

Amberley Parochial School

Amberley, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 5JG

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Children enter Reception with the skills expected for their age and by the time they leave school, pupils have reached well above average standards in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is typically good and sometimes of high quality. This ensures that most pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, and particularly in writing.
- Pupils have exceptionally good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.
- Pupils feel safe and happy and their attendance is better than at most schools.
- The leadership and governance of the school have high expectations and are continually seeking ways to improve pupils' achievements. Their determination has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection in both the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In some of the mathematics teaching, work is not always a hard enough challenge for more-able pupils, and marking does not always provide enough guidance to all pupils on how to improve.
- There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition the inspector made a number of short visits to other lessons to see the work of children with special educational needs.
- The inspector talked with pupils, looked at samples of their work, and listened to two groups of pupils read.
- Meetings were also held with teachers, a group of governors, the headteacher and the school's middle leaders. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the extent and impact of support provided to the school.
- In planning the inspection, the inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the views of ten parents and carers who spoke with him during the inspection, and 14 questionnaires returned by school staff.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at many documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, performance management documentation, planning documents, monitoring and assessment information, school policies, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

John Collins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- There is a breakfast club run by the governors.
- All classes have children of mixed ages.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and few are from other ethnic backgrounds.
- All pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is much smaller than average. This provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes to the governing body and the senior leadership team in the past year. The school no longer has a deputy headteacher and the governing body has been restructured. There is a relatively new Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils in mathematics have work that requires them to think hard
 - developing teachers' use of marking in mathematics to the level seen in English so that pupils always understand what they must do next to improve their work.
- Help all pupils to make rapid progress in reading, especially the older ones, by:
 - ensuring that weaker readers are taught on a daily basis how to blend and sound out correctly the words they cannot read
 - ensuring that the books pupils are reading are neither too hard nor too easy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils make good progress throughout the school and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, achieve well above average standards in English and mathematics. Their attainment is particularly strong in writing.
- On entry to Reception, most pupils have the skills expected for their age. They make strong progress and by the time they begin Year 1 work, most have exceeded the levels expected for their age in early reading, writing, number and social skills. This is because teaching is good and they are provided with a wide variety of learning opportunities.
- At Key Stage 1 the improvements in teaching and good planning of lessons to meet the needs of all pupils have enabled the pupils to make faster progress through Year 2 than in previous years. As a result they reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, notably in their writing, which is often of exceptionally good quality. This is largely because the school has given fire to the imagination of pupils by using new and exciting approaches suggested by a local author. Much of this involves writing through other subjects as well as in English lessons.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress in reading, although the progress of some older weaker readers, including those with special educational needs, is not as strong as it could be. This is because they have not learned to blend and sound letters properly. Such work is given insufficient emphasis in the upper part of the school for those who need it.
- Almost all pupils read widely for pleasure and some are reading sophisticated non-fiction books. One boy, reading a book about the Middle East, was able to give a very interesting verbal account of the life of nomadic tribes in Arabia. However, pupils do not always choose books that fully match their individual needs relating to the development of their reading skills.
- Most pupils also make good progress in mathematics because it is mostly well taught. Pupils are able to solve problems mentally and practically. For example, during a project at Christmas they used a shopping catalogue to calculate the number of different presents they could buy with £100. In another lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed their perfect playground including areas taken up by furniture. One able pupil was able to find the area of an irregular shape quickly in his head. He commented, 'It's simple if you find the area of the whole rectangle and subtract the small area from it – I don't need to write it down.'
- However, for a small number of more-able pupils, the work in mathematics is not always hard enough and, on occasion, they make less progress than they could.
- Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs now make good progress, because one-to-one tuition is provided and is very effective in addressing individual needs; this is an improvement on last year, when they made less progress than their classmates.
- School records show that pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, make similar progress to other pupils. Although numbers are small, their attainment in mathematics and English, as measured by average points scores, is as good and often better than all pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is much improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall. This is because the senior leaders and governors, helped by the local authority and an external consultant, focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching as recommended in the previous inspection report. As a result pupils' achievement has also improved.
- Most lessons are now lively and active. Pupils' wide-ranging needs are met by careful, often imaginative, planning. This sometimes involves using video clips followed by pupils discussing

what they have learned. In a Reception and Year 1 class, the pupils watched a video clip about dinosaurs and sang tunefully, and with actions, to describe the 20 different types of dinosaur they had learned about.

