



Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126439
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282113
Inspection dates 25 April 2006 to 26 April 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Semley
School category	Voluntary aided		Shaftesbury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Dorset SP7 9AU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01747 830427
Number on roll	124	Fax number	01747 830427
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Judi Godeseth
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr Karl Hopwood

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 25 April 2006 - 26 April 2006	Inspection number 282113
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Semley is a smaller-than-average primary school with an increasing roll. The designation changed from a first school to a primary school in September 2004 and the number of pupils has doubled. Nearly all pupils are White British. The majority of pupils are from relatively advantaged backgrounds and none is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is low, as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Semley is a good school with many outstanding features. The inspector and school agree on this judgement of the school's effectiveness, although the school understates some of its strengths. Teaching is good, with many outstanding elements. The pupils join the school with mainly above-average ability and make good progress. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most achieve the early learning goals; a few are already beginning to work beyond this expectation. Standards have been consistently above national averages in Key Stage 1 and all pupils who took the Key Stage 2 tests performed above national expectations. Although pupils' work is assessed regularly, the quality of marking and the use of targets for pupils to know how to improve their work further are inconsistent.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and the school puts the highest priority on their personal development. Their behaviour and attitudes to school and each other are exemplary. They enjoy coming to school and want to learn. Most take part in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities provided. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work and all the staff.

The headteacher has shown outstanding leadership and has a clear vision for further improvements. The headteacher is very ably supported by the new senior management structure, and leadership and management are good overall.

Issues at the last inspection have shown significant improvement and the school has very good capacity to improve further. The school makes the best use of all its resources and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the consistent use of targets with pupils so they all understand how to improve their work.
- Ensure that marking is of a consistently high standard and helps all pupils to improve their work further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and progress are good throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with above-average attainment. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the goals set for them in all areas of learning. A few pupils are starting to work at a consistently higher level than the expectations for pupils at age five as a result of improved learning opportunities. For pupils aged seven, results have been consistently above the national average in recent years. The 2005 results were slightly lower than in previous years but reflected the school's own predictions for this year group. Throughout Key Stage 1 the vast majority of pupils make good progress, and some make very good progress. In 2005, all pupils at age 11 exceeded the standards expected for their age, although this was based on a very small group of pupils. In Key

Stage 2 all pupils make at least good progress and a few are beginning to demonstrate attainments above those expected for their age because of higher teacher expectations.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and all are supported very well in lessons. Pupils who show a particular talent are challenged well in most classes and have access to extension work, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils is outstanding, which is better than the school judges itself. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal and social skills are developed very well and this helps them to relate confidently to each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are exemplary. Pupils work extremely well together and show high levels of maturity when working in pairs and small groups to discuss their ideas in class activities. They show great care for one another in class and in the playground. Pupils understand the reasons for school rules and appreciate the system of rewards.

The school's Christian ethos gives excellent support to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' ideas are valued and fully taken into account through the highly effective work of the school council and pupil surveys. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities for each other in school, and for the wider community beyond. This is illustrated by pupils supporting each other in the playground on the friendship bench, by many taking on positions of responsibility and by their charity fundraising efforts. Pupils gain a good understanding of the diversity of cultures via their links with an inner-London school, and the school will shortly become part of an international project with four other countries to extend pupils' knowledge of other communities. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of the importance of eating healthily, taking regular exercise and staying safe. They are gaining the necessary numeracy, literacy and computer skills that will help them in the workplace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall, with many outstanding elements, and this explains why pupils learn well and make good progress. In the best teaching, teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' work and pupils respond well by trying hard to succeed. Teachers make lessons enjoyable by using a wide range of exciting activities, including computers and large interactive screens, to stimulate further interest in learning. The pace of lessons is usually very brisk and holds pupils' attention throughout the lesson. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled at questioning pupils to check their understanding and to develop independent thinking.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, although the quality of marking and written feedback to help pupils know how to improve their work further is inconsistent. In the best practice pupils are set specific targets to incorporate in their future work. Occasionally pupils mark their own work and set their own targets, which is helping them to increase their understanding of high quality work. A good example is during 'racy pacy' writing in Key Stage 2. The very good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all pupils who need help are supported very well in their learning. The school has a very good partnership with parents. They are provided with information about the curriculum and their child's progress that enables them to provide valuable support at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that makes learning interesting. Pupils particularly comment on how much they enjoy art, as they can be creative, and mathematics, especially when they are given challenging work. Teachers are starting to make better links between subjects for pupils to use their English and mathematical skills consistently. Teachers are beginning to adapt planning well to create more continuity between subjects. For example, a topic in design and technology planned for the autumn was taught in the spring to extend science work on light and electricity. The revised guidance for some subjects ensures teachers have a good basis for lesson planning that is better meeting the learning needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in a class.

The school enriches the curriculum with an outstanding range of activities and pupils are offered a wealth of opportunities during the school day and after school. The school makes outstanding use of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum such as using local facilities to develop history knowledge, and nearly half of the pupils learn to play musical instruments. The vast majority of pupils attend activities outside the school day to play sport, improve their artistic talents or care for their environment. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have good opportunities for residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall, with some significant strengths. The school takes exceptionally good care of its pupils and knows them well. A friendly and caring atmosphere permeates throughout the school. One parent commented about her child, 'she is very happy and thriving within the caring learning environment.' Teachers encourage pupils to listen to and respect each other and to show initiative and independence. All pupils respond very positively to these opportunities. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have confidence that any worries they have are dealt with quickly and sensitively. The procedures for child protection have been improved and are now robust. Regular risk assessments ensure a secure and well-maintained environment for learning.

The support for pupils with learning difficulties, which sometimes involves outside agencies, is very good. The targets on their individual plans are reviewed regularly and this helps them to achieve well. The procedures to monitor and track the progress of all pupils and set individual targets for them to improve are inconsistent. This has already been identified as an area for improvement by the senior management team.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. Improvements since the last inspection have been significant in all the identified areas and there is very good capacity to improve further. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has set a clear vision for improvements to raise standards further. He has created a caring atmosphere where all pupils feel valued and are supported very effectively in their learning and personal development. He is very ably supported by the new senior management structure and together they are starting to create a strong team to lead future developments. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development based on secure and robust evaluation of its work. He has implemented an excellent range of activities to monitor the school's work, which is used effectively by all staff to improve the learning opportunities available to pupils. Staff with subject and other responsibilities in the school are beginning to implement their roles effectively. They are given good opportunities to review their subjects, influence teaching activities and organise support for individual pupils.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work and many comment on the welcoming approach adopted by the headteacher and staff. One parent's comment reflects those of many others: 'Excellent leadership of the headteacher, he injects enthusiasm and energy into the school'.

The governing body provides good support and guidance to the school. The chair of governors is highly experienced and uses her knowledge extremely well to both support the headteacher and act as an effective critical friend. Although many of the governors are new, they have good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They undertake regular visits to the school and a few have met with subject leaders to improve their knowledge of the school's work and monitor its progress.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	2	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

Following my visit to your school, I wanted to say thank you for talking to me and telling me so much about the things you are doing and showing me your work.

I am pleased to say that, for lots of reasons, Semley CE primary is a good school. Here are some of the most important things that make it so good:

- Teachers provide you with exciting activities that help to make learning fun in lessons and you say how much you enjoy school.
- You work hard in lessons and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave extremely well around the school and show a great deal of care for each other.
- You are very well looked after in school by all the staff, and everyone works together to help you feel safe.
- You are very lucky to have so many extra activities to help you learn musical instruments, sing, keep fit and healthy and look after the environment.
- Your headteacher has worked very hard to make the school as good as it is and to make sure all of you are well cared for and have lots of opportunities to learn.

Some of you already have targets to help you improve your work, including when your work is marked, but I think all of you should have them so that you know how to get even better at your work. I have asked the school to find ways of doing this.

Thank you for making me feel so welcome; you are very lucky to be in such a good school. I hope that you continue to work hard in the future and to enjoy your learning.