



St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Withern

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120588
LEA LINCOLNSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280847
Inspection dates 18 May 2006 to 19 May 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Cheryl Thompson LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Withern
School category	Voluntary controlled		LN13 0NB
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01507 450375
Number on roll	63	Fax number	01507 450375
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Nick Denby
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Valerie Buckeridge

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 18 May 2006 - 19 May 2006	Inspection number 280847
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Margaret's is much smaller than most schools. Year groups are small and almost all pupils are White British with a very small number who have English as an additional language. The school serves a wide area of social deprivation. A high number of children join and leave at different times of the school year. Attainment on entry is generally below that expected of the age group, especially in literacy and numeracy skills. A much higher than average proportion of children are identified as having learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Margaret's gives children a sound education and has some considerable strengths. The school views itself as good. The inspector agrees with nearly all the school's views of itself but children's progress needs to be better to warrant the judgement of 'good'. Children make satisfactory academic progress and their personal development is excellent. The pastoral care provided is excellent. Each child is known exceptionally well and valued. Children are very keen to learn from a good curriculum which is enriched with an outstanding range of clubs. Older children behave exceptionally well. Parents and children value the school and all it has to offer. It provides satisfactory value for money. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a good idea of what their pupils know and need to learn next but do not always make the most profitable use of this information to ensure the best possible progress. Standards are generally below average in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science. Standards of presentation, spelling and handwriting are not good enough and do not always reflect children's abilities. Very good links between staff, parents and the adjacent playgroup ensure children are well prepared for starting in Class 1. This year, standards are around those typical for Reception children and they make sound progress. Provision for the youngest children is satisfactory. However, there is not enough attention paid to making sure they learn letter sounds at a fast enough rate to help them make a good start on reading and writing. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with particular strengths in promoting children's personal development. There are good systems in place for checking on the work of the school but they are not being used rigorously enough to have a significant impact on the progress children make. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and this demonstrates a sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards by rigorous use of the good systems for checking on children's progress and the work of the school.
- Improve teaching of phonics (letter sounds) so that Reception children make better progress in developing literacy skills.
- Improve standards of handwriting, presentation and spelling.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the school with below average knowledge and skills and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The high proportion of children with learning difficulties also make satisfactory progress. They make very good progress in their personal development and have good self-esteem. Children who have a particularly high level of need make good progress. They have very good support with their special work and are fully included in the life and work of their classes. Standards in national tests, as compared with other schools, vary considerably from year to year because small year groups are statistically unreliable.

Another factor impacting on the standards attained in tests and whether targets are met is the very high number of children joining and leaving the school. For example, in Year 6 in 2005, half of the children had joined in either Year 5 or Year 6. Over time, standards attained by children in Year 2 are below average in reading and writing. Standards attained by Year 6 are also below average in English, mathematics and science. Children do well in reading but writing is a weakness the school has identified for improvement. The targets set for attainment for Year 6 in 2005 were not met and it is unlikely that the 2006 targets will be met, except in English. Standards in handwriting and presentation are not good enough and do not always reflect children's ability or effort. Spelling of commonly used words is not secure. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with those expected at Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are very positive about learning. Behaviour in Class 1 is good, and, in response to the school's high expectations, older children's behaviour is excellent. They thrive on the many opportunities to take on responsibilities and are dependable and thoughtful young people. They contribute significantly to school life in such areas as organising and conducting assemblies, running the fruit snack shop and helping with serving and clearing dinners. The school council has a positive effect on school life and the care provided within it. It listens to children's ideas and concerns and discusses these with the whole school in assemblies. It is clear that children love being in school and feel very secure and happy. Attendance is good. Children develop a very good understanding of how to be healthy and safe through an extensive programme of personal, social and health education as well as cycle proficiency courses and visits from the local police. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The strong links with two local schools are very beneficial for children's social and cultural development. For example, all Year 6 pupils from the three schools worked together on a science day. The schools also share cultural experiences such as a visiting group who provided an 'Aboriginal Day'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's learning is underpinned by the excellent relationships that exist in classes. Children put forward their ideas and answers confidently, knowing that they will be listened to and respected. Where teaching is most successful, explicit expectations are set for children to achieve work in a certain amount of time and to a good standard. Children's work is always marked but there are opportunities to talk through what has been achieved and what could be improved. However, this is not done consistently across the school so children are not always

