

# Amblecote Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103806
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	376969
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Davis

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	272
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	June Lewis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ann Mason
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	School Drive Amblecote Stourbridge DY8 4DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818335
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818336
<b>Email address</b>	info@amblecote.dudley.sch.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Amblecote Pre-School
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	31
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	24 June 2009

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 September 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	376969

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons and 8 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff, and groups of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; pupils' work; and 100 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively do pupils in current classes learn, particularly girls? Has the improved progress seen in 2010 been sustained?
- How effective is the school's self-evaluation? Is this leading to the identification of appropriate priorities for development and are areas of under-performance being identified and addressed?
- How well do teachers use assessment to support learning? Do pupils understand their targets and how to improve their work?
- How well does the school promote regular attendance? What has been the impact of strategies to raise levels of attendance?

## Information about the school

Amblecote is an above average-sized primary school serving a diverse community. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that found nationally and there are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs and there is a privately-funded pre-school for children aged three to four years on the same site managed by the governing body. The school has Healthy Schools status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Pupils are proud of their good school. Leaders have taken robust action to address the areas for development identified by the previous inspection and, as a result, all aspects of the school's provision have improved strongly. This has had a significant impact on raising pupils' levels of achievement. The school shows a good capacity to sustain this improvement. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and pupils speak of their appreciation of the way they are taught and cared for. The following are typical of comments they made: 'Teachers make learning fun', and 'Teachers always help you when you are stuck and care about you.'

Children make an exceptionally good start to school in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment and rates of progress across the school have accelerated rapidly over the past three years. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the many active and exciting tasks provided for them. Parents and carers expressed their confidence that the school will keep their children safe and pupils share this, showing a good understanding of how to look after themselves. They behave well and are welcoming and confident in speaking to visitors. Attendance, however has been low, with a higher than average proportion of persistent absentees. Support to promote regular attendance is now beginning to show an impact and the school recognises that this remains an area for improvement.

The quality of teaching across the school is good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan well to meet the differing needs in their classes. They provide a stimulating environment and a range of resources to excite their pupils and stimulate their imagination. When teaching is outstanding, pupils are able to independently evaluate their own work and that of others against clearly stated success criteria. They are able to identify what they have to do to produce high quality work, and can edit and develop what they have written. However, this is not the case in all lessons. For example, a very small minority of teachers allow an activity to go on for too long before they assess how well pupils are learning. This results in some pupils losing focus because they do not understand the task or those of higher ability being insufficiently challenged. Marking of pupils' books is likewise inconsistent in the quality of advice provided. Although targets are set for development, sometimes this lacks the detail required to ensure pupils understand what they need to do to reach the next level. The good curriculum is broad and balanced. Enrichment activities feature strongly and provision in music is a key strength. Some aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding, particularly in the arrangements to secure a smooth and happy transition to the next class or key stage. The school provides

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excellent care for those pupils for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, involving a wide variety of external agencies. As a result, these pupils are well included and achieve well.

The headteacher is supported by a dynamic and vibrant team. Together, they have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement have improved. They have achieved this by robustly addressing the issue of assessment, ensuring that teachers have a better understanding of assessment practice and rigorously holding all teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. Progress is well monitored and underachievement identified and addressed. Although the school's leaders, including the governing body, have effectively addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and have identified priorities for future development, currently their self-evaluation procedures are insufficiently rigorous to provide an effective overview of the impact of the provision on all pupils' outcomes.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Embed assessment practice to better support learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers frequently evaluate the learning taking place during lessons to enable them to provide appropriate support or to increase the level of challenge
  - ensure that feedback on pupil's work provides sufficient information on how they can achieve their targets.
  
- Develop self-evaluation practice to better enable leaders to judge the impact of the provision on all pupil outcomes.
  
- Raise attendance rates by:
  - communicating with parents and carers the importance of ensuring their children's regular attendance
  - rigorously following-up absences.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils generally enter Year 1 with average skills in most areas of learning. Results in the Year 6 national tests over the past three years have risen from below average in 2009 to above average in 2011 in both English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has also increased to above average. Pupils show great enjoyment of their lessons and are keen to do well. They say they learn best when tasks are active and fun. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils were inspired to write a story about a scarecrow, having improvised a drama involving a life-size 'magic' scarecrow in their classroom. As a result, they were able to write creatively about their feelings of excitement using adventurous vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities were observed making good

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progress in lessons a result of the high level of support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants, coupled with the provision of tasks appropriate to their needs. They also make good progress over time, achieving close to the national average in mathematics. Girls and boys achieve equally well, as do those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Pupils say that there is little bullying and that they are quick to make up when they fall out with their friends. Pupils contribute to the community through the school council and the Eco Warriors group. They speak with pride about supporting older people from their local community by donating food at the harvest festival and working with gardeners from local allotments towards Stourbridge in Bloom. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and many of the sporting activities offered are over-subscribed. They develop an understanding of the world of work from the frequent visitors to school, for example, a graphic designer who supported them in their topic work. This, together with their well-developed basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, prepares them well for their future economic well-being. The school has taken positive action to improve attendance and, in the previous academic year, attendance rates were broadly average and the number of persistent absentees had fallen. Pupils have a good understanding of world religions and are respectful of the beliefs of others. They get on well together, care for each other, and show a good understanding of right and wrong. However, although pupils are curious about the world around them, their first-hand experiences of life in multi-cultural Britain is relatively limited. They discuss and reflect thoughtfully on a variety of issues in assemblies.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have risen to the challenge to improve their practice, and expressed excitement and satisfaction that their hard work is bearing fruit in terms of increasing rates of pupils' progress. They provide opportunities for pupils to build on prior learning and consolidate their understanding by practising skills and applying their knowledge to different situations. In the most effective lessons, pupils are not only praised when they produce high quality work but also this work is shared with other pupils, who have the opportunity to identify the elements that make it good. This results in a high level of motivation and enthusiasm to do well. Occasionally, the pace of learning is slower as the result of an activity going on for too long without providing any increased challenge.

