

Inspection of Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kitchener Road, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 7AX

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Weaknesses in leadership and poorly managed change have contributed to pupils receiving an inadequate quality of education. The curriculum is poorly planned. It is not coherent or sequenced well. As a result, pupils do not secure the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

Nevertheless, pupils like coming to school and feel safe. Staff are dedicated. They want pupils to achieve and be happy. However, staff's morale is low. Too many new initiatives and changes over time have led to staff feeling exhausted and confused. They do not know whether they are 'coming or going'. Some parents are anxious about the future. Pupils are not clear about what is expected of them in relation to their learning.

Pupils say that behaviour is not consistently good. The behaviour of a minority of pupils is detrimental to others, particularly to older pupils. Poor behaviour gets in the way of learning. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say bullying can happen but when it does, leaders deal with it.

Leaders provide pupils with experiences to support their personal development, such as through trips and visits. However, these opportunities are not planned well enough to ensure pupils link these opportunities to their learning.

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

The school has declined since the previous inspection. Over the past few years, pupils have been let down by frequent changes in leadership. This has created significant inconsistencies in processes and procedures, including the development of a coherent and well-sequenced curriculum. As a result, pupils are not learning a curriculum that enables them to gain the necessary knowledge and skills that they need. This means that they are not well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The governing body lacks strategic direction. Governors do not have an accurate picture of the school. There has been little systematic and reflective self-evaluation of the curriculum. Governors do not fully understand their role or have a thorough and robust approach to monitoring. They do not know the key development priorities for the school.

Leaders introduced a new curriculum at the start of the academic year. However, they have not identified the key concepts and most important knowledge that they want all pupils to know. Consequently, teachers are unable to accurately assess what pupils know and remember. As a result, pupils receive a jumbled and disjointed learning experience.

Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme to support the teaching of early reading. Teachers follow a step-by-step approach. As a result, most pupils secure

the necessary skills required for early reading, particularly in the early years foundation stage. Children are proud of what they can do. They confidently talk about reading and their learning across other areas of the early years curriculum. However, pupils in key stage 2 are not receiving a suitable reading curriculum. As a result, many pupils do not read fluently or as confidently as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve well. Leaders have not accurately identified pupils' additional learning needs early enough. Although interim leaders are in the process of addressing this, their work has only recently started. For example, individual plans for pupils are being developed but have not yet been fully implemented.

Too many pupils do not behave well. Changes in expectations from adults and different approaches to how behaviour is managed have led to confusion. As a result, some pupils find it difficult to know what is expected of them. However, pupils say behaviour has started to improve. Leaders have convincing plans to continue the recent developments and to support pupils who struggle with their behaviour.

Pupils know how to eat healthily and stay fit. They understand right from wrong. However, pupils say that there are some who intentionally make the wrong choices. They say that boys and girls are treated equally and that they are expected to be respectful. Pupils know that valuing individual differences is important. Pupils know about the school's Christian values, but they have little understanding of fundamental British values, such as individual liberty and rule of law. These key aspects are not planned systematically into the curriculum. As a result, pupils struggle to articulate their understanding of them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They know it is everyone's responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff know who to go to with concerns. There are effective systems in place for recording and reporting these to protect pupils. The school carries out necessary checks on the suitability of staff to ensure they are safe to work with children.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They can discuss the positive and negative aspects of using the internet. Both pupils and parents agree that school is a safe place to be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leadership changes over time have been poorly managed. This has been detrimental to the quality of education and staff's morale. Senior leaders do not

have oversight of the systems and processes to deliver an effective curriculum. Leaders, including governors, should ensure urgent action is taken to improve provision to ensure that all pupils are ready for the next stage in their education.

- Governors do not have clarity of vision or strategic direction. They do not understand their roles and responsibilities, including holding senior leaders to account for the quality of education that the school provides. Governors need to ensure that they introduce effective monitoring systems to be able to challenge leaders on the quality of education the school is providing.
- The curriculum is not coherently planned or sequenced. Therefore, pupils do not have the necessary knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is designed well, and organised and sequenced effectively, so pupils know more and remember more over time.
- Teachers do not effectively assess what pupils know and can do. Consequently, learning does not build on what has been taught to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders, including subject leaders, need to ensure that assessment processes accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge in order to support subsequent learning.
- Pupils in key stage 2 do not receive a rigorous or sequential reading curriculum. As a result, pupils do not develop fluency, confidence and understanding of texts they are exposed to. Leaders need to design a reading curriculum that builds on pupils' knowledge and understanding and enables them to become confident and fluent readers.
- Pupils with SEND have not been identified early enough. As a result, over time, their learning gaps have widened. Leaders need to ensure that processes are in place to accurately identify and support pupils' individual needs so that they catch up quickly.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	131215
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10216458
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bev Small
Headteacher	Jennie White
Website	www.amesbury.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Amesbury Primary is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury. When the school had its last section 48 inspection in November 2015, it was judged to be outstanding.
- An interim executive headteacher and a representative from the local authority are currently leading the school.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the interim executive headteacher, the interim special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff, representatives from the local authority, the school improvement consultant from the Diocese of Salisbury and members of the local governing body. The current interim headteacher was not present during the inspection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They reviewed how well the designated safeguarding leads act upon concerns about pupils' welfare. Inspectors talked to pupils, staff and governors about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The lead inspector discussed key documentation with the interim executive headteacher, including governors' minutes.
- Inspectors considered 34 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 30 free-text responses, 77 responses from the pupil survey and 22 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Ofsted Inspector
Katharine Anstey	Ofsted Inspector

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