

Amberley CofE First School

School Road, Amberley, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 9NB

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics has been consistently lower than in reading and remains so.
- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who need to catch up are not always helped to make accelerated progress, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' progress consistently well to inform the 'next steps' targets that they set for pupils, plans for pupils' learning in lessons and over time, and when informing teaching assistants about the support to provide for pupils. Teachers do not always resolve pupils' misconceptions promptly during lessons.
- When they check teaching, leaders do not examine closely its impact on pupils' progress.
- The school's too broad approach to tracking and analysing pupils' progress does not support teachers' planning for pupils' learning well, or leaders' evaluation of pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are not provided with a rich experience of life in modern Britain.
- Early years provision does not make good use of the outdoor area to promote children's independent learning.
- Governors have not monitored closely the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors' role in checking school improvement is not well planned and they have not ensured effective action in some areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's dedicated leadership inspires trust and confidence in the whole school community and enthusiastic teamwork by staff.
- Pupils are kept safe and feel safe at school. High attendance rates reflect pupils' enjoyment and the overwhelming support of the majority of parents.
- Pupils value teachers' conscientious feedback about their work because this helps them improve.
- Pupils' good behaviour is supported well by the positive example of all staff, clear systems for rewards and sanctions and the quality of the school environment.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities and the most-able pupils make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress over time from their different starting points, including disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up, particularly in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers make good use of accurate information about pupils' progress to plan suitable teaching, activities for pupils and teaching assistant support
 - the 'next steps' targets that teachers set for pupils are clear and precise and teachers promptly resolve pupils' misconceptions during lessons
 - pupils master mathematical understanding and skills through sequences of lessons and activities which consolidate and extend pupils' understanding.

- Improve leadership, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - leaders further develop the school's assessment system to provide a clear picture of pupils' progress through the year, using this information well to analyse the achievement of groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up
 - leaders' evaluations of teaching and their feedback to staff consider the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up
 - the curriculum and pupils' life at school develop rapidly to provide pupils with a rich experience of society, culture and life in the wider United Kingdom
 - governors assiduously monitor the progress and well-being of disadvantaged pupils, to assure these pupils' success
 - the school's improvement plans include clear information about how governors will check the progress of planned activities and evaluate the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' achievement
 - efforts are redoubled to secure good attendance for every pupil, particularly all those supported by the pupil premium.

- Improve early years provision to promote children's good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in writing and mathematics and particularly during children's independent learning by ensuring that:
 - adults take swift action to provide engaging and meaningful activities, inside and out-of-doors.

- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- On taking up post 18 months ago, the headteacher took swift effective action to improve teaching and develop leadership. Staff have been energised by new opportunities and challenges, including to develop plans for improvement and lead their implementation. Good elements of teaching are evident, but leaders have not ensured consistent improvement throughout the school, particularly for younger pupils.
- The headteacher has established regular checks on teaching. Teachers in new leadership roles are beginning to share in these. However, when they check teaching, leaders do not consider its impact on pupils' progress closely enough. This has resulted in some over-optimistic evaluations of teaching, including in reports to governors.
- Leaders are developing a promising system for tracking and analysing pupils' progress, linked closely to the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. However, this is currently imprecise, recording teachers' broad estimation of pupils' progress towards final expectations for reading, writing and mathematics. This limits the value of the regular meetings held to review pupils' progress, and reports to governors and parents. Furthermore, leaders do not use this system well to analyse the achievement of groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up.
- The headteacher openly promotes partnerships to enrich the professional development of staff. New links with local schools extend teachers' opportunities to check the accuracy of assessment, and to see strengths in teaching. Most helpfully, the headteacher works with his own local colleagues to develop the evaluation of teaching at Amberley. It is too soon to gauge the impact of these activities on pupils' achievement.
- The established special educational needs coordinator ensures that well-targeted effective interventions support pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to make good progress.
- A member of staff has recently been appointed as 'ambassador' for disadvantaged pupils. Information has been reported to governors, and posted recently on the school's website, about the allocation and spending of the pupil premium (additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority). However, this new role and the spending of the pupil premium have yet to impact significantly on improving the achievement of this small group of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that additional government funding for sport is used well. Pupils and parents value the wide range of new opportunities for competitive and individual sport, with every pupil in the school participating in one way or another. Professional coaches lead physical education (PE) lessons, assisted by class teachers. As a result, teachers' confidence and skill to teach PE and provide sports clubs has been significantly enhanced, boosting the school's own capacity.
- The curriculum is wide ranging. Pupils cover all the areas of the National Curriculum through well organised two-year cycles. Visits to local venues and the recent introduction of a residential visit for older pupils enrich pupils' experience. This year, pupils in Years 4 and 5 have experienced a wider range of international themes and cultures in their learning than previously. However, as at the time of the previous inspection, more needs to be done to ensure pupils throughout the school learn well about the rich blend of cultures and lifestyles in modern Britain.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is catered for well. The school's Christian ethos ensures that pupils' understanding of right and wrong is developed seamlessly through teaching, worship and the excellent example and care of all the adults. Regular learning out-of-doors promotes pupils' awe and wonder at the beauty of nature, developing well their respect for the environment. Fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect are promoted well through the school's ethos and traditions, assemblies, religious education and school council. However, the range of social and cultural influences which pupils encounter in lessons, in the books and resources they use and through the life of the school, is limited.
- The local authority was slow to align its advisory support to the school's longstanding partnership with St James' CofE Primary School. New arrangements have recently ensured timely and helpful advice and guidance to leaders, including about the need to consolidate improvements in teaching and monitor closely the progress made by pupils supported by the pupil premium. The headteacher has welcomed the support of a local authority early years adviser to support improvement in provision for Reception Year children.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are dedicated and hard working. The Chair of the Governing Body leads with determination, demonstrated well in swift action to resolve administrative issues in safeguarding procedures identified during the inspection. The governing body is well organised, acting within a clear code of conduct and terms of reference. Effective clerking ensures reliable records of meetings, including the questions governors ask when holding leaders to account. A recent skills audit identified needs which have already been met through the recruitment of suitably experienced people.
- Governors are well informed about teachers' performance management and follow due process when making decisions about teachers' pay.
- Governors make regular visits to scrutinise specific aspects of the school's work, most recently the teaching of reading and the impact of steps taken by leaders to improve pupils' writing. Governors ask relevant questions of leaders during these visits and review their findings. Governors are aware of relative weaknesses in pupils' mathematics and writing achievement. However, governors' role in checking the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' outcomes is not set out clearly in the school's improvement plans. Governors have not ensured sustained effective action in some areas identified in the previous inspection report, notably in early years provision and pupils' experience of life in Britain beyond the local area.
- Governors have not routinely monitored the progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium, to check the impact of the school's use of this additional money. Separate monitoring of these funds is now established, together with the appointment of the 'pupil premium ambassador', but it is too soon to see results from these recent initiatives.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are aware of possible signs of abuse and care diligently for pupils. Procedures for reporting concerns are secure, including when the headteacher is not present in school. Risk assessments are completed and all necessary checks are made on adults working as staff, volunteers or as visiting teachers and coaches. Administrative issues with the recording of these checks were swiftly resolved during the inspection. Relevant policies are maintained and staff training is regular, although not always updated promptly in the recent past. This issue was also swiftly resolved during the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teachers' too broad assessment of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics limits how well they identify and plan for pupils' precise next steps in learning.
- In line with the school's policies, teachers set individual targets for pupils' progress in writing and mathematics. However, these targets are not always written in ways which have clear meaning for pupils and are sometimes too general and unambitious, for example 'always use full stops'. This limits the impact of the targets set, particularly for younger pupils who need to catch up.
- Aspects of mathematics are sometimes taught in short episodes, limiting opportunities for pupils to master the knowledge and skills involved. Recognising the need for a more systematic approach to teaching calculation, teachers are developing a coherent policy with neighbouring schools, for implementation later this term.
- Sometimes, when teaching younger pupils, teachers do not recognise and address pupils' misconceptions promptly. In some lessons, younger pupils who need to catch up are not provided with the support or resources required for them to make accelerated progress.
- Teachers ensure a positive atmosphere in the classroom, with well-organised resources and eye-catching displays, although mathematics is given a generally lower profile around the school than English.
- Teaching assistants provide encouraging support for pupils during lessons. However, assistants are not always well informed about the precise learning that pupils are expected to achieve, the mathematical concepts or language involved, or the particular points of English grammar.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school through an effective blend of group teaching and individual attention. The recent purchase of significant additional resources has enriched the range of texts available to pupils.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds letters make) are taught systematically, enabling pupils to build and apply their skills successfully. Pupils who fall behind in phonics during Year 1 are always helped to catch up by