The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Individual literacy and numeracy support is provided for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and challenging extra-curricular opportunities for those of highest ability. A half-termly topic plan enables a cross-curricular approach and provides lively experiences to stimulate writing. The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 and the beginning of Key Stage 2 builds well on their experiences in pre-school and Reception classes and is helping the older pupils make up lost ground in their reading and writing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy French lessons, which focus on speaking and listening. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is offered, including the opportunity to take part in music festivals and to play in the school band. Special days such as Architects Day, Business Day and opportunities to undertake first-aid training with the St John's Ambulance Brigade further enrich the curriculum. Information and communication technology is, however, currently underused across the school as there are too few classroom computers to enable free access during lessons.

All pupils are known and cared for as individuals and the school shows exceptional care for its most vulnerable pupils. Links with outside agencies ensure effective ongoing support both at home and in school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly and individual support provided. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in a range of special needs. Parents and carers say they highly value the before- and after-school clubs that provide a safe and caring environment for their children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken robust action to raise the quality of teaching. They have high expectations of staff and hold them to account through frequent monitoring and progress meetings. Support and training are provided to promote consistency and good practice is shared. Processes for tracking progress are very effective and data presented so that it can be easily understood, enabling any underachievement to be identified and addressed, and challenging targets to be set. Leaders analyse the progress of all groups of pupils to ensure that there is no discrimination and that the same opportunities are provided for all. The governing body are generally well informed and able to hold the school to account. They have developed their involvement with the school through, for example, lesson observations. Although the governing body ensures that staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, it is less clear about their statutory responsibility to ensure that policies are regularly evaluated and reviewed. Satisfactory safeguarding practice ensures that children are safe. Child protection arrangements are thorough, records kept up to date, and first-aiders well trained. However, leaders recognise that safeguarding, health and safety policies and risk assessments are not sufficiently robust. Leaders have identified the need to develop their engagement with parents and carers. Although staff are available before and after school, and regular newsletters are provided, there are few opportunities for family learning or for parents and carers to experience first-hand current methods of teaching literacy and numeracy. Strong partnerships exist with external agencies to support pupils' differing needs. Local businesses and organisations also provide support and enhance the curriculum, together with good links with the secondary school. The school knows its intake well and ensures that other lifestyles and cultures are studied within the curriculum. The school is a cohesive community and many opportunities are provided to contribute to the local community. However, it has only just started to consider reaching out to other national and international communities, and the evaluation of this work is patchy.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the pre-school with skills that are below those expected of their age, particularly in their development of speech and language. They make good progress, and, by the end of the Reception class, reach expected levels in all areas of learning. Children develop good inter-personal skills so that they work and play harmoniously with others and form strong relationships with adults. They behave well and show a good awareness of safe play. The provision is exemplary in the wide range of exciting resources provided to stimulate the imagination. For example, during the inspection, children were being firemen in the outside area, while inside they enjoyed learning about the world and travel in the airport and aeroplane role-play area. There is a good balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Staff work very well together as a team and the provision is exceptionally well managed. All aspects of children’s welfare are catered for in a safe environment. The organisation and curriculum planning is exemplary and enables children to progress well in learning and development through purposeful play. Excellent links with parents and carers ensures that they are well informed about their child’s progress and well-being, and are able to further support learning at home. The outstanding partnership that exists between pre-school and Reception results in exceptionally well-managed transitions and very good continuity of provision. Leaders quickly identify where children have specific needs and, through positive links with external agencies, ensure early intervention.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded were overwhelmingly positive. A very few parents and carers said that they would like more opportunity to be better informed about their child’s progress and to have more opportunity to find out about what their child is learning to enable them to provide support at home. Inspectors found that the school has already recognised this concern and has identified improving communications and parental and carer involvement as a key priority this year.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Amblecote Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 271 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	58	39	39	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	59	39	39	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	40	58	56	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	46	45	46	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	48	45	46	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	41	42	52	54	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	42	52	52	6	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	45	49	49	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	40	41	55	56	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	33	58	59	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	35	55	57	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	41	54	55	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	51	52	43	44	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Amblecote Primary School, Stourbridge, DY8 4DQ**

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed your beautiful singing in assembly.

Our inspection has judged that you go to a good school. The care that the school provides for you is good and, as a result, you feel safe and well-known. The standards that you reach are rising steadily. Your good behaviour and understanding of how to stay healthy impressed us. You concentrate well and enjoy your lessons and all the activities that are provided for you, including all the clubs, sport and music. Your teachers provide lessons that are fun and interesting, and you told us how well teachers support you. We have asked them to ensure that they frequently check how well you are learning in lessons and that they make it clear, when they mark your work, what steps you need to take to achieve your targets. You make a good contribution to your school community and enjoy taking responsibility. You get on well with each other and are respectful of those with different beliefs and backgrounds to your own. We have asked the school to continue to ensure that you attend regularly as we were concerned that attendance levels for some of you have been too low for you to do as well as you can.

The leaders of the school are working hard to make sure you learn well and develop well as young people, but we have asked them to make sure that they check their work more clearly so that they can continue to develop the work of the school and raise standards further. You can help them by continuing to work hard and attending well. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis  
Lead inspector

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