

Inspection of a good school: Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Semley, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9AU

Inspection date:

4 May 2023

Outcome

Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils believe their school is a warm, friendly, 'family' school. They are respectful and kind towards one another. Pupils are resilient in their efforts to learn. They strive to work hard for their teachers. For example, children in Reception worked studiously together to create a bug hotel.

Pupils say teachers show them 'how to be'. Pupils fully take part in school as sports ambassadors, play leaders and members of the school council. Pupils feel staff listen to their views and take them seriously. Pupil librarians listen to younger pupils read. Older pupils care for the younger children. For example, during lunchtime, pupils help to cut food or open packets for the younger children. All of this contributes to a warm, nurturing community.

Many pupils attend a range of after-school clubs. Leaders make sure there is variation, such as tennis, cricket or Lego. Several pupils enjoy learning musical instruments, with many playing the piano. Leaders plan regular trips and visits, such as to Stonehenge. This supports the planned learning. With the Coronation imminent, pupils have excitedly prepared for a crown parade. They understand the significance of symbols such as the sceptre and orb.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. In mathematics, for example, it is well sequenced so pupils build on their knowledge. Pupils in Year 4 use their understanding of the properties of shape and apply this to their new learning. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their ability to use calculation strategies to find the mean. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not broken down and sequenced effectively. Leaders have not been precise enough in the knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, a few pupils do not recall their learning as well as they could.

In Reception class, leaders plan a curriculum to prepare children well for the next steps of their formal learning. Children enjoy sharing their writing through their play and exploration. Leaders help children to develop their pencil grip and master their letter formation.

Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read follow a well-implemented phonics programme. Pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. Leaders track progress carefully so pupils can receive additional intervention when they need it. Leaders are ambitious for pupils to learn their phonics quickly and securely. Working with external support, they are in the process of implementing a new programme aiming to deliver even better outcomes for pupils. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. As pupils become independent in their reading, teachers encourage them to read a wide range of texts. The library is at the centre of the school. Supported by the local community and parents, pupils relish choosing books and spending time there.

Pupils learn in mixed-age classes. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils focus on their lessons and show resilience in their learning, especially as it becomes challenging. They listen carefully and show enthusiasm when contributing to class discussions. In Reception class, children carry out routines and expectations naturally and calmly.

Leaders are ambitious to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the adaptation and support they need. Leaders have put precise systems in place to support staff to identify pupils' needs early. However, staff do not have the strategies or training to support them in precisely adapting for pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND rely on adult help for their support to access their learning. Leaders have started to plan the next steps in providing staff with the strategies they need to provide adaptation effectively.

Leaders have planned a well-structured personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils recall their learning with detail. As well as learning about respect, relationships and stereotypes, pupils learn about puberty in an age-appropriate way. Pupils keenly support one another and embrace difference. For example, they explain how they helped a pupil with no understanding of English to feel part of the community.

Parents are hugely positive about the school and the care staff have for the children. They are supportive of the new headteacher and her ambition to work closely with the community. Governors have a secure knowledge of the priorities for the school. They support and challenge leaders to make those improvements. Staff feel leaders take their workload seriously. Through a network of schools, staff appreciate working with colleagues and the opportunities this brings for their professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have evaluated the systems in place to keep pupils safe. Systems for reporting are well implemented and clear. As a result, staff are confident to identify and report concerns. Leaders follow up with prompt and effective actions.

Leaders make sure the records for checking that adults are safe to work with children are well maintained. They go beyond statutory requirements to ensure records are thorough.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils are articulate in knowing how to protect themselves. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They are confident staff will look after them if they have concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge pupils will learn. As a result, pupils do not learn knowledge as deeply as they should. Leaders need to ensure the important knowledge pupils will learn is explicit.
- Some staff do not have sufficient knowledge to provide precise adaptation and support to pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils rely on adults when they are struggling. Leaders need to make sure staff are trained so they can adapt more precisely for pupils with SEND.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2014.

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.

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	126439
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10287462
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Briony Brickell
Headteacher	Abigail Carlyle-Clarke
Website	www.semley.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in April 2022.
- Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a church school in the Diocese of Salisbury. The school was graded good at its section 48 inspection in May 2019.
- The school has a breakfast club for pupils.
- Classes are taught in mixed-age groups.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments, and the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Hicks

Ofsted Inspector

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