aware of what they need to do to improve. Not enough is expected of children in terms of handwriting and presentation, and the incorrect spelling of commonly used words are sometimes accepted. In the Foundation Stage, phonics (letter sounds) are not taught well enough to help children make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is suitably broad and balanced. As well as sound provision for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, there are very good opportunities for children to learn about environmental issues such as re-cycling and compost making. The lack of a school hall inhibits the delivery of the full physical education programme. However, the school makes every effort to use the outside areas as much as possible to compensate for this. The curriculum is enriched with a very good range of visits and visitors. For a small school, there is an outstanding range of after-school clubs. Children also take part in a residential visit and a high proportion take part very successfully in inter-school competitive sporting events. Together, these activities promote children's academic and personal development and lay firm foundations for their lives as adults.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. In this small school, all children are known and valued as individuals. The pastoral care they receive is excellent. Staff soon spot if a child is having difficulties or is distressed. Children with learning difficulties have suitable programmes of work and their parents are helped as much as possible to be involved in their progress. The school has good procedures for ensuring children's safety and welfare. Children say that if they have concerns about unkind behaviour, they are always dealt with. Children are confident that their ideas and opinions will be listened to and acted upon. For example, they said they would like more swimming time and this has been organised. The school has good systems for keeping track of children's academic progress. However, it is not yet using the information it collects to set challenging targets for individuals and making sure they know what to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides very good leadership for children's personal development. The headteacher and two teachers work very effectively together as a team, sharing subject responsibilities according to their expertise. They share a strong commitment to providing a school where each child is valued and enabled to thrive. The headteacher has a satisfactory understanding of what goes on in the school and what needs to be done to improve. The actual systems for checking on the work of the school are good, such as observing lessons, checking on work and tracking children's progress. However, there is not enough rigour

applied to these checks to ensure that details are noted on how to help children make even better progress. The views of parents and children are regularly sought and acted upon. For example, in line with parents' wishes, the school now provides good quality hot school dinners. Governors are very proud of the school and support the headteacher and her staff very well. They fulfil their roles satisfactorily, but need to develop their understanding of the standards achieved in the school in order that they can act as a 'critical friend' and challenge the school to do even better. The issues raised by the last inspection have been dealt with well, demonstrating at least a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The forward-thinking collaboration between St Margaret's and two other nearby small schools is already proving a very profitable move for both staff and children. For example, children share cultural experiences and staff share planning and assessment.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I enjoyed sharing lunchtimes with you and talking to you about what you like doing in school. I was impressed with how well you behave in lessons and at playtimes. I was also very impressed with how thoughtful you are about other children in your classes and how the older children help around the school so responsibly. You told me that you enjoyed your lessons, your visits to the other schools and that everyone in school looks after you and listens to you. You are very lucky to have such a great choice of clubs and sporting events. I noticed that all the adults know each of you and look after you very well. Your headteacher is making sure you get a sound education. I have asked her to do a few things to make it even better and there are some things you can help with too. I have asked her to make sure that when teachers mark your work they tell you how you can improve so that you can make even better progress. In Class 1, I have asked that the youngest children are taught letter sounds in a better way. I have also asked Mrs Buckeridge to check carefully what goes on in school to make sure you do as well as possible, and this is where you can help. When I looked through some of your work I thought that your handwriting and the presentation of your work doesn't really show how clever you are. Please could you try hard to make your work neater? I hope you continue to enjoy school and that 'Goldilocks' is a huge success. To Year 6: 'Good Luck' in your new schools.