

Inspection of a good school: The St Margaret's Church of England School, Withern

Main Road, Withern, Alford, Lincolnshire LN13 0NB

Inspection date:

29 March 2022

Outcome

The St Margaret's Church of England School, Withern continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'It is the best school,' is how pupils describe St Margaret's. Pupils enjoy learning and playing together. They behave well because adults have high expectations.

Pupils enjoy using the outdoor areas during social times and for learning. For example, they explore different climates and natural spaces in the biomes and zones that leaders have created. Parents and carers value the support and opportunities that the school provides. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'I couldn't wish for a better environment for my child to be learning and growing.'

Pupils like helping to make a difference to others in their community. In one such instance, the school council supported a local charity to provide hot drinks for people who are homeless. However, pupils do not have a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils can explain exactly whom they would speak to if they had any worries or concerns. They commented that bullying does not happen at school, and that staff sort out any disagreements quickly.

A well-planned curriculum is in place to help pupils learn and know more.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They identify any gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers revise learning regularly to ensure that pupils remember the key knowledge. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), teachers break down key knowledge into smaller steps.

The school's curriculum is well sequenced. It outlines what pupils need to know and by when. Leaders ensure that regular checks are made on what pupils know and remember. Leaders are checking that the key knowledge in early years is preparing children to know more of the school's curriculum in later years. For example, in science, teachers ensure that children in early years can use words to describe the weather, space and planets. Staff build on this knowledge to explore seasons, the cycle of the moon, and day and night. Leaders are developing staff's expertise in delivering the school's curriculum.

Pupils enjoy reading and sharing a wide range of books with adults. These books are repeated so that the vocabulary can be learned and enjoyed. For example, children in early years listened to 'The highway man' by Julia Donaldson. They joined in with the rhymes and learned new words such as 'bellowed' and 'scornful'. When pupils with SEND need additional support with reading, leaders try to understand their specific needs. For example, when pupils need help to understand what they have read, they are given precise techniques to help them find key information in the text.

Leaders ensure that all pupils can read by the start of Year 2. They have prioritised additional lessons for the teaching of early reading. These sessions help pupils to 'over-learn' the knowledge they need to read simple books. Regular checks mean that pupils' gaps in early reading are quickly identified.

Leaders provide support for pupils to attend extra-curricular clubs. They provide many opportunities to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the world beyond school. For example, pupils make short video clips for the British Film Institute. However, pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and different faiths and cultures is not well developed.

Governors are proud of the school. They ask questions about the information that is presented to them by leaders. However, governors require further expertise to make sufficient checks on this information.

Staff feel well supported with their workload. They feel valued, and appreciate the training that leaders provide for them. They enjoy working at the school because the school is, as one said, 'calm, positive and like a family'.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that implementation of the curriculum, further development of governance and refining pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their families well. They ensure that any safeguarding concerns are regularly discussed. When needed, leaders involve other agencies to support families. Governors make regular checks to ensure that the processes and procedures in school help to safeguard all pupils.

Staff can identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that staff have regular training to help them understand how to safeguard pupils. The school's pastoral team supports pupils who may need additional help effectively.

The school's curriculum helps pupils to learn about different types of safety. From the very start, pupils learn about how to stay safe in the community and when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Governors are overly reliant on what leaders tell them. This prevents them from being able to check well enough the impact of leaders' actions. Governors should assure themselves that the information with which they are presented is accurate, so that they can hold leaders to account more effectively.
- Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values, including different faiths and cultures, is less strong than other aspects of their personal development. Leaders should ensure that pupils are able to broaden their knowledge of different faiths and cultures, so they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- On occasion, the implementation of the curriculum leads to a few pupils becoming unfocused and not learning as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that across all subjects, teaching activities enable all pupils to remain fully focused on their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

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

Further information

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

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

School details

Unique reference number	120588
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211619
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carl Norbron
Headteacher	James Siddle
Website	www.st-margarets-pri.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary school. It underwent a section 48 inspection in 2016.
- Since the previous Ofsted inspection, a new chair of governors and an assistant headteacher have been appointed.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- To judge the quality of education, specific subjects of the school's curriculum were discussed. This included meeting with subject leaders, consideration of leaders' curriculum organisation, visiting lessons, meeting with staff and pupils, and sampling pupils' work. The subjects that were selected for this focus were early reading, mathematics and computing. Aspects of the school's personal, social, health and economic education programme, as well as science, were also sampled.

- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body.
- Information on attendance, and behaviour logs and safeguarding records were analysed. Meetings with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils were also conducted.
- Pupils' behaviour was considered at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime.
- The views of parents were considered through the Ofsted survey, Parent View, and by meeting parents during the inspection. The views of staff were gathered as part of the on-site inspection.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Thornalley

Ofsted Inspector

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