the end of Year 2.

- The most-able older pupils thrive on teachers' expectations for their interest and commitment to learning at a higher level. In a practical lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically to refine their shelter designs and consider the best construction materials. Teachers make good use of information communication technology, texts and partnerships with other schools to ensure that these pupils' needs are well met. Younger most-able pupils have not always been supported well to excel, particularly in writing, but this is beginning to improve.
- Teachers conscientiously apply the school's marking policy and pupils value highly the thoughtful comments that teachers record. Pupils carefully undertake the corrections and extension activities that teachers provide, consolidating learning. The variable quality of pupils' presentation has been noted by teachers, so a handwriting policy is due for development on the next staff training day.
- Highly effective interventions ensure that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are supported well to make good progress. Teaching assistants receive specific training to ensure that they lead this learning successfully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- All adults in school care diligently for pupils, promoting an ethos of kindness and consideration which pupils quickly learn and adopt.
- Pupils are kept safe in school and learn well how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils are sure that bullying is very rare and are that confident they can rely on the adults to step in promptly and resolve any issues if necessary.
- Supervision at break and lunchtime is well organised and attentive. Pupils are provided with a healthy lunch and encouraged to eat tidily with good manners. Good teamwork ensures a swift response to any problem without any reduction in wider supervision. Staff are suitably trained to provide first-aid, efficient records are kept and incidents reported promptly to parents.
- Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups. At social times, pupils play well together, including with siblings or friends of different ages.
- Pupils value the opportunities provided for them to take up responsibilities, such as table monitors at lunchtime or organising playtime equipment. School council members recently arranged the purchase of new playground games and equipment, making their choices democratically.
- Parents are overwhelmingly confident that pupils are well cared for and see this as a key strength of the school. Parents value the communication they receive, finding that this helps them to support their children's learning and well-being at school more readily than previously.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous and polite. They are proud of their school, take good care of one another and show respect to adults including visitors. Pupils use resources and equipment sensibly. The inspector saw Reception and Year 1 pupils using physical education equipment in the hall safely, while taking turns.
- Pupils behave well around the school and during lessons. The inspector saw no evidence of pupils disrupting the learning of others. In the very few instances when the inspector saw younger pupils not working diligently, this was because teaching or the activity they were undertaking was not suitable, or they did not have the support or resources needed for success. In some cases, younger pupils lost focus because teaching assistants did not have the precise information and skills needed to take learning forward.
- The majority of pupils have good attendance. This reflects parents' consistent support for the school and the impact of the headteacher's swift actions to improve punctuality for some pupils when he first joined the school. However, leaders have so far been unsuccessful in improving parents' attitudes to attendance for a very small minority of pupils, including some supported by the pupil premium.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Over time, pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing has been consistently lower than in reading, despite a continuing focus by staff to remedy this.
- Pupils in Year 2 in 2015 showed that they had made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics during Key Stage 1, from relatively low starting points at the beginning of Year 1. However, pupils' attainment in writing was lower than in reading and their attainment in mathematics lower still. Over time, too few pupils have achieved higher than expected levels in writing at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Most pupils leaving Year 5 in 2015 had made good progress during Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, while 100% of pupils achieved the level expected by the school in reading, a smaller proportion of pupils were successful in writing and a smaller proportion still achieved the expected level in mathematics.
- The school's information shows increasing proportions of pupils on track for their end-of-year targets, but this picture remains inconsistent between subjects and year groups. Pupils who have fallen behind in their learning, or needing to catch up from a low starting point, do not always make the accelerated progress that they require.
- The number of pupils at the school supported by the pupil premium is too small for any comparison with national standards. However, the school's information shows clearly that gaps exist between the achievement of all these pupils and others at the school in reading, writing and mathematics, and that these gaps are not closing rapidly.
- Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities are helped to achieve good levels in reading, which equip them well for learning in Year 6 and beyond. Parents support their children well by reading regularly with them at home.
- Pupils' success in reading is well supported by their development of good phonics understanding and skills. All the pupils who read to the inspector were able to unpick words successfully if they found them hard to read. A higher proportion of pupils than nationally achieved well in the national phonics screen in 2015, reflecting a rising trend in the school. Furthermore, all the Year 2 pupils who needed to revisit this activity in 2015 were successful.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities make good progress, both in the short term and over time. In many cases, these pupils are making faster progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, so catching up rapidly.
- The most-able pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school, with some older pupils particularly forging ahead.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Children usually enter Reception Year with levels of learning typical for their age or higher. Most children make good progress so that a larger proportion than seen nationally move on to Year 1 with a good level of development. However, not all children who enter the school at levels typical for their age do achieve this good level of learning. Leaders have identified that this is due to relatively weaker progress for some children in developing early writing skills.
- Leaders have taken some effective steps to boost learning in writing and mathematics. Children are encouraged to write as frequently as possible in the classroom, a prominent and extensive display gives writing a high profile and a mathematics table encourages children to explore counting and sorting. However, these initiatives do not extend to the children's independent learning out-of-doors. Here, the newly refurbished area is not developed well to provide inviting and engaging activities that promote children's progress in all areas of learning. This reflects weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Furthermore, evaluation of early years provision is not a current feature of leaders' assessment of the school's overall effectiveness.
- Adults communicate well with the children during teaching, carefully explaining and demonstrating the learning that they intend the children to achieve. However, limited purposeful opportunities for independent activity mean that there is little learning for adults to discuss with children during these times.

- Adults care well for the children and keep them safe. Children are taught well how to behave and to show respect for one another and the school. Parents value greatly the ready availability of staff to discuss any concerns and feel well informed about their children's progress, finding staff very approachable. Parents are delighted that their younger children can mix freely with siblings and older friends at playtimes.

School details

Unique reference number	125970
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10001534

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Shaw
Headteacher	John Gilbert
Telephone number	01798831612
Website	www.amberley.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@amberley.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2010

Information about this school

- Amberley is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The headteacher also leads St James' CofE Primary School in Coldwaltham, sharing his time equally between the schools. The schools are not federated and maintain separate governing bodies.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority, for which the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), is well below the national average.
- Currently, there are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving school support is broadly average. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 5, so the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress nationally at age 11, do not apply.
- Pupils attend the Reception Year full time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all the classes with the headteacher, heard pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books and on display.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, governors, staff and representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, observed lunchtime, and talked with pupils and staff around the school. 15 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 11 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey were considered.
- The inspector talked with parents at the start of the day, met with one parent at their request and analysed the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- A range of documents were examined, including teachers' plans for pupils' learning, leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plans, documents on the school's website, governing body records and local authority reports.
- Checks were made of arrangements for keeping pupils safe and records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. The inspector scrutinised leaders' analysis of pupils' progress, and records of leaders' checks on teaching.

Inspection team

Siân Thornton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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