

Inspection of a good school: Sherston CofE Primary School

Knockdown Road, Sherston, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 0NJ

Inspection date: 24 June 2021

Outcome

Sherston CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. They place significant importance on 'learning, caring and achieving together'. Leaders expect pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to flourish as kind and responsible young people.

Pupils are unanimous in their view that this is a happy and safe place to learn. They appreciate how leaders listen to their ideas. Pupils say that lunchtime is much better since they requested more activities. They enjoy the climbing area and games with the sports coaches. Regardless of age, pupils play together sensibly and cooperatively.

In lessons, pupils' behaviour is commendable. They listen to adults and are keen to please. Bullying is not a problem. On the rare occasion when friends fall out, pupils use helpful strategies to resolve issues, such as 'apologising' or 'talking together'.

Pupils enjoy carefully planned opportunities to broaden their knowledge and appreciation of the wider world. Following 'world religion week', pupils have a strong understanding of acceptance and diversity. Parents and carers also value the school's work beyond the academic curriculum. One parent told us how impressive it is that children are 'growing on a personal level', including having a 'social awareness beyond our rural community'.

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

Leaders and staff ensure that all pupils master learning to read at an early age. From the moment children start in the Reception class, they learn phonics. Well-trained staff make frequent checks on pupils who struggle to keep up with the ambitious reading programme. They maximise time throughout the school day to give the right support to pupils who need it. Older pupils talk animatedly about their love of reading. They are knowledgeable about their favourite authors. One pupil said, 'Reading takes you away from worries.'

In mathematics, teachers have the expert subject knowledge to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils remember important facts that support them in lessons. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils apply their secure knowledge of doubling to work out problem-solving challenges. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy using 'hands-on' equipment which supports their understanding of mathematical concepts. More pupils are becoming increasingly competent mathematicians.

The geography curriculum is not as well sequenced as other subjects. Teachers have not considered carefully enough how new knowledge links to what pupils have previously learned. In some classes, many pupils have not experienced a rich diet of geographical content over time. As a result, their understanding of complex topics, such as trade, is patchy. Leaders have plans in place to address this, but COVID-19 (coronavirus) has delayed some of their actions. In contrast, children in Reception use a range of geographical words in their play confidently.

Leaders inspire pupils to grow into responsible citizens. They place the value of friendship and kindness at the heart of their work. Pupils learn to 'spread kindness like confetti' by considering the impact of their words and actions on others. Older pupils say that they are confident to challenge gender stereotypes and racism. The introduction of 'worry boxes' helped many pupils overcome any anxieties about returning to school after the third national lockdown. Pupils appreciate how staff care about their wider personal development.

Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons. This means that interruptions to learning are rare.

Staff cater for pupils with SEND extremely well. They adapt learning skilfully to just the right level to meet pupils' needs. Teaching assistants offer timely support while encouraging and promoting independent thinking. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive in a supportive environment.

Governors share the ambitions of school leaders. They receive helpful information from subject leaders to strengthen their understanding of the curriculum. They have sought external support to improve their effectiveness in holding leaders to account. Staff appreciate the ongoing support from a 'well-being' governor. Additionally, they speak positively about how leaders consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand how to report any concerns about safeguarding. They know that leaders follow up such concerns appropriately and trigger the right multi-agency support if necessary. Staff, including governors, take part in regular training to keep pupils' welfare and safety at the forefront of their work. Leaders work effectively with pupils and families in need of extra help.

The school community collectively agrees that Sherston is a safe school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum leaders have not planned the content and sequencing of some wider curriculum subjects well enough. Therefore, it is not always clear what pupils should know and by when. Leaders should ensure that staff identify, sequence and plan core knowledge carefully where subjects are less well developed, such as geography. This will ensure that pupils have the building blocks for future 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. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23 February 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 [here](#).

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	126356
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10193544
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	139
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Belinda Robinson
Headteacher	Susan Leyden
Website	https://www.sherstonprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been some staffing changes. A headteacher took up post in September 2016. The special educational needs coordinator joined the school in January 2021.
- There have been some changes to the governing body. A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2020.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. The lead inspector met with four representatives from the governing body, including the chair, and made a telephone call to the local authority school improvement adviser.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, talked to teachers, looked at examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding policies and practices, including safeguarding checks on staff. They also considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. Inspectors talked to pupils and staff about safety.
- Inspectors considered 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 40 free-text responses. They also took into account 11 responses from staff and nine responses from pupils to the questionnaires issued at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Farr

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021