith and beliefs through their links with a school in Leicester and their work with a school in India.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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>2</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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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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## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' progress is in part the result of teachers and teaching assistants successfully meeting the wide range of needs in the mixed-year classes. It is also attributable to the careful tracking of their progress and the way teachers use information to set up extra support to ensure that any potential underachievement is eradicated. This means that in most lessons new learning is solidly based on prior knowledge and skills. Lessons begin with clear learning objectives and guidance on how pupils can judge whether they have achieved the objectives or not. In most classes, pupils have their personalised learning targets and these provide guidance about what is required to reach the next level in learning. That said, opportunities are missed in the marking of pupils' work in some classes to set the next steps for further improvement. Throughout the school, activities are consistently well-planned to meet the needs of the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, but the challenge in tasks set in some classes does not always extend the learning of the higher ability pupils quickly enough, especially in writing. Pupils are not consistently taught to assess the quality of their own work. Caring and skilled teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to meet their needs. The rich and varied curriculum, the way it is well adapted to most pupils' needs and the good range of additional after-school clubs, visitors, visits and themed events, make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that should they seek help with problems they can turn to an adult for guidance and support. This is clearly evident in respect of any potentially vulnerable pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are enabled to make the best of what the school provides.

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The visionary headteacher, aided by his senior managers and governors, has been successful in securing significant improvements since the last inspection. He has been extremely successful in securing the support of other staff in the drive for further improvement. School self-evaluation is rigorous and honest and has identified the main priorities for action and improvement. As a result of regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders, the quality of this aspect of the school's work has improved significantly. However, subject leaders are not given enough opportunity for lesson observations to judge for themselves the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The robust collection and rigorous analysis of assessment data is used effectively in focusing resources for individual pupils, particularly those needing additional support.

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Setting of targets is assisting most pupils to aim at and achieve higher standards. The school's commitment to tackling discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for all and respect for diversity is strong. The good links with parents and carers are being enhanced by a variety of initiatives to engage them in supporting their own children. A good example of this is the 'Bright Sparks' homework club where parents, carers and pupils work together, assisted by staff. Effective partnerships with outside agencies support pupils' learning and well-being. This is particularly true for vulnerable pupils. The support from the local authority has resulted in improvements to writing across the school and strategies to improve communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Governors know the school well and satisfactorily fulfil their duties. They are supportive and hold the school to account when required to do so. They currently do not have formalised systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school for themselves. Safeguarding and concern for the health and safety of pupils have led to the good procedures that are evident. The school rigorously pursues the safety of all pupils and staff, particularly the most vulnerable. Good risk assessments and robust policies and procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and are regularly reviewed and updated. Parents, carers and pupils endorse this view. Community cohesion is good because the school is a cohesive community where pupils respect each other. They have good links with the local community and their understanding of other faiths and cultures in Britain and the wider world is good.

*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>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation stage is good and leads to good outcomes for children. Effective links with the pre-school playgroup and children's centre enable pupils



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to settle quickly and happily into the Reception class. Children readily understand the routines and what is expected of them. Parents and carers are very positive about the procedures and about the quality of information they receive about their children's progress, through the children's individual learning journals.

Children thrive in the safe, stimulating, happy and caring environment. They enter the Reception class with broadly average skills and abilities, though this varies from year to year because of the size of cohorts, which can be very small. As a result of focused and creative teaching, they make good progress. In 2010, they entered Year 1 with attainment slightly above that expected for their age, but this again varies from year to year. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Staff use assessment information well in order to set targets for their next steps in learning. The effective and on-going monitoring system encourages children to make good progress in their work.

The welfare of children is promoted well and there are good relationships between adults and amongst the children. Teaching is effective because the good leadership has ensured that planning is robust and provides opportunities and activities which are lively, interesting and related to children's needs. Assessment opportunities are an integral part of the teaching and learning that take place. There is good use of a stimulating outdoor area which enhances learning throughout the year.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly happy with virtually all aspects of the school. They particularly like the way that the school keeps their children safe. They say that the school helps their children to stay healthy and that children enjoy coming to school. They know how well their child is doing and the school seeks their views about important issues that affect them. A small minority of parents and carers feel that the school does not deal effectively with challenging behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour in and out of lessons to be good and observed no instances of challenging behaviour.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Witham Community 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	70	12	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	83	7	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	65	14	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	70	12	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	73	11	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	73	11	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	68	13	33	0	0	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)	26	65	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	65	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	53	11	28	6	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	55	18	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	68	13	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	75	10	25	0	0	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are 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 and spring terms 2009/10 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.**



8 December 2010

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of South Witham Community Primary School, Grantham, NG33 5PH**

Thank you all for making us so very welcome and for answering all our questions when we visited your school recently. We think that yours is a good school, and all the help you receive from the teachers and teaching assistants enables you to do well. We were particularly impressed by the support provided for those of you who sometimes find learning hard. You impressed us with your knowledge of how to keep yourselves safe at all times, and we were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school.

You will be pleased to learn that you and your parents and carers are very happy with the quality of education you receive, and that you enjoy all the additional activities and educational visits the school provides. We support these views. We are also impressed with the way you get involved with your local community and by the way that you are linking with pupils who come from Leicester and the school in India whose heritage and culture are different to your own. Equally impressive is your progress in learning by the time you leave the school in Year 6. This is much better than in most schools.

We know the headteacher and governors are always striving to make your school even better. With this in mind we are asking them to do several things. We want them to make sure that teachers' marking of your work is consistently good across the school, so you always know exactly what you are doing well and to inform you how you can improve your work further. We also want them to offer you consistently challenging work to accelerate your progress, especially in writing. We want subject leaders to come to observe you in class, so that they have a good idea of the quality of teaching and learning that you receive in the different subjects, particularly in mathematics and English. Finally, we want governors to make sure they are checking to see if teachers and senior leaders are always working as effectively as they can.

You can help with these improvements by continuing to work hard and doing your best and not being afraid to ask for work that is harder if you feel you can do it. We would like to wish you all the very best for the future. We are sure you will do well.

Yours sincerely,

David Edwards

Lead Inspector

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