

# Amblecote Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	103806
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323899
Inspection dates	25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Deana Holdaway HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.  
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	273
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin de Vine
Headteacher	Ann Mason
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	13 June 2006
School address	School Drive Amblecote Stourbridge DY8 4DQ
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress and the safeguarding of pupils. They analysed the responses of 92 parental questionnaires. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, governors' minutes and the school improvement plan.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Assessment, to determine if it was sufficiently accurate to inform planning, help teachers match activities to pupils' needs and signal pupils who were falling behind or requiring additional challenge.
- The expectations of teachers in lessons and the opportunities for pupils to contribute to improvements.
- The responsiveness of curriculum design, planning and implementation to match pupils' needs and interests.
- The extent to which senior leaders set specific targets, evaluated measurable outcomes and reported accurately on the school's performance.
- The contribution of middle managers in effectively monitoring the quality of teaching and accurately tracking pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

Amblecote Primary School is a larger than average school and is situated close to Stourbridge in the West Midlands. Almost all of the pupils are of White British background. Over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and seven have a statement of special educational need. A growing number of children enter school with social and emotional needs and more than the local authority average have complex speech disorders. The school has a number of awards, including Healthy Schools Award and Activemark.

The school has governance of a pre-school group for children aged three to five years and this was incorporated into the inspection of the Early Years Foundation Stage in school.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

Amblecote Primary School is at a point of transition. A new headteacher took up her post in January 2009 and an appointment has been made for a new deputy headteacher from September. The school has met challenging targets to sustain improvements in pupils' attainment. The headteacher has begun a programme of monitoring and evaluation although these functions are not yet an established responsibility of middle managers. Senior leaders, including the governing body, have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and plans have been agreed to address the required improvements. However, the current plans lack measurable targets.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning and development. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory so that pupils attain standards in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. The school has a number of good features, not least, the polite, friendly and enthusiastic pupils whose behaviour was of a high standard both in and beyond lessons. Staff know the pupils' pastoral needs very well and they provide good support where needed. However, teachers' knowledge of pupils' academic progress, during lessons and over time, is insufficiently accurate. Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not high enough and while there are examples of good teaching throughout the school, it is not consistent.

The school has established positive relationships with most parents through informal and formal meetings as well as consulting parents through questionnaires. Where parents express concerns the school leaders do their best to take effective action.

A proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise standards and improve the accuracy of assessment by:
  - tracking regularly the progress of individual and groups of pupils against

- National Curriculum levels and parts of levels
  - analysing the outcomes of assessment to accurately inform plans for learning
  - matching activities to pupils' learning needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is consistently good by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly the higher-attaining groups so that the pace and content of lessons are challenging
  - increasing the rate of pupils' progress, not just within units of work or published materials but more importantly, through the National Curriculum levels
  - inviting pupils' opinions about what makes successful learning and inspiring lessons.
- Add detail to whole-school plans and reports to enable governors to hold the school to account by:
  - adding specific, measurable and timed targets in all planning, and reporting quantifiable outcomes against each target.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3
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The school has focused successfully on raising the attainment of those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and these pupils now make satisfactory progress. However, a lack of systems for teachers and managers to track individual pupils' progress has held back the school in identifying other groups of pupils who are falling behind. The predictions for 2009 national test results in Year 6 and the current work of pupils in Year 2 show standards that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from their starting points because staff maintain regular and accurate assessments of their progress and plan the next stages of learning depending on their needs.

In lessons, pupils' progress is secured by effective intervention. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions, and discussions with partners help them to further explain their understanding. In some good lessons, teachers explained specific and well-targeted criteria for pupils to work towards so that their work matched teachers' expectations of them. These indicators also assisted pupils in evaluating the quality of their own work. In other lessons, tasks were not matched accurately to pupils' abilities and an over-reliance on worksheets prevented pupils from practising learned skills such as sentence construction and punctuation.

Relationships are good between adults and pupils and a particular feature of this rapport was the mutual respect witnessed between staff and pupils. Staff genuinely care about the pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel very safe in school and free from bullying and harassment of any sort. Pupils reported that adults would help if they had a problem. As one pupil said, 'Everyone matters.' Pupils know and understand many of the important factors associated with good health and fitness. School meals and snacks encourage pupils to eat healthily and the wide range of physical activities after school is popular and often oversubscribed. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and are eager to be involved in decision-making, councils or groups raising awareness of current topics such as environmental issues. Other than aspects of religious education, pupils do not have enough knowledge of the rich

cultural diversity within the locality. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and the school works effectively with parents, carers and other appropriate agencies to improve the attendance of a small group of pupils. Pupils have the personal skills and qualities needed for their future but lessons do not guide pupils towards ambitious aspiration. Pupils show a great deal of interest in the world around them, their place within it and their relationships with others. They work together well to make the school a place where they can confidently say, 'We're all happy here.'

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers' lesson plans do not consistently focus on purposeful learning and appropriate outcomes. While teachers have a firm grasp of pupils' progress within published programmes of work they are less able to account for the progress made against national measures. All staff know the pupils well but because their expectations are not sufficiently ambitious the higher-attaining pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and sometimes creatively so that pupils understand their work and remain enthusiastic about learning. Activities successfully consolidate new learning though not enough require pupils to investigate, inquire, solve problems or work in teams. The intervention from teaching assistants contributes effectively to pupils' learning and progress.

The curriculum is suitably matched to the needs of