

# St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Withern

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120588
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380070
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catie Cherrie
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Siddle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Main Road Withern Alford LN13 0NB
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	10–11 October 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Eleven lessons, taught by three teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with a member of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. The school's work was observed and planning, tracking data and a range of policies were scrutinised. In addition, 23 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- The inspector investigated what the school did to achieve its above-average standards in mathematics.
- The inspector checked on what the school is doing to raise standards in reading and writing.
- The inspector looked at how well pupils' progress is tracked and used to set challenging targets.
- The inspector looked at the school's efforts to improve the progress of the most-able pupils.

## Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The vast majority of the pupils are White British, and the proportion from other ethnic backgrounds is well below average. None speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special need, is well above average.

The school has an Active Mark, a Silver Eco-School Award and Healthy Schools Status. The governing body manages the running of a breakfast club for the pupils.

**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 school has many strengths. The recently appointed acting headteacher has built on the school's existing successes and brought a new sense of urgency to the need to raise standards. In a short time he has changed the way pupils' progress is tracked, introduced some very effective interventions with pupils at risk of underachieving and recognised the need to ensure more pupils reach higher levels. The positive impact of these initiatives shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attendance is above average. The relationships between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, make a very positive contribution to their learning. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are clear about how safe the children are at school. This is supported by the inspection evidence, especially regarding pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep safe when using new technology. Although attainment in mathematics has often been higher than that in reading and writing, standards overall have been broadly average by the time pupils leave the school. This has represented generally good progress, taking into account the pupils' starting points which are often below those expected. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make similarly good progress. In the past there has been a lack of pupils reaching the higher levels. The acting headteacher has addressed this matter very swiftly and many of the current Year 5 and 6 pupils are on track to achieve much higher standards. Even so, teachers have recognised that standards in reading and writing require further improvement through the more effective teaching of letters and sounds, and by providing more opportunities to write in different subjects.

There is consistently good teaching, especially in the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. The best lessons demonstrate very flexible groupings where, for example, more able younger pupils can work with older ones, and where the subject matter is very challenging. The school has a good curriculum. Its strengths lie in the enrichment activities, especially in high quality sport, and in the use of visits to enliven and extend pupils' learning. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides good care, guidance and support for the pupils, especially those facing challenging circumstances. Parents and carers are very aware of how well their children are cared for and looked after. One parent wrote that 'I am extremely pleased with the care and support my child is given ...she is regarded as an individual, which is important for her.'

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The recently appointed acting headteacher has been responsible for the rapid improvement and drive to raise standards. He has provided outstanding leadership and is an excellent role model for other teachers. He has quickly created a very positive team spirit in which staff are happy to learn from others and to look outside the school for support and advice when appropriate. Most aspects of leadership are good and the acting headteacher has correctly focused on raising standards as his first priority. Teachers plan good work in learning about other faiths and cultures but the school has yet to evaluate its work in promoting community cohesion and to draw up a strategy to extend its effectiveness. The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members provide a good level of challenge for its work. However, they do not have sufficiently high profile in the school and parents and carers, staff and pupils are not familiar enough with them or their work.

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing by
  - introducing a new approach to learning about letters and sounds
  - providing more focused opportunities for writing activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - providing more opportunities for older pupils to write for a variety of purposes.
- Evaluate the work done to help pupils learn about how others live, and create a plan for its further development.
- Raise the profile of the governing body so more people are familiar with its members and the work it does.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

The current work of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is of much higher quality than has recently been the case. This is evident in their books and in their responses in lessons. High-quality understanding of the features of good writing, such as the use of rhetorical questions, is commonplace. Pupils have a growing confidence in their knowledge and understanding. In Years 3 and 4 rising standards are also evident. For example, pupils enjoy challenging learning in the use of place value in mathematics and also to write factually for a purpose, such as an information brochure. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have a very good understanding of capacity and make rapid gains in learning to use and compare measures. There are no significant differences between the outcomes of boys and girls. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress owing to the success of the specific interventions provided for them both in and outside the classroom. The most-able pupils are better provided for than in the past and they are now making the progress expected of them.

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Learning is helped by pupils’ excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. The small groups help all pupils take a full part in lessons. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and their rising standards and good learning habits mean they are being well prepared for their future education and lives. Pupils enjoy the variety of responsibilities they are given. They use their initiative well. This was evident when they decided that there was a local charity they wanted to support. They have a good knowledge of how others live through links with a school in India and another British inner city school. Their cultural development is further enhanced through outstanding work in drama and music and is evident in the summer show held at a local theatre in which the whole school took part.

