



Amblecote Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103806
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 276995
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Martin Cole AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Drive
School category	Community		Amblecote
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 4DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818335
Number on roll	306	Fax number	01384 818336
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Mills

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	Inspection number 276995
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Amblecote is larger than average for a primary school. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds and start at the school with varied attainment. A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a good many of these learn English as an additional language. About a quarter of all pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is an above average proportion and is partly explained by the fact that the school attracts some pupils transferring from other schools. Since the previous inspection, the attainment of pupils entering the school has declined from an average to a below average level.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and provides good value for money. Prior to the inspection, the school had made a cautious evaluation of its own performance as 'satisfactory', reflecting the fact that Year 6 pupils' 2005 national test results had been lower than usual. However, these results had been due to special factors, particular to that year-group, concerning pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties who did not join the school until the latter part of their primary schooling. Inspectors took account of a broader range of evidence and more up-to-date measures of pupils' progress and thus arrived at their more positive view of the school. A wide range of strengths combine to ensure pupils achieve well in their work and make good progress in their personal development. Good provision in the Reception classes leads to good progress and standards which are broadly average at the end of Reception. Throughout the school, good, challenging and supportive teaching of a lively curriculum is very successful in inspiring pupils' excellent behaviour, their determination to succeed and their obvious enjoyment of their education. All of this means that both pupils and their parents think very highly of the school. Good leadership and management have ensured that since its previous inspection, an already good school has maintained its strengths and achieved a satisfactory level of further improvement. A good recent improvement has been in literacy, with more thorough checks on teaching and learning and specific targets to help pupils understand how to improve their writing. These approaches have begun to work well and raise achievement but not with full consistency across the school or in relation to other skills or subjects. The school measures and understands its own performance satisfactorily. The school has a sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Apply the good quality of checks on teaching and learning in English to that of other subjects, especially mathematics.
- Extend the best practice in target-setting and marking and ensure consistency across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. The overall attainment of children starting at the school is below average. Good progress in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and further steady progress thereafter, means that pupils leave Year 6 with attainment in line with the national average. Pupils of all abilities and needs progress well. This includes the considerable proportion of pupils who find particular difficulty in learning or with behaviour. The very good support for pupils with such difficulties results in some of them making particularly good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress and some at an early stage of learning English make exceptionally good progress. Pupils' national test results vary from year to year, reflecting significant fluctuations in the profile of pupils' abilities and the number who

have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, results have been broadly average over recent years. Inspectors' observations of current pupils' work and performance in lessons support the view from the school's records of progress that the Year 6 pupils have met realistic targets and that there has been a return to average standards after the dip in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Adults in the school are excellent role-models for the values of care and mutual respect they wish pupils to adopt. One parent said that during many visits to the school she had never heard a teacher raise their voice. Very good progress in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to the overall excellent standard of behaviour and pupils' clear respect for others regardless of age, gender, background or culture. Bullying is rare and pupils say staff deal quickly with any minor upsets. A few pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties but, with very sensitive guidance, they behave well almost all of the time. Following recent improvement, attendance is now good. Pupils grow in self-confidence, respond keenly to challenge and show much enjoyment in their education. They willingly and sensibly join in opportunities to contribute to the community through the school council, positions of responsibility and supporting other pupils. However, the school overlooks some opportunities it might give pupils to show independence and enterprise. The good progress in pupils' personal qualities combines with their good progress in developing skills in literacy and numeracy to prepare them well for adult and working life. A strong school focus on healthy lifestyles helps pupils know how to stay healthy and act accordingly. They praise improvements in school meals: 'We only have chips on Friday' - 'Yes, and they're oven chips!'. Pupils also take advantage of the good opportunities to take exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and leads to good learning and overall good progress. Some outstanding lessons are taught. Teachers plan lessons well, building on pupils' previous learning and identifying clearly what pupils of different capabilities are to learn. Systematic assessments of pupils' progress are used well to match pupils' tasks to their needs. Classes are managed skilfully so no time is wasted on maintaining discipline. Lively activities and plenty of encouragement lead to pupils' high levels of interest, enjoyment and attentiveness in lessons. 'Work is fun!' as one boy said. Another remarked that teachers are 'ready to listen to our ideas, and not just their own'. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully to tell pupils how well they have done but do not explain with consistent clarity or regularity what pupils need to do next to improve further. In English, particularly writing, clear targets related to capability help pupils throughout the school know what they are aiming for. In mathematics, a similar system

