

Ambergate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112786
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289412
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Battram
Headteacher	Mrs C Webster
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002
School address	Toadmoor Lane Ambergate Belper Derbyshire DE56 2GN
Telephone number	01773 852204
Fax number	01773 852204

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Inspection number	289412

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

Ambergate is a small school which serves the village of Ambergate and surrounding area. All the pupils are White British and have English as their first language. Children's standards on entry to the school vary from year to year but overall are typical of children nationally. The proportions of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities and with statements of special educational need are average. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ambergate is a good school with aspects that are outstanding. It is effective because there is very clear direction to its work, which is understood and embraced by everyone. The school's breadth of provision is successful in promoting the all round development of pupils. Pupils are treated and valued equally. Parents' comments are very positive about the school for example, 'Both my children have been extremely happy there and have thrived as a result.'

Leadership and management is good. The school has made many improvements in the past year, based on extremely well informed research and evaluation of evidence. This process of self-evaluation is outstanding and is part of the routine of the school's work. The school identifies areas to improve and then makes the necessary changes. For example, pupils' standards of writing have risen because the teaching has focused closely on their use of vocabulary, punctuation, joining words and opening sentences.

Standards are improving because experienced subject leaders are effective in their roles. They have correctly identified areas for improvement in pupils' work. For example that older pupils have difficulty solving problems in mathematics and aspects of pupils' cultural development are limited. Governors make a good contribution to the work and development of the school and keep a check on many aspects of its work effectively. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Each year pupils' starting points vary considerably, which largely explains the fluctuations in standards by the end of Year 2. Children make a good start in Reception. The generous adult to child ratio and good use of outdoor facilities give children many opportunities to settle into school routines and make good progress, for example, with their social skills. Teachers' assessments show that pupils typically reach average standards at the end of Year 2. National test results at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of the good extra support they receive.

Pupils' personal development is good. They willingly take on responsibilities, such as membership of the school council, which help them to understand what good citizenship is. Many older pupils show an exceptional commitment to the life of the school. Pupils respond well to lessons about how to stay healthy and safe. Behaviour is good because teachers reinforce school rules consistently. Pupils enjoy going to school because they feel safe, they are well cared for and work is interesting.

Pupils enjoy learning because the teaching is good. Pupils know their personal targets and how to achieve them because marking is thorough and tells them what they must do to improve. Classes are orderly and purposeful and the good curriculum is well planned. Staff demonstrate considerable subject expertise. The school offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics, so that they know more clearly how to answer questions.
- Develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and of world issues

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement across the school is good and those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and most reach the expected goals by Year 1. Some exceed them and children make particularly good progress in their social and emotional development. In Year 2, although pupils' standards fluctuate over time, they reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This year pupils have made good progress in mathematics and are likely to reach above average standards.

In Year 6, standards in 2004 and 2006 were above average in English, mathematics and science. This year pupils again have challenging targets to reach. Their current work in English and science indicates that they are on course to reach above average standards, and in mathematics average standards. Pupils have some difficulty in solving mathematical problems, using their existing knowledge and skills in a range of practical situations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and know that members of staff are ready to listen to any concerns they have. Their attitudes towards work are positive and they enjoy school very much. Consequently, behaviour is good and attendance is above average. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of looking after their bodies through eating healthily and exercising frequently. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know right from wrong and older pupils help younger ones to learn the school's routines. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of other cultures and their place in the world and the school rightly has a target to improve pupils' development in this area.

Several letters from parents rightly mention the positive, nurturing atmosphere in school that has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Many older pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic about contributing to the school's development, such as through the school council, as monitors and as helpers. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have identified 33 jobs that they do to help the school run smoothly. The work of the pupils who prepare and edit the 'Amber Express' school newspaper is exemplary. Pupils are well prepared academically and personally for the challenges ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The pace of teaching is good and pupils work productively in lessons. Standards have risen as a result since the last inspection. The teaching reflects the considerable subject knowledge that teachers have across the curriculum. What pupils are to learn in each lesson is planned clearly and lesson targets are evaluated carefully to see whether they have been reached. Practical mathematical activities, such as seen in the Reception, Years 1 and 2 class, really interested pupils. Each pupil had to explain what they had learned, which they did well. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and class control is excellent. The teaching includes each pupil in the mixed-age classes, but there are moments when tasks are not as closely matched to pupils' individual abilities as they could be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

As well as its provision of the required curriculum, the school offers pupils very many opportunities to contribute to the school community through duties and participation in the school council. Education for health and safety is good and covers many of the dangers pupils are likely to meet. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of additional activities including clubs and visits to places of educational interest. There is good provision for conversational French before and during school time.

The school has made good changes to the curriculum and is seeing the benefit of their critical skills programme in the way that pupils approach their work. For example, there is greater emphasis on pupils making connections between things they know and asking further questions to extend their knowledge. Enquiring into or investigating ideas is expected in all subjects. As standards rise, the most able pupils are at times ready for work that is beyond that expected of the primary school curriculum. The school caters for these pupils but for example, has not yet explored formal arrangements with the local secondary school to help meet their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support is good. The staff teach pupils in a supportive learning environment. Pupils feel safe and they show that they are very happy in school. Parents are very positive about how well their children are getting on and how well the school looks after them. Pupils grow into well rounded young people. Staff support pupils' personal and academic development systematically. Pupils receive strong encouragement to work hard and to reach good standards. They understand how they should be progressing throughout the year because they are well aware of their targets and teachers mark their work with these targets in mind. The attention given to pupils' writing targets is exemplary. Target setting is well developed in some other subjects but not all. Pupils with special educational needs receive good individual support so that they are able to make the progress of which they are capable. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management is good. The leadership skills of the headteacher are excellent. She has guided the school, strongly supported by the staff, to a point where pupils' standards and progress have risen from satisfactory at the last inspection to good now. The headteacher also leads a group of local headteachers to raise standards across the group of schools. Strong teamwork at Ambergate contributes to the good quality of education. The school has an exceptionally clear picture of its strengths and areas for development, based on solid evidence, such as assessment results. Staff training is linked closely to improving the standards pupils attain. Governors understand their roles and contribute significantly to school improvement through, for example, their links to subjects. They keep a close check on all aspects of the school's work through meetings, but need to make more first hand focused visits to the school to see it working in practice and hence to form more independent opinions as critical friends.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ambergate Primary School, Ambergate, Derbyshire, DE56 2GN

Thank you for being so helpful during my recent visit. I enjoyed meeting many of you at lunchtime and in lessons. There are many good features in your school. Here are some of them:

- You make good progress from Reception to Year 6 in your work.
- The standards of work that you reach are often above average by the end of Year 6.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers and other adults care for you and help you to learn.
- You work hard and get on very well with one another.
- Your headteacher and the staff do a really good job running the school.
- Those of you who are older make an exceptional effort to help the school run smoothly.
- Your teachers are really good at working out how to improve the school.

To improve things further the school now needs to:

- help you develop problem solving skills in mathematics, so that you know more clearly how to answer questions
- provide more opportunities for you to understand more about other cultures and the wider world.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard and doing well.

Roger Fry

Lead Inspector