

Witherley Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120172
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379971
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanna Curd

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Bell
Headteacher	Alison Ward
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons were observed; these were taught by five different teachers. Discussions were held with parents, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. Inspectors observed the pupils' work, and examined assessments of their attainment and progress. Lesson plans, and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils' health and safety, were also scrutinised. Eight questionnaires from staff, 41 from pupils and 31 from parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teachers have improved levels of challenge in lessons since the last inspection and whether this has improved rates of progress for all groups.
- The extent to which observations support the school's view that behaviour, pupils' safety and their contribution to the school are outstanding.
- How well the role of subject leaders has developed since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than most other primary schools. Pupils are grouped into four age-based classes, one of which caters solely for the very youngest children. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, none learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities is also much lower than in most other schools; most of these pupils have specific learning difficulties in literacy. The school runs a breakfast- and after-school club at the beginning and end of each school day. The school has achieved Healthy School status and 'Eco' award in the last two years.

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

Witherley Church of England Primary School provides a good quality education with outstanding outcomes for pupils. The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. Effective teaching, an interesting curriculum and excellent support all contribute to good progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teamwork is very strong and all the staff work well together in their shared vision for the school. Parents and carers are exceedingly well-engaged with the school. They are very positive and particularly appreciate how well staff know their children and how they help them to develop independence and confidence. One parent or carer of an older pupil, reflecting the views of most, said: 'Witherley has provided my child with a wonderful start in life. The school has supported and encouraged my child in every way possible. We are very grateful'.

The headteacher provides stable and effective leadership. She successfully galvanises the whole school community and provides an excellent role-model of thoughtfulness, appreciation of others and continuous drive for school improvement. Staff and pupils respond very positively to this. Relationships throughout the school are extremely warm and supportive. Pupils behave extremely well and are very eager and keen to learn. They develop exceedingly good attitudes to health and make an outstanding contribution to their community. They work with councillors and the local community on plans for village development, serve on the active school council, plan and run fundraising events as well as help with tasks around the school such as errands, gardening and tending the compost. Opportunities for pupils to experience a diversity of cultures first-hand have increased since the last inspection. Pupils now visit various different places of worship, correspond with pupils from a school in Leicester and have met their pen pals for a picnic and games afternoon. These experiences have improved their understanding of cultural diversity but are not yet sufficiently frequent to consolidate this or raise spiritual, moral, social and cultural development above good.

The role of subject leaders has improved considerably since the last inspection. They are fully involved in monitoring provision and are far more aware of outcomes than they were. They quickly identify and address most areas of inconsistencies and relative weaknesses. All the senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses which they use well to develop the school further. An example of their involvement and drive for improvement is in the quality of teaching which is now consistently good. Since the last inspection, the focus on

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increasing progress through raising challenge in lessons has been sharp and effective. The pace of lessons is often rapid and expectations are high. This has successfully raised the progress of all groups. The pace is sometimes slightly too fast for a few, however, and whole-class explanations are occasionally too long. Teachers generally use their knowledge and assessments of pupils well to modify activities so that these are suitable for the full range of pupils' learning needs, particularly in English and mathematics lessons. Activities are not always sufficiently varied and are sometimes slightly too easy or difficult for a few.

Systems for safeguarding are outstanding; they are very comprehensive and robust. Pupils feel extremely safe because they know that adults are there to help them and will support them whenever necessary.

Given leaders' successful track record in developing the school and the commitment and motivation of the whole school community, the school's capacity to sustain improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the fine-tuning of activities throughout lessons, including introductions, to ensure these are consistently well-matched to individual learning needs and sufficiently engaging for all pupils.
- Increase the frequency of opportunities for pupils' first-hand experience of a range of cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All groups of pupils achieve well. Children start at the school with a range of knowledge, skills and understanding; overall these are generally in line with national expectations for this age. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above the national average. A greater proportion of pupils than in most schools reach higher levels in English and mathematics. As a group, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress; some make even better progress than this because support is skilled and well-targeted. Progress of all groups slows occasionally because a very few pupils are not always fully engaged and work is sometimes too difficult or too easy for them. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 made good progress when they were all engaged in solving various mathematical problems which were well-matched to their differing learning levels, but some were less engaged in whole-class teaching which was too complex for some. Initially, in the Year 3 and 4 class the progress of a few pupils was relatively slow because they were not engaged in an overlong introduction. Later, they all made good progress through actively investigating the purposes of different teeth; using their own to bite or chew apple and feeling animal's teeth in real sheep skulls. One teacher successfully overcame the challenge of meeting all pupils learning needs in an introduction by releasing some more-able pupils to work independently rather than listening to an explanation which they already understood.

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Pupils enjoy school. Attendance rates are above the national average and punctuality is good. Pupils are well prepared for later life and learning because behaviour is excellent, they develop very high levels of independence, confidence and self-esteem, have supportive relationships with others, positive attitudes to work and high levels of attainment. Pupils develop a very good understanding of, and commitment to, leading healthy lives. They participate eagerly in sports during lessons and clubs, engage in very active play at break times, enjoy fresh, healthy and tasty school lunches, have fresh fruit for snacks and are very secure in their knowledge of the importance of diet, exercise and sleep.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They plan and prepare lessons well and use interesting methods, often including technology to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are experienced, skilful and very supportive. Staff generally use their accurate assessments of pupils well to vary activities, expectations and explanations to meet pupils' varied learning needs. Progress occasionally slows slightly because some pupils are not fully engaged throughout lessons, especially if introductions are too long or they are not fully involved in activities.

The curriculum is interesting and enriched well through a wide range of visits, visitors and popular after school clubs. These include gardening, small-world play and den building. Some vibrant links between subjects enable pupils to use literacy and mathematical skills in relevant ways enabling them to see how these basic skills can

¹ 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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be used to develop their overall understanding. For example, making a graph of how happy or sad Jonah might feel at various points in his experience of being eaten by a whale, enabled pupils to use and develop mathematical skills whilst gaining fuller empathy with Jonah and his story. Occasionally, activities are not sufficiently varied to meet pupils’ widely different learning needs.

Highly effective support contributes well to pupils’ high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Parents and carers are very appreciative of this. One said, ‘Witherley is a very caring and supportive school where both my children feel happy, secure and enthusiastic to learn’. Records and discussions show striking examples of when the school has been particularly successful in helping pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, settle, integrate and make good progress in their learning. The breakfast- and after-school clubs provide popular and safe extended care for a growing number of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are experienced and astute. They successfully embed ambition in the whole school community and drive improvement across all aspects of the school. Teamwork and training have a high priority. The governing body supports and challenges the school effectively, especially with regard to procedures and policies for safeguarding, which are all particularly robust. Individual governors are each linked with a subject or area of the school and receive frequent accurate information from the headteacher and other staff. However, they do not always visit often enough to be able to confirm or evaluate this at first hand. Effective partnerships extend opportunities for all pupils which would otherwise not be available in this small village school. These include extensive sports events which contribute to pupils’ health and enjoyment as well as links with an inner city school in Leicester which contributes to pupils’ experience of cultural diversity, even though contact is not always as frequent as it could be. The school’s contribution to community cohesion is good. It is highly cohesive internally and makes a good contribution to the local village and area through organising and hosting various events, helping train and support teachers in other schools and raising money for national and international charities. Staff use their informal evaluations of these events to plan future ones. More formal evaluation is at a relatively early stage. Engagement with parents and carers is outstanding through the active friends association which raises funds, and the school’s frequent verbal communication and

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more formal written newsletters. In addition, parents and carers receive plenty of information about the topics pupils are learning as well as reports of pupils’ attainment and progress. Leaders work well to promote equal opportunities and combat discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their learning and personal development in the Reception class. They enjoy a wide range of interesting and practical activities which are suitable for all. Staff interact skilfully with the children to extend their learning. For example, with adult support, several children successfully developed their mathematical understanding, language and creative skills as well as knowledge and understanding of the world as they built a ‘house’ with large plastic construction blocks outdoors. They worked cooperatively together on this, measured doors and windows with real tape measures and painted the house with water. Other children successfully developed their language skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and interest in healthy diets as they tried and enjoyed new fruit describing how it looked, felt, smelt and tasted. Opportunities for children to develop their physical skills are more limited because the class’s secure outdoor area is fairly small. However, resources are used well inside and out. Children are often taken to the school playground to use climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Children are kept very safe through close supervision, effective support and very good care. Children who attend the school’s breakfast- and after-school clubs are cared for well before and after school. They enjoy suitable activities and positive relationships with adults and each other. Links with parents and carers are extremely good. Parents and carers feel very well informed and able to discuss any queries or difficulties with staff. One said: ‘The staff have been really encouraging with my daughter. They are

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an excellent team and are a great support for new children’.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 proportion of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire is higher than in most schools. Inspectors spoke directly with about a quarter of parents and carers during the inspection. Responses from each group were overwhelmingly positive about the school. The most positive responses to the questionnaire were that their children enjoyed school, were encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle, were kept safe and that the parents and carers were happy with their children’s overall experience at the school. These responses reflect the inspectors’ findings. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the progress their children are making and the extent to which the school meets their children’s particular needs. Inspectors found that, although all groups of pupils are making good progress, a few pupils occasionally make slightly slower progress because they are not fully engaged throughout lessons and some activities are occasionally a bit too hard or easy for some.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Witherley Church of England 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 81 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	58	9	29	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	52	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	77	7	23	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)	17	55	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	58	10	32	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	52	15	48	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	55	14	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	23	74	8	26	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



29 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Witherley Church of England Primary School, Witherley, CV9 3NA

We were pleased to meet so many of you during our visit to your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you at break and lunch time, and hearing so much about your school. All the things you said helped us greatly with our work – thank you.

We agree with you that your school is good. You behave extremely well and tell us that you feel very safe. You are supported and cared for well and know that your teachers are always there to help. You carry out a very wide range of jobs around the school and make an outstanding contribution to your school and community. You make good progress in your learning because teaching is good and lessons are interesting. Activities are varied but are not always adapted to meet some of your particular needs. For example, some introductions are a bit too long for a few of you and some activities are slightly too easy or difficult. We have asked your teachers to ensure that activities are suitable for you all.

We were pleased to hear about your pen pals from a school in Leicester which, in many ways, is different from yours. It is bigger and pupils come from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds. We know that some of you have met your pen pals at a picnic and games afternoon. You told us that you enjoy these contacts even though they have not been very often. Because these direct links will help your understanding of different cultures we have asked school leaders to increase the frequency of these.

You can all help by telling teachers when activities and introductions really help you with your work as well as by continuing to be friendly and welcoming to all you meet.

With best regards to you and your families
Yours sincerely

Jo Curd
Lead inspector

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