is established in Years 1 and 2 but not in other classes. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support from staff. Those at an early stage of learning English are also given good support and this helps them make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets national requirements and is well planned to suit the full range of pupils' capabilities, needs and interests. The curriculum promotes progress in skills well in literacy and satisfactorily in numeracy. There are carefully devised programmes of work for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils at an early stage of learning English have wellmatched work. Excellent planning of links between subjects adds interest and relevance to activities. One pupil enthused about the link between history work on Ancient Greece and the music of 'Orpheus and the Underworld'. Reception class children enjoy a varied, well-planned curriculum. A good programme of personal, social and health education is reflected in pupils' cooperative relationships and their good knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe, for example on local building sites and when cycling. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a very good range of visits and visitors, providing pupils with valuable first-hand learning experiences. They also provide good opportunities for them to improve teamwork, independence and relationships. Activities outside lessons, including good opportunities in music and sport, are wideranging and well-attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support are provided. Good relationships combine with rigorous formal procedures to promote pupils' well-being and ensure their safety. Pupils are well understood and provided for as individuals and a good check is kept on each one's progress and welfare. Good liaison between teachers, teaching assistants, parents and outside agencies ensures that pupils' needs are met. Those who have specific needs in relation to learning or behaviour are quickly identified and given thorough support. Pupils receive sound guidance on learning but with more consistent quality in English than in other subjects. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for at school and their confidence and happiness are plain for all to see.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher sets a clear example of dedication to pupils' academic and personal development and to providing equal opportunities within a very caring context. Strong staff teamwork, which unites around these aims, is mirrored in very cooperative relationships with pupils, parents and governors and good links with external organisations and other schools. Some valuable improvements in the teaching and curriculum have helped the school to maintain overall standards over recent years while it has been accepting a more

challenging intake of pupils. Planning for improvement takes account of parents' and pupils' views and is based on sound checks on the school's performance. The school is conservative in evaluating itself and thus judges some of its qualities less favourably than inspectors do. In English, checks are especially thorough and have been effectively used to plan good improvements. In other areas, including mathematics, less rigorous evaluation has taken place and less improvement has been achieved. Governors keep a well-informed watch over the school's performance and hold the school to account effectively. The clear commitment of staff and governors to improvement and the record of past improvement show the school has a sound capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 June 2006 Dear Pupils The inspectors who visited your school recently would like to say a big 'thank you' to you all. You were very friendly and we really enjoyed talking to you. It was also good to see how well you get on with your school work. You concentrate well and try hard. We think you are making good progress. We also noticed your excellent behaviour and how much you enjoy school. Your teachers provide good lessons which are interesting and enjoyable and there are fun activities after lessons as well. Everyone in the school, adults and children, gets on really well together. All the adults look after you really well. All of this makes your school a very happy one. We have said that we think Amblecote is a good school. The adults in charge of the school are doing a good job. However, we have suggested two ways they could help you learn even more. The teachers have improved the way they teach you literacy skills by checking very carefully how well the lessons help you learn. We have asked the teachers to concentrate on mathematics now and make similar improvements in this subject. Some of you told us how you like your targets for writing. You also like it when the way teachers mark your work helps you know how to improve. We have asked the school to make sure you all get this sort of help regularly. Thank you again for making our visit so enjoyable. We wish you the very best for the future. Yours sincerely M H Cole Lead Inspector Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 www.ofsted.gov.uk