

# Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126439
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328498
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	135
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janni Redmond
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Moorsom
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Semley Shaftesbury SP7 9AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01747 830427
<b>Fax number</b>	01747 830427

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Semley is a small school serving the village and surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including hearing impairment, specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average.

The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. Privately-run childcare provision for children in the 2–4 age range shares the school site. It was subject to a separate inspection and is not covered by this report.

The school has been through a period of staff changes and sickness. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2008, after a year during which the school had an acting headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has been through a period of turbulence during which pupils' progress dropped. However, under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, strong action has arrested the decline and pupils' achievement is now good. Pupils are well cared for, and the support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a great strength of the school. Pupils show good personal development and parents are very satisfied. They appreciate the way the school is, as one commented, 'at the heart of the community'.

Standards vary greatly from year to year because of the small size and differing ability profile of each year group. They are average overall. Importantly, though, pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Mathematics was identified as an area of weakness in Autumn 2007, and various measures were taken to improve it. These had limited impact the first year, but were followed up very effectively by the headteacher after her appointment. The school's detailed tracking shows that progress in mathematics this year has been excellent in some parts of the school – for example in Year 6 and throughout Key Stage 1. This effective action, coupled with the school's very accurate self-evaluation, demonstrates its good capacity to improve further.

One particularly effective strategy in mathematics has been to identify groups of pupils who need specific support or extension work, and withdraw them from lessons for separate teaching. Another has been to make the lessons more interesting and more focused on solving problems. Teaching is also having a good impact because teachers and teaching assistants question well to make sure pupils understand. Occasionally, however, more able pupils do not move on quickly enough because they do the same work as the rest of the class before being given something harder. This is partly because teachers' plans do not always take into account why they want pupils to carry out a specific activity – what the key teaching point is or what learning will result for pupils of different abilities, especially the most able. As a result, the pupils themselves do not always know why they are engaged in an activity. Teachers' marking corrects errors and gives day-to-day guidance, but most pupils are not provided with focused targets, framed in language they can understand, to help them improve over the longer term. In contrast, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear and effective targets in their individual education plans.

The high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs means that the number of adults working in classes is high. This ensures that pupils get plenty of individual attention. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very well and there is a strong feeling of teamwork in the school. Pupils feel very safe and they have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They, too, make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and the direction it takes. They much enjoy all the school offers, and their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their understanding of the range of cultures present in Britain today is less well developed, and the school has recognised that it has not yet done enough to broaden their horizons.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

This good quality provision ensures that the children are provided with a good start to their education and a secure basis for their future learning. Interesting and stimulating activities are

planned which strike a good balance between adult direction and free choices for the children. At the time of the inspection, for example, one corner of the classroom was arranged as a pretend building site. Good quality teaching, especially positive relationships, the very productive and focused use of teaching assistants, and the use of stimulating resources and space, both indoors and outdoors, helps to ensure good progress. The detailed and individual support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to be fully included, to the benefit of themselves and the others in the class. The most able children take advantage of the varied and interesting curriculum, but opportunities are sometimes missed to give them more demanding work. The children are happy and confident; they work and play and listen to each other well. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. Good care, guidance and support, including strong involvement of parents and links with pre-school provision, ensure that the children settle into routines and much enjoy being at school. Good management ensures that the personal needs of each child are catered for in a caring and effective way.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that teachers plan focused activities that support clearly identified teaching or learning points, and that these teaching or learning objectives are suitably challenging for pupils of different skills and abilities.
- Improve pupils' understanding of their learning, ensuring that they know why they are doing the activities set in lessons and that they have clear targets to help them improve in the longer term.
- Give pupils a better understanding of the range of cultures present in Britain today.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Significant numbers of pupils reach standards above those expected for their age but, because of the nature of some pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are average overall. Achievement is good. Progress is particularly good for pupils with more severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is also especially rapid in Key Stage 1.

Progress has historically been best in English, but this year it has much improved in mathematics and has also improved in science. In 2008, the Year 6 pupils made average progress to reach standards that were slightly above average in their national tests. The school's records show that the current Year 6 pupils have made excellent progress in mathematics this year. They have more than made up ground lost in some previous years when progress was slower and their overall progress through the key stage has been good in both mathematics and English.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well and look after each other. The school council ensures that everybody is listened to, for example by providing an 'ideas and worry box' that pupils can use to make suggestions. Even children in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate a good awareness of safety by wearing hard hats on their 'building site' and ensuring there is safety tape at the edge of it. Pupils are well aware of road safety, and this is particularly important on narrow country lanes in the local area. They also have a good understanding of internet safety. They have good skills in information and communication technology, one of many ways in which they are well prepared for their future lives. They get plenty of exercise through sports and activities such as 'wake and shake'. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 thoroughly enjoyed an exercise

session in French during the inspection. Attendance is good. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is supported well through their charitable links with a school in Rwanda, but plans to develop links with schools in other parts of England are at a very early stage. Pupils do, however, have strong and wide-ranging links with the local church and the wider local community. They have worked with a local wildlife group, for example, to plant new areas of hedgerow.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit from not only good whole-class teaching, but also from very effective teaching in small groups that in some cases comprises one-to-one tuition. Teachers plan imaginatively, building in opportunities for pupils to reflect. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils were able to engage with the idea that things in a dream can represent things in real life. Pupils feel they are learning well and talk of teachers 'encouraging us to do new things'. They also say that teachers 'make work fun', even though, at times, they are unsure of what they are learning when carrying out an activity. Classroom routines are well established, and there is a good positive working atmosphere. Teachers and teaching assistants move unobtrusively around different groups, asking probing questions to make sure that children of different abilities can all cope with the work the class is doing. The most able pupils are challenged well by the questions that the adults ask, but more challenging work is commonly given to them only when they have finished the main class task, and this can sometimes slow their pace of progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum includes a wide range of very interesting activities. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, spent an evening at the school sleeping overnight in the hall as if they were evacuees from the Second World War. A recent science week was greatly enjoyed by the pupils, who report that it helped them to 'think about why things happen'. The curriculum is also well organised; groups are withdrawn from classes and taught separately for different purposes. These groups often comprise pupils of lower ability, or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and parents speak highly of the work done by the 'pips' group. However, more able mathematicians are also withdrawn for separate work. The school has identified that the provision for gifted and talented pupils is not sufficiently varied. At the moment, it is largely restricted to events run by the local cluster of schools.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents and pupils much appreciate the way pupils are looked after; as one parent wrote, 'It is the extra care and attention that makes a huge difference.' Requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met. All pupils benefit from good support, but for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities it is particularly impressive. Targets and strategies from these pupils' individual education plans are integrated by teaching assistants into the activities of the lesson. This contributes to the strong sense of inclusion within the school. The school draws well on support and expertise from the local authority and uses specialist equipment such as hearing loops to help meet the wide range of special needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers have been experimenting with the setting of targets for other pupils. These sometimes

have too broad a focus, for example 'improve tables' rather than specifying which tables. In general, the day-to-day guidance to pupils on how to improve their work in lessons is more effective and helpful than the guidance to them on what they should aim for in the longer term.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher inherited a difficult management situation and has demonstrated great skill in bringing the staff together to work as a team while at the same time addressing pressing issues concerned with progress. Statutory target setting is now refined and strong self-evaluation is well established. Many parents acknowledge this, praising the leadership and appreciating the way the headteacher is available to talk to them. Governors have been very supportive throughout the issues that the school has faced and have given unstintingly of their time. The governing body is well organised and they offer a good range of skills. However, the challenge that governors offer to the school is satisfactory rather than better, as is the overall way in which the school promotes community cohesion. Governors as yet have limited understanding of what data they should require or explanations they should ask for to evaluate achievement.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Semley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Shaftesbury SP7 9AU

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school yesterday. We enjoyed our day and we think you go to a good school. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Turtles class, and you are all making good progress. We were impressed by how much your mathematics has improved recently. You told us you feel very well cared for, and you are clearly good at keeping yourselves healthy and safe. You get a lot of extra help from all the adults who are in the school and this particularly benefits those of you who find learning difficult. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy the things the school offers, and how much you yourselves contribute to the success of the school – for example, in the school council and in the playground. You behave well and you look after each other.

The headteacher and staff have already made a lot of improvements, but they want to improve the school more and we have given them three more things to do.

- We have asked the teachers to make sure that the activities they give you to do in lessons are very closely linked to the things that they want you to learn next. You can help by telling the teachers if the work you are doing is a bit too easy.
- We also want you to be told what it is you are trying to learn in each lesson, and to be given clear targets to aim for.
- Some of you do not know very much about how other children in different parts of Britain live, particularly those from other backgrounds. We want the school to help you to understand more about this.

With best wishes for the future

Yours faithfully

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector