

# Sherston CofE Primary School

Address: Knockdown Road, Sherston, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 0NJ

Unique reference number (URN): 126356

## Inspection report: 3 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ●
Needs attention	● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

### ✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

#### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

## Strong standard ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils' attendance is a significant strength of the school. Attendance is significantly above national figures. Clear expectations and robust systems ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, attend regularly and punctually. Leaders work proactively with families to remove any obstacles and promote the importance of high attendance. All staff contribute to this. The positive relationship between school and families means that pupils enjoy coming to school.

More recently, the school has focused on establishing high expectations for behaviour and secure routines. Staff and pupils from Reception Year to Year 6 follow these consistently. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils demonstrate the utmost respect for their peers and staff, who act as excellent role models for positive behaviour. Any form of discrimination is rare and dealt with quickly. Pupils have a strong desire to learn. They consistently have positive attitudes in lessons. They engage enthusiastically and sustain focus, even when tasks are challenging. Older pupils act as role models to younger children, contributing to a culture where positive behaviour is taught and lived out.

---

## Expected standard ●

### Achievement

Expected standard ●

Published outcomes show that pupils' achievement is above other pupils nationally. Pupils achieve well in the phonics screening test and at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics. This indicates that generally, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils accurately recall aspects of their learning across the wider curriculum. For example, older pupils use their knowledge of invaders and settlers to explain confidently why the Romans came to Britain.

However, at times, pupils' achievement in national tests is not reflected well enough in the quality of work they produce. Sometimes, staff do not address errors in spelling, sentence structure and letter formation. When this occurs, errors in some pupils' written work persist.

### Inclusion

Expected standard ●

This is an inclusive school. Staff quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with barriers to learning or wellbeing. They provide tailored support. For example, service pupils receive additional pastoral support if their parents and carers are deployed abroad.

Staff typically benefit from the training they receive. They work closely with external professionals to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to succeed.

For example, staff work alongside speech and language therapists and the behaviour support team to ensure that provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Staff regularly measure and review pupils' targets together with parents. This enables pupils to access learning alongside their peers. However, where the quality of teaching is less effective, this hinders the progress some pupils with SEND make across the curriculum.

Leaders use their knowledge of the barriers some pupils have to inform the school's pupil premium strategy. Staff use this information effectively to ensure pupils fully engage in all aspects of school life. This is particularly noticeable in the improvements made in attendance for disadvantaged pupils.

The school makes effective use of alternative provision to enhance pupils' education. Leaders review and monitor the success of this. This ensures that the specific needs of pupils are well met.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

The school's personal development programme supports pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. Pupils are morally grounded individuals who know the difference between right and wrong. They actively ensure that everyone is treated as a unique person. Pupils know that tolerance and acceptance are key to a harmonious and respectful school community.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils to understand what makes a positive relationship. They know that honesty and trust are essential qualities in a friendship. Pupils speak with maturity about how their bodies change as they get older. Pupils learn about fundamental British values through the PSHE curriculum and assemblies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe on a day-to-day basis as well as when using the internet. They understand the benefits and dangers of being online. They know never to share any personal details.

The close links with the wider community support pupils to understand their role as a responsible citizen. Pupils show respect for those involved in war during significant events such as the remembrance service. They also reflect on the sacrifice made. Pupils know they can make a difference through the charities they support and donations they make as a result of special celebrations, such as the harvest festival.

Pupils develop their interests and talents through the curriculum. They build these further through a wide range of enrichment activities. They enjoy drama, rock steady and French club. They particularly benefit from playing different musical instruments, including the ukulele and piano. This helps to develop pupils' appreciation of the arts. Leaders make sure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, fully benefit from this offer. They are included in all aspects of school life.

---

## Needs attention

### Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders do not have an accurate and informed view of the quality of the curriculum in some areas. Although they have identified the need to improve pupils' handwriting, leaders have not fully considered the broader gaps that exist in some pupils' writing. Furthermore, from time to time, the books that some pupils are encouraged to read do not match the sounds that they know. This limits how well some pupils develop their knowledge of reading and writing.

There is too much variability in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is less effective, the checks that teachers make do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions swiftly enough. Learning activities are not adapted well enough. At times, pupils complete tasks that are too complex too soon.

Despite the deficiencies that exist, the curriculum is broad and ambitious. The school has identified what it wants pupils to learn and in what order. In some subjects, teachers have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. For example, in mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils use their knowledge of times tables well to tackle more challenging concepts, such as converting fractions to decimals. Typically, teaching ensures that pupils can recall what they have learned previously. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently recall the journey of a river, including subject-specific vocabulary.

### Early years

Needs attention 

In the early years curriculum, leaders have not considered well enough how children will build their knowledge over time. This means that children do not develop their understanding sequentially. They struggle to tackle more challenging tasks as they have not secured the basic knowledge first. For example, some children do not form their letters accurately when writing and spelling. Staff do not routinely address these errors, which prevents children from developing the essential writing skills they need. The interactions between adults and children sometimes lack precision because of how the curriculum is designed. This means that some children do not develop their communication and vocabulary skills as well as they could.

Despite these inconsistencies, leaders have prioritised developing the early years. The learning environment supports children to build independence. It is calm, orderly and organised. Leaders have identified the knowledge and skills they want children to learn. Children have the opportunity to practise their reading, writing and number skills. They learn to read sounds from the start. Where needed, children receive support to catch up with their reading.

Children in the early years are happy and safe. Staff build positive relationships with children and know them well. Adults show high levels of care and work closely with parents and carers. Children follow the routines of the school day well.

Leaders, including governors, do not have a detailed enough understanding of what the school needs to do to improve some aspects of the school's work. They have taken action to address handwriting across the school. However, this has not sufficiently addressed the wider weaknesses evident in pupils' writing knowledge. The rate of improvement in this area is not quick enough.

Those responsible for governance have an overly positive view of the school because of the school's published outcomes. Leaders have not been precise in identifying the underlying cause of the weaknesses in writing or to reduce the variability in the quality of teaching. As a result, governors do not provide the level of challenge needed to ensure that all pupils, including those with barriers, achieve well in all year groups.

Governors ensure the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities. There is a commitment from leaders to provide a high quality education for pupils. The school has prioritised improvements to pupils' behaviour and attendance, showing significant improvement.

Staff are valued members of the school. They recognise the support leaders provide to help them manage their workload and wellbeing. Staff appreciate the professional learning programme the school provides. Parents and carers are unwavering in their support for the school and value the inclusive, friendly and family feel that exists.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

Pupils at this school are well cared for and safe. They skip into school with a desire to learn and a smile on their face. Staff warmly welcome pupils. This ensures they develop a strong sense of belonging. Staff forge positive relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils know they can talk to a trusted adult about any worries or concerns. The school's high levels of attendance demonstrate the strength of the school's positive culture.

Pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn. They speak with enthusiasm about their current learning. Pupils particularly enjoy sharing their knowledge in assemblies. Pupils achieve well compared to others nationally at the end of Year 6 and in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school secures timely support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with barriers to learning or wellbeing. However, some pupils do not have a secure foundation in writing.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is a strength. Older pupils exemplify the school's values. Bullying is rare and swiftly dealt with. Children in Reception Year follow the school routines and expectations. They look up to their older peers. However, the design of the early years curriculum does not enable children to build their knowledge in a logical order. As a result, some children in Reception Year do not develop a secure understanding of the important key skills they need to be ready for Year 1.

In some areas of the school's work, leaders, including governors, do not have an accurate view of what is working well and what needs to improve. This is because they do not check the quality of education with enough rigour and precision.

While there are weaknesses in some aspects of the school's work, pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. They enjoy visits to local museums and residential visits. These experiences broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding of the world. Pupils are proud to play an integral role within the school community. They particularly value their voices being heard as members of the school council.

---

## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address gaps in pupils' learning to improve pupils' writing knowledge, including spelling, sentence structure and letter formation.
  - Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum is designed and sequenced so that children build the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1.
  - Leaders, including governors, should ensure that there is robust oversight of the actions that they take to improve the school so that weaknesses are promptly identified and addressed.
- 

## About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dominic Koole.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and a group of staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and from the trust. The inspectors also met with a group of governors.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher is new to their role.

The school is a Church of England primary school within the Diocese of Bristol. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 2024.

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Headteacher: Tommy Towers

---

**Lead inspector:**

Wendy D'Arcy, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**

Richard Lucas, Ofsted Inspector

**Facts and figures used on inspection**

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 February 2026

**School and pupil context****Total pupils**

**116**

Below average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

**School capacity**

**210**

Below average

**What does this mean?**

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

**Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)**

**3.45%**

Well below average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

### **Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

**2.59%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

### **Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

**12.93%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

### **Location deprivation**

**Well below average**

### **What does this mean?**

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

### **Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)**

**No resourced provision**

### **What does this mean?**

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

## All pupils' performance

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	79%	60%	Above

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	90%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	95%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	95%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	79%	73%	Close to average

### Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	81%	72%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	73%	72%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	86%	72%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	84%	71%	Above

### **Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	95%	73%	Above
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	100%	74%	Above
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	100%	73%	Above
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	84%	73%	Above

### **Disadvantaged pupils' performance**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

#### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	33%	46%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	47%	S

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	46%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	44%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	50%	62%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	63%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	62%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	60%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	33%	59%	Below
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	59%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	58%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	58%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	60%	Close to average
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	61%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	59%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	59%	S

'S' in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## **Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap**

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	33%	68%	-34 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	69%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	67%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	66%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	50%	80%	-30 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	81%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	80%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	78%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	33%	78%	-44 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	78%	S
<b>2022/23 (final)</b>	S	77%	S

### **Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National non-disadvantaged score</b>	<b>School disadvantage gap</b>
<b>Latest 3 year average</b>	67%	80%	-13 pp
<b>2024/25 (revised)</b>	S	81%	S
<b>2023/24 (final)</b>	S	79%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

'S' in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

## Absence

### Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.4%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

### Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.8%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	10.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	18.8%	16.2%	Close to average

## Our grades explained

### Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

### **Strong standard** ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

### **Expected standard** ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

### **Needs attention** ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

### **Urgent improvement** ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

---

**The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)** inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright