

# Selsted School: 150 Years of Learning, Faith and Community

Selsted School sits within the Parish of St Martin's, Acrise, with Swingfield, part of the Elham Valley Group of nine churches. Although Acrise Church is 3.2 miles southwest, nearby churches such as St Mary Magdalene, Denton and St Martin, Wootton play an active role in school life. The Benefice is led by Rev'd Carol Bates, based in Elham.

Close to the school is St Peter's Church, Swingfield (1.3 miles southeast), a possibly 11th-century church now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. The school uses all these churches for Remembrance services, Leavers' services, nature surveys, and other events. Today, three members of the Benefice lead Collective Worship every Tuesday, with Rev'd Carol visiting at other times. A Foundation Governor is an active member of St Martin's Church.

## Our Origins (1871)

Selsted School began as The Swingfield, Wootton and Denton Church of England Primary School, founded under a Trust Deed dated 20 June 1871. Built for 140 pupils—though typically educating around 70—the site included a school house and two classrooms.

Its founding purpose was:

“For educating children and adults or children only of the labouring, manufacturing and other poorer classes of the named parishes.”

- 1955 – The Ministry of Education appointed the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance as administrative trustee.
- 1981 – The school field was leased, providing essential outdoor space.
- 2004 – The Community Hall was completed, strengthening school and village life.
- 2006-2007- Selsted faced possible closure, but strong community support—and the involvement of MP Michael Howard—helped secure its future.

## A Modern, Thriving School

- 2007–2014 – Headteacher Mr Kevin Bailey
- 2015–2026 – Headteacher Mrs Woodgate, accompanied by Luna, the school dog
- 2016 – Two minibuses acquired for trips and sports
- 2017 – The school field was purchased, later gaining an all-weather Daily Mile track
- COVID-19 era – The former air-raid shelter became a library, showing the school's adaptability

## Our Story Continues

From its Victorian foundation to its 21st-century innovations, Selsted School has spent more than 150 years at the heart of its community—growing, adapting, and continuing its mission to educate, inspire, and serve.

Here at Selsted, in our unique, rural setting, we provide a happy, safe stimulating environment where children develop their love of learning. Through mutual respect and trust, children are given a voice and responsibility. We are brave, resilient and committed to making the impossible possible through God's loving care.

Every morning begins with our breakfast minibus pick-up and a warm welcome as children are met in the car park. These daily interactions are a vital part of building the strong relationships and bonds that underpin life at Selsted. The school thrives on a culture of positive relationships, trust, and belonging.

Outdoor learning is central to our identity. Children benefit from:

- Forest School, encouraging resilience, teamwork, and curiosity
- Our much-loved school chickens, giving pupils hands-on responsibility and care
- A rich natural environment that supports exploration and wellbeing

These experiences form part of the unique offer that makes Selsted special.

Every child at Selsted takes part in at least one sports competition each year, ensuring inclusive access to physical activity and teamwork. We maintain a strong partnership with the Shepway Sports Trust, enhancing our PE provision and widening opportunities for pupils.

We support a small number of families through Flexi-schooling, working closely with parents to provide a tailored approach that meets individual needs while keeping children connected to school life.

The school has a nurturing reputation in both the local and wider community. Parents actively seek this school out due to their nurturing ethos. In March 2025 we were achieved the Nurture UK award here is a small snippet from the report.

“At Selsted the Six Principles of Nurture dovetail with the ethos of the school. Their school motto is: ‘From tiny acorns, mighty oaks grow within the love of God’. They believe in doing everything they can to help their children grow physically, socially, emotionally and academically to prepare them for the next stage in their lives. They use a nurturing approach to ensure success in this area. They provide a happy, safe, nurturing environment where children develop a love of learning. Their children are given a voice and encouraged to develop a sense of resilience and responsibility.”

This year we have won Bronze at 2025-2026 Wilder Kent Awards, which was all thanks to the hard work of Mrs Hawkes and the children. There were 90 organisations shortlisted,

with 25,000+ individuals recorded as having acted for nature. Their efforts resulted in a staggering 400,000+ people across the county receiving the nature benefits from the actions taken by the entrants. In total, almost 70 hectares were improved or restored for nature - that's the size of 98 football pitches.

We are also part of the “Folkestone Ethos School, Improvement Ltd” (FESI).

This is a group of 6 other schools who we work closely with to support school improvement and pupil progress.

