

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Kennet Valley Church of England Aided Primary School

Lockeridge, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4EL

Inspection date:

7 May 2025

Outcome

Kennet Valley Church of England Aided Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto of 'small but mighty' encapsulates what it provides for its pupils. Its staff create a secure, close-knit and family-like atmosphere. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They say they are well supported and cared for. The decision to be 'mighty' is reflected in the high expectations the school has for its pupils to be the best they can be.

To achieve its aims, the school provides a broad and rich educational experience. This consists of a secure academic curriculum and a strong programme to promote pupils' personal development. The school emphasises the value of physical activity and learning beyond the classroom. Its offer helps pupils to achieve well academically and to develop confidence, social skills and a sense of personal responsibility.

Pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment. They work and play together happily. They behave well and try their best in lessons. They know that they can ask for help when needed.

Pupils participate in many sporting and other interesting activities. There are lots of clubs, trips and other experiences that broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility. They are proud of the contribution they make to school life and the wider community.

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

The school has developed a strong, cohesive curriculum. It has trained its teachers to deliver this well. This includes enabling staff to cater for pupils with special educational

needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in lessons. These pupils' needs are swiftly and accurately identified. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.

There is a strong emphasis on making sure pupils learn to read. Typically, pupils read fluently by the end of Year 2. Those who need a little more time receive the help they need to catch up early in Year 3.

Through Years 3 to 6, pupils learn to comprehend what they read with confidence. Teachers model how to read aloud with confidence, expression and fluency. Pupils learn to unpick a range of complex texts to understand the language used and to infer meaning.

The school makes sure that pupils recall essential mathematical knowledge. This starts in Reception. Children explore numbers through games, rhymes, songs and other activities. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently perform core mathematical operations such as adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. This sets them up well for increasingly challenging mathematics as they move through key stage 2.

Most pupils learn to write confidently and fluently. The school's English curriculum typically supports pupils to learn the essential skills of handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Most pupils confidently apply these skills in a range of contexts. A few pupils' writing is not as secure. This is because they have not mastered these basic skills. This gets in the way of them writing fluently. The school provides appropriate extra help for these pupils to improve their skills, which is beginning to have an impact.

The school has introduced a common approach to teaching in all subjects. This aims to ensure that teachers explicitly teach the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need equally well across the curriculum. This approach is relatively new. In addition, there have been very recent changes in staffing. Therefore, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work. Nevertheless, early signs are positive. Pupils are increasingly confident to discuss what they have learned using technical language, such as 'evaporation'.

A programme designed to promote pupils' wider personal development enhances the school's academic curriculum considerably. This offer reflects the school's stated belief that, though small, it has the potential to achieve great things. Pupils benefit very much from their experience. They learn to organise events, take responsibility for their actions, empathise with others and expand their view of the world.

Pupils' attendance has improved substantially over the last year. This is testament to the highly focused actions that leaders have taken to work with families.

Leaders have steered the school sensitively, yet resolutely, through a difficult period since the previous inspection. They remain focused on providing the best possible quality of education. Leaders know what is working well, what remains to be done and what is needed to get there.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The agreed approach to teaching is in its infancy and is not used consistently. As a result, some pupils do not learn the school's well-sequenced curriculum as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that the agreed strategies become embedded across all subjects so that pupils learn the school's curriculum to the depth intended.
- In the past, a few pupils did not develop secure handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills. This means that they cannot write down their ideas fluently. The school needs to ensure that its English curriculum prioritises the secure learning of these skills by the end of key stage 1.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	126446
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10378910
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Simon Jones and Lizzie Daley
Headteacher	Katie Mallinson
Website	www.kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection. Following a period of interim leadership between December 2022 and August 2023, the current headteacher took up post in September 2023. Pupil numbers have decreased. This has led to several changes in the organisation of classes.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.
- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Salisbury. The school's last Section 48 inspection was in March 2018.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher, other senior staff, representatives of the governing body, a group of teachers and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also reviewed responses to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lorna Buchanan

Ofsted Inspector

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