

Inspection of Sholden Church of England Primary School

London Road, Sholden, Deal, Kent CT14 0AB

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are incredibly positive about their experiences at Sholden Church of England Primary School. They are bubbling with eagerness to talk about the range of different opportunities available to them, including being 'buddies' for younger pupils, becoming members of the school or spiritual councils, or being prefects. Pupils are proud to hold these responsibilities, and those who do not yet have the chance are keen to have these opportunities in the future.

The school values of courage, forgiveness, kindness, peace and love run throughout the school. Pupils are proud to embody these values and talk about the 'Christian coins' and headteacher's awards they earn for demonstrating them. Pupils talk especially positively about the need to be inclusive and kind, explaining that it is just 'what we do'.

Staff know their pupils especially well, and this leads to strong, nurturing relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe and can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe both online and in the wider world.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils meet these expectations readily. As a result, behaviour around the school is calm and pupils are settled and focused in lessons.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum across subjects that maps out carefully what all pupils need to know, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This builds effectively from the early years upwards, ensuring that there are strong foundations for learning which are built upon effectively as pupils progress through the school. In mathematics and early reading, this sequence has identified the small steps of knowledge that pupils need, leading to precise teaching in lessons. As a result, pupils generally achieve well. In some foundation subjects, however, these small steps have not yet been identified quite as closely. This means that, on occasion, lesson activities are not always as precisely linked to the intended learning as they could be.

In early reading and mathematics, teachers continually assess what pupils know and can remember during their lessons. Teachers then use this knowledge to adapt what they teach to inform pupils' next steps, ensuring that any misunderstandings are addressed quickly. In other foundation subjects, while teachers do check pupils' understanding, this is not done as precisely as in reading and mathematics. This means that staff do not have the same precise understanding of what pupils have understood or what they can remember longer term.

Leaders promote a love of reading throughout the school. The library is a well-used space and leaders have plans to develop this further. There are welcoming reading corners in each classroom. Staff share a range of stories and books from the early

years onwards, setting the foundations for a love of reading from the earliest stages. Leaders have thought carefully about the range of texts they share with pupils, ensuring that they are exposed to a wide cultural experience beyond their own.

Early reading is taught effectively. Children benefit from targeted and specific sessions to support with any particular needs, helping them to develop the skills they need to become increasingly fluent and confident readers.

In lessons, there is a positive learning culture. Pupils are keen to engage with their learning. Classrooms are calm, orderly places. Pupils know the school rules and understand how these keep them and their friends safe and happy.

Leaders ensure that all staff have a secure knowledge of how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and put in place additional support, right from the early years, so that they can access their learning effectively. Leaders engage increasingly effectively with parents and carers, with regular 'SEND coffee mornings' offering opportunities to engage with leaders and receive support and advice.

The wider development of pupils is also well considered by leaders. They ensure that pupils access a range of trips that are linked to their learning, such as visits to a castle and to a mining museum. Pupils also enthused about the recent residential trip and the chance to work together to solve problems.

Leaders know their school well and carefully identify the actions they need to take to develop it. They work effectively with governors and the trust to evaluate the impact of their actions. This helps them to know that their actions are having the impact they intend. Leaders work collaboratively with other small schools across the trust to share their practice and be stronger together, for example in terms of developing their curriculum. This is starting to show a positive impact, particularly on workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff receive appropriate training which is regularly updated, meaning that they know how to identify and refer any pupils who might be at risk. They know their pupils well, and there are detailed records kept of any concerns. Concerns are acted on quickly, and leaders liaise well with external agencies as needed.

Leaders complete appropriate checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. Governors know their safeguarding responsibilities and hold leaders to account.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is not yet the same systematic approach to assessment in the foundation subjects as there is in reading and maths. This means that teachers and leaders do not know precisely how much knowledge pupils have understood or retained over time. Leaders need to ensure that all staff know how to approach assessment across all subjects so that they can assess what pupils can remember long term, as well as using this information to inform next steps.

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	147057
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268142
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Walton
Headteacher	Dawn Theaker
Website	www.sholdenprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has been part of the Deal Education Alliance for Learning Trust since April 2019.
- Sholden Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in April 2019. When its predecessor school, also named Sholden Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body,

including the chair of governors, and also with members of the trust board and the chief executive officer. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. 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. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to familiar adults.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, the governing body, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The team spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of the views of parents, carers and staff through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sara Wakefield

Ofsted Inspector

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