- Teachers know their pupils well and provide a very wide range of learning activities that motivate the pupils to learn. For example, one small group of slower learning pupils was observed working outside on measuring activities and made very good progress in calculating areas.
- Marking provides regular and accurate checks on pupils' progress. Guidance through marking on how to improve further is consistently strong in English, but less so in mathematics.
- Very effective use is made of skilled teaching assistants to promote high-quality learning for groups of pupils and individuals. For example, in a Year 1 class a pupil was having difficulty forming and sounding out a capital letter. The teaching assistant correctly sounded out the letter for the child to repeat and skilfully explained, with a finger in the air, the shape of the letter. This enabled the child to write the letter and to sound it out confidently and correctly.
- One-to-one teaching, often with teaching assistants, is especially effective at enabling students to overcome their difficulties. For example, four Year 6 pupils made double the expected progress in mathematics over a one-year period.
- The teaching of writing is a particular strength of the school. As a result pupils make excellent progress and achieve high standards. For example, in writing about a football match one Year 5 pupil wrote, 'The match was played at an exhilarating pace and the crowd was ecstatic as the goal was scored.'
- The teaching of reading is mostly effective so that, consequently, pupils become enthusiastic readers. However, pupils do not always choose books that will enhance their reading skills and weaker readers do not always receive enough reading practice.
- The teaching of mathematics provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their mental and practical skills in problem solving. However, on occasion some more-able pupils are not challenged enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They focus well on the tasks set by their teachers because they are interested and keen to do well.
- Their high levels of motivation to take part in learning activities are also a consequence of the strong relationships between staff and pupils. They ask and answer questions confidently and competently and take part in practical and other activities sensibly and with enthusiasm.
- Behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is excellent. Pupils are respectful of each other's feelings, property, views, suggestions and beliefs.
- Pupils are very well mannered. At the breakfast club, pupils chatted quietly among themselves and occasionally asked politely for more toast or for another pupil to pass the honey. They are equally well mannered at lunch and at other times around the school.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of various kinds of unsafe situations, including internet safety and road safety, through the school's assemblies and its rich, vibrant curriculum.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and in travelling to and from school. They understand what bullying means and say that it is very rare but if it happens the teachers deal it with swiftly. They are extremely tolerant of the differences in other pupils and know that if they are worried they can talk with an adult in the school.
- Attendance is high, punctuality is very good and there have been no exclusions for several years.
- The strongly positive views of parents, carers and staff support the inspection findings about

behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The effective leadership and governance of the school have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Effective collaboration with the local authority and external consultants has led to greater rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning. This in turn has brought about significant improvements in teaching, particularly the teaching of writing, and has enabled pupils to achieve better outcomes.
- The support of the local authority has been very effective in working with the school and governors to review how well the school is doing. The school's own check on this is now accurate and this has resulted in sharply focused planning for improvement.
- The headteacher and governing body have ensured that teachers, middle leaders and other school staff have had relevant and appropriate training in areas that required improvement. This has been effective, for example, in producing improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics and reading, although the school acknowledges that there is more to do in these areas.
- Discussions with parents and carers, and responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), revealed that almost all parents and carers are fully supportive of the school because they believe their children are happy, safe, cared for, and make good progress in their learning.
- The school offers a wide range of well-planned learning activities, including sport, that motivate the pupils and help them to develop well, academically and personally. However, opportunities for some weaker readers to practise their reading skills are too limited.
- The daily breakfast club provides pupils of all ages with good opportunities to relax, play and get cereals and/or toast to eat. There is a school band and choir and various clubs after school, all of which are well attended by pupils. These do much to enhance pupils' enjoyment of school, and to develop leadership and other skills.
- The school and governors do not permit discrimination of any kind and work hard to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils relate well to each other and all are highly motivated to learn.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have benefited from relevant training and have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing compared with national averages. They take part in checks of the school's performance, visit lessons and events, and monitor safeguarding on a frequent basis. They have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this to hold the school to account. This enables them to take a major role in policy making and school improvement planning. Their awareness of the need to improve progress for the small number of students that are eligible for pupil premium funding, have special educational needs or are disabled, led to the allocation of funds to provide one-to-one tuition for those pupils; as a result their progress is now in line with their peers. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, and are very much involved in decisions about teachers' status and pay; they use safe recruitment procedures. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, and have good capacity to assist the school with further improvements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115689
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	401532
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Matt Amey
Headteacher	Peter Godfrey
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2010
Telephone number	01453 873349
Fax number	01453 873615
Email address	school@amberley.gloucs.sch.uk

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