

Inspection of Shillingstone Church of England Primary School

Augustan Avenue, Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 0TX

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 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

The headteacher of this school is Jane Whitehouse-Sharpe. This school is part of Sherborne Area Schools' Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Brian Hooper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Middleton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Shillingstone are proud to belong to an inclusive and caring community. They are kind and patient with one another. Pupils understand that everyone is different. They celebrate this. Pupils have warm relationships with staff and they feel safe.

Pupils enjoy learning a broad range of subjects. The school has high expectations of them. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss and debate ideas. They are keen to learn and curious to know more. They have highly positive attitudes towards school.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to adults. Pupils of all ages play well together. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. They understand the school's 'golden rules' and follow them well. This starts in the early years. Children listen carefully to staff and behave well.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities outside the classroom. They enjoy a range of trips and visits to support their learning. Sports events and tournaments are particularly popular, and open to all. Residential trips are a particular highlight of the school calendar. Older pupils value their positions of leadership in the school. As 'Bronze Ambassadors', they take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils contribute positively to the school community.

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

The school has experienced significant change recently as it merged with another local primary school. It has managed the amalgamation of new cohorts and curriculum changes well. Pupils are integrated well. The school has now developed a new curriculum. This has led to an improved quality of education that is not yet reflected in published outcomes.

The school has planned an ambitious curriculum. Pupils experience a broad curriculum where all subjects are valued. Where possible, subjects are taught by subject experts, for example for music and French. The school has identified what pupils need to know and understand in all subjects. The curriculum is designed so that pupils in mixed-age classes build their learning well over time. Most pupils are benefiting from the recent improvements. However, the precision evident in curriculum planning is not always evident in how it is delivered. For example, sometimes, learning activities do not precisely match what pupils can do. This means some pupils do not move on to more complex work when they are ready. The school has not yet evaluated the impact of recent changes.

There is a sharp focus on early reading, mathematics and writing, including in the early years. Staff ensure that information is presented clearly. They check pupils' understanding before teaching new content. This means that most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn effectively.

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy learning and using new vocabulary in their discussions and their writing.

Children begin learning phonics as soon as they start school. They learn and remember new sounds well. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds they are learning. This helps them to gain confidence. Pupils who are struggling to read receive the support they need to help them to catch up. Staff read high-quality texts to pupils every day. This successfully develops a love of reading.

Pupils with SEND are identified accurately. They receive extra help when needed. Most of the time, appropriate adaptations are made so that pupils can learn the curriculum alongside their peers. The school ensures that all pupils are actively included in school life.

Pupils behave well. They understand the school's systems to support good behaviour. This helps pupils to make good choices and to support one another. Children in the early years quickly settle into routines. They focus on their work and share sensibly with one another. They enjoy listening to familiar stories. Staff expertly help children use language to explain how they are feeling.

Pupils learn about discrimination, respect and democracy. As a result, all pupils contribute actively to the harmonious culture in their school. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils feel well cared for. Staff know every pupil. Pupils are taught how to be resilient and overcome difficulties, such as friendship issues. Their mental and physical health is prioritised. Pupils remember important information about how to keep themselves safe online.

The school and trust have high expectations. They have maintained their vision for the school during a period of significant change. The trust has ensured that the school maintains its distinctive ethos. Staff feel valued and well supported. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experiences at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Much of the work on the school's curriculum has been recent, following significant changes last year as the school merged with another. At times, the implementation of the curriculum does not precisely match its intent. Learning activities do not always reflect what pupils can do. As a result, pupils do not always move on to more complex work when they are ready. The trust must ensure that teachers are supported to implement the curriculum effectively so that all pupils benefit from the school's ambitious curriculum.

- The school has recently adapted its curriculum to facilitate changes to its mixed-age classes. However, it has not evaluated the effectiveness of curriculum changes. The trust needs to ensure that curriculum implementation is consistently strong and has the intended impact.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147141
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10268554
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	108
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Middleton
Headteacher	Jane Whitehouse-Sharpe
Website	www.shillingstone.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Salisbury. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection was on 13 October 2022.
- The school joined the Sherborne Area Schools' Trust on 1 July 2019.
- The school has merged with Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England School. Pupils who previously attended Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England School have attended Shillingstone Church of England School since September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in writing and history.
- The lead inspector analysed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and staff in Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, as well as talking to them in lessons and during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector also met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- The lead inspector met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- Inspectors met with school and trust leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barraclough	His Majesty's Inspector

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