

# Great Witchingham Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121148
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	380177
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judi Bedawi

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Blathwayt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Anne Livings (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	The Street Lenwade Norwich NR9 5SD
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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	4–5 October 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed five teachers in 10 lessons. The inspection team held meetings with pupils, the staff and members of the governing body, and had informal discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' books, a range of school documentation, policies, monitoring records and data on pupils' attainment, together with safeguarding arrangements. The inspectors received and analysed 33 parents' and carers' questionnaires, together with those from staff and pupils.

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

- The inspectors investigated strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing and to increase their progress.
- They explored the impact of the school federation on pupils' outcomes and school performance.
- They looked at how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop their early writing and social skills.

## Information about the school

Great Withingham Voluntary Aided is much smaller than the average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A very few are from other minority ethnic groups and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although none have a statement of special educational needs. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than the start or finish of the school year is high. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Physical Education Charter Mark.

The federation with St Peter's CofE Voluntary Controlled, Easton and Hockering Voluntary Controlled schools began in July 2011. The Executive headteacher works across the three schools. When she is not at Great Withingham, a teacher-in-charge assumes responsibility. The federation has one senior leadership team and one governing body. The staff share expertise, training and pupils' learning opportunities.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for all its pupils within a caring and supportive learning environment. There is determination from the executive headteacher to raise and sustain standards and pupils' progress rapidly. This focus is supported well across the federation and is fully backed by the governing body. The expertise and skills of senior staff are being harnessed to drive improvements. Parents and carers value the sense of community and know that their children feel extremely safe. A parent said, 'The school has a wonderful 'family feel' resulting in my children being very happy.'

Current attainment is broadly average. Although standards in reading are sustained at above average, those in writing fell sharply in 2011, from having been broadly average in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2010. Writing in Years 1 to 6 is weak because pupils do not understand the main features of writing for different purposes and contexts or use these skills enough in other subjects. However, pupils now use a colour coded 'traffic lights' system to self-assess their understanding of written tasks and this is improving their progress. There are few opportunities to develop spelling because there is little extended writing. Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress in developing their early writing and reading skills. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is broadly average and improving well due to the effective input of the subject specialist leadership.

Teaching is satisfactory with an increasing proportion of good practice. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to the school receive appropriate support to fill gaps in their learning. Pupils have limited opportunity to undertake independent research in lessons. Marking has improved since the previous inspection but pupils do not usually make use of the good suggestions offered by their teacher to improve the quality of their written work. The well-balanced and resourced curriculum is extended through use of wider federation facilities and use of other partners to support learning. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good with prompt identification of pupils in need of nurture or academic support.

Attendance is above average. Behaviour is good and pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is outstanding as is their personal and spiritual development. Given effective management, pupils' satisfactory attainment and improving progress, previous inspection issues being addressed and accurate school evaluation of development areas, the school's capacity to further improve is satisfactory.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise standards and progress in writing by:
  - expanding opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to understand and use key writing features in different styles and contexts across the curriculum
  - improving pupils' skills in spelling and in extended writing
  
- Increase the impact of teaching on learning by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent research skills
  - ensuring that the pupils consistently act upon their teachers' suggestions to improve the quality of their written work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children enter the reception class with levels of skills and knowledge that varies considerably from year to year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and given relevant support, so they make satisfactory progress from their starting points. As they move into Year 1, the number of pupils still needing the practical activities of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum also varies each year. There is no significant difference in the performance of different pupil groups including those learning English as an additional language and boys. The school ensures that any pupil arriving at a time other than the normal start of the school year receives the extra help required to fill any gaps in their learning. Pupils mostly express themselves well and speak and read confidently. As they move up the school, reading skills are consistently above average and their mathematical skills are improving well. Writing lags behind pupils' skills in reading because they do not write enough in different styles, contexts or subjects to develop skills in writing interesting texts. Strategies such as use of pupil 'spelling buddies' has a positive impact in one federation school and has just been introduced at Great Withingham. It is too soon to see the impact.

Pupils enjoy school and the way that their teachers make learning interesting, saying, 'The teachers make mathematics fun and they look after people.' Pupils work sensibly with positive attitudes. They behave well in and out of lessons, showing tolerance towards the very few pupils who occasionally have a difficult day. They appreciate learning about e-safety and how to stay safe when not in school. This makes them feel exceptionally secure. If they need access to other help the adults take prompt action. Pupils are intrigued by new experiences asking many questions of the visiting drama group about living in Africa and Zimbabwe, keen to hear about environmental issues, daily life and dangerous snakes. Adoption of

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healthy lifestyles is impressive. They understand why it is important to eat sensibly, grow vegetables and enjoy many sports such as hockey and after-school Tai Kwondo. Their involvement in the local community and parish is strong. Pupils have a ‘green’ travel plan so many walk or cycle to school. There are several global links but links with schools and communities around the United Kingdom are very limited. Pupils’ personal development observed in the spirituality of assemblies and the respect shown for others’ views and feelings is outstanding and enriches school life.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is satisfactory with an increasing amount of good practice that is helping to accelerate pupils’ progress. Staff work together flexibly and this allows pupils to be supported when there is need. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils who are picked up through assessment tracking as falling behind, or those new to the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to check pupils’ understanding. However, in lessons where explanations of tasks are overlong, then there is less time for pupils to learn and work independently. Marking has improved since the last inspection and gives clear suggestions for improvement. However, most pupils do not consistently act on these suggestions to improve their work and understanding. Target setting is established in English, mathematics and physical education and is now reviewed in pupil progress meetings. Pupils know their targets and are generally reaching their goals sooner.

<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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The well-balanced curriculum is enhanced by the extension of learning opportunities through the federation. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is carefully adapted to meet their individual needs. Themed creative activities spark pupils’ interest and involvement. Writing is less developed across the curriculum but there is now a strong focus to improve this, although it is too early to see the impact. Mathematics and information and communication technology are used well in different curriculum areas. Pupils particularly enjoy reading, mathematics and physical education. They also benefit from many trips including residential experiences, visitors and a wide range of clubs available over the year that enrich their personal development and esteem. As a parent commented ‘For such a small school the amount of extra-curricular activities is excellent.’

Staff know and understand their pupils well, providing good quality pastoral care that enables pupils to concentrate on learning. Pupils and families who find themselves to be in more vulnerable circumstances are directed towards relevant external support to meet their particular needs. There is a parent support worker covering local schools and the federation, offering additional guidance. Monitoring of welfare related matters, including behaviour is good as is monitoring of health and safety. Parents and carers value the support and guidance available before their children start school and as they prepare to move on to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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 executive headteacher and her senior leaders are steadfastly focused on raising standards. They are supported in this very relevant aim by the newly reconstituted and much larger governing body, who are well aware of the schools’ strengths and weaknesses, but are still establishing their responsibilities across the federation. The involvement and sharing of specialist staff across the federation has improved standards and pupil progress in mathematics. The decline in writing in 2011 followed the much improved results of the previous year. Since the summer a sharply focused action plan is in place, with the overview for improvement led by a member of the senior leadership team, although it is too early to yet see the impact of new strategies. Subject leaders are fully involved through assessment and monitoring their pupils’ progress.

Partnerships with parents and carers and with other partners to promote learning are good. Parents and carers like the small school atmosphere and the comfort of

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knowing their children are safe and well cared for and the ease of accessing staff. The federation has had a major positive impact on all aspects of provision including more staff expertise to drive up standards, much broader curriculum opportunities and shared training and budgets to reduce costs. There is also a wide range of access to welfare support and strong links with the mother and toddler group so many children stay on to start school and strong transition links with the local high school. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and pupils know that any kind of discrimination is totally unacceptable.

Safeguarding is good with strengths in the support for families who find themselves in vulnerable situations, and in the attention given to health and safety matters. Community cohesion is satisfactory with strong local community and several global links. Links with different communities and schools across the United Kingdom are less developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily to learning through play because many have attended the weekly mother and toddler sessions held in the school. They know and enjoy the daily routines and sharing their news. Behaviour is good and they follow instructions well. There is a sharp focus on developing basic skills in mathematical development, language and early writing and on improving children’s social skills. As a result, progress is good in these and all other areas of learning. This was observed in a good lesson focused on learning letter sounds and writing. Children were confident and accurate in identifying sounds and using actions to remember them. The teacher set a brisk pace and it took just 22 seconds for children to identify eight letter sounds using an interactive whiteboard program. They then sounded out



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simple words; one boy read the word 'October' independently, seen on the whiteboard. Children practised writing letters, concentrating hard on formation with great enjoyment and pride in their efforts.

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Children are challenged and as a result, progress well, monitored through daily assessment and evidence in their scrapbooks. All staff understand the needs of young children and any special needs and/or disabilities are identified early with relevant support provided. There is a good balance between adult-directed and child-led activities with free access to outdoor learning and exploration, although the small covered area is quite cluttered with many resources, so children have to move around carefully. Leadership and management is good, enhanced by the job share arrangements. Welfare and safeguarding is good as in the rest of the school. Parents and carers are fully involved in their children's learning. One said, 'We are extremely pleased with all areas of development.'

*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 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were almost entirely positive about all aspects of their children's education. All felt that their children enjoy school and that healthy lifestyles are highly promoted. A few felt that behaviour and progress could be better and that suggestions and concerns could be better addressed. The inspection team found behaviour to be good and pupils' progress satisfactory. Records show that the school does respond to suggestions and concerns.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Withingham 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	73	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	64	11	33	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	58	13	39	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	55	9	27	6	18	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	55	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	52	15	45	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	58	14	42	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)	16	48	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	58	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	58	8	24	5	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	48	12	36	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	61	12	36	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	23	70	10	30	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](http://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"> <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.**



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Great Witchingham Church of England Primary School,  
Norwich, NR9 5SD**

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we recently visited your school. It was good to hear your views and to see that you are happy and feel exceptionally safe because the staff look after you so well. We were impressed by the way you have adopted healthy lifestyles and are involved in so many sporting activities. I enjoyed hearing your questions when talking to the African drama group. Well done! You go to a satisfactory school. This means that you make similar progress to pupils in most other primary schools. Your headteacher and the staff want to make your school even better. I have asked them to do these things:

- to help all of you in Years 1 to 6 to get better at writing and understanding how to write for different purposes and contexts in other subjects, as well as English
- to make sure that you spell correctly and do more extended writing
- to give you more opportunities to learn and research independently
- to check that you follow your teachers' good suggestions for improving your writing, so that your progress improves.

You can help to make your school get even better by writing more and improving your spellings. You can remind your teachers about working independently. Finally you need to always act on your teachers' suggestions to improve your written work. I am sure you will be able to do these things. I also know you will continue to enjoy learning at Great Witchingham.

Yours sincerely

Judi Bedawi  
Lead inspector

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