*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>1</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>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The teaching is good and pupils make at least good progress in the vast majority of lessons. In non-core subjects the teaching is not quite as successful because many of the methods and techniques used in English and mathematics are not yet transferred. The teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, especially those who find learning more difficult or who need a temporary boost. In addition, they are used very effectively as a resource to create flexible, small groupings enabling more focused teaching to be targeted at pupils’ specific needs. For example, in one mathematics lesson in Years 5 and 6 this helped some pupils to consolidate their basic number skills while others solved complex problems around angles and straight lines.

<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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Teachers' improved use of assessments ensures that pupils are provided with appropriately flexible and challenging work in lessons. They use the good curriculum thoughtfully to provide more interesting opportunities to use information and communication technology and to link subjects. This happened in one lesson when pupils were helped to use film techniques to bring alive a real story from the Second World War. The good care, guidance and support is improving even further as provision for the most able, and those with specific gifts and talents, is extended. The school has maintained its very caring ethos over many years while efforts to raise standards have been introduced in a caring but challenging way. One parent wrote that their shy child had 'now blossomed into a happy little girl.'

*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 acting headteacher has very rapidly addressed areas where he recognised underachievement. Training has been put in place for staff to support the introduction of a new scheme for teaching pupils about letters and sounds. Visits to observe outstanding practice in other schools have been put in place, showing the willingness to learn from others and to accept external advice and support. Other good partnerships support the curriculum, especially for physical education. New and very clear systems for tracking pupils' progress have been introduced. Engagement with parents has been very strong and they are kept well informed about the curriculum and how their child's individual needs are met. The school provides a very safe environment in which pupils can work and play. Good training to ensure the safe recruitment of adults to work with pupils has been carried out and first aid systems are robust. Strong safeguarding procedures in practice reflect the good-quality policies and protocols. Staff are very aware of the needs of individual pupils and parents are very confident that their children are safe and well cared for at school. The recent improvements to the provision for the most-able pupils, alongside the good provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mean that the school ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve well.

*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

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

There is good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This helps them make rapid progress overall in most areas of learning. The school is particularly effective at developing children's personal, social and emotional growth. This helps them become good learners for the future. Speaking and listening skills are well-developed and better than those skills in reading and writing. Good support from a teaching assistant, together with the teacher's planning and guidance, has a good impact on progress. Accurate observations of children's learning are made and recorded. These are supported well by evidence from work and photographs of learning in action. These assessments are often used to build next steps in learning. For example, in one good lesson children worked so well with a small set of capacity apparatus that this work was extended the next day with tubes, funnels and a range of other measuring equipment. Children played with these and, with clever questioning from the teaching assistant, very effectively began to develop their comparison and measuring skills. Children show they really enjoy being at school. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good; it is well-resourced and an effectively planned aspect of the school's work.

*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

An above average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. They were overwhelmingly positive with no negative responses. A few parents and



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carers are unsure yet about the contribution of the recently appointed headteacher, about how well the school deals with behaviour issues and how well the school prepares children for the future. The inspection evidence shows that the new headteacher has very quickly had an extremely positive effect on the running of the school and on the standards currently being attained. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and relationships are very positive throughout the school. The pupils are developing good skills and attitudes that should help them succeed when they move on to secondary education and beyond. A very large majority of parents and carers strongly agree that the school keeps their children safe. This is reflected in the good safeguarding procedures and the pupils' exceptional knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The St Margaret's Church of England School, Withern 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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	61	8	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	74	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	70	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	65	6	26	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)	14	61	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	70	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	57	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	52	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	16	70	7	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.**



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Withern, LN13 0NB**

I am writing to thank you for the way you welcomed me to your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit and talking with many of you about your school. I especially enjoyed the assembly some of Class 3 produced.

St Margaret's is a good and rapidly improving school. One of the main reasons for the school's success in helping you learn new things and make such good progress is because your headteacher has rightly concentrated on helping you learn more new things while still keeping the school and happy place to work and play.

More of you are making good progress in learning now but I think the school still needs to help you get even better at reading and writing. I know the headteacher and governing body agree with me. They are planning a new scheme to help with your reading and they are looking at ways to help you and even the very youngest children to write more often and for different purposes. Teachers plan interesting and challenging activities for you to do and these are helping you learn.

I have also asked your school to look at the work you do about how others live, both here and abroad. The school does some good things in this area but has not worked out what it does well and what needs to improve. In addition, I have asked the governing body to get a bit more involved in school life and make sure you and your parents know more about what they do.

Thank you again for your help and friendliness. Enjoy your time at St Margaret's and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms  
Lead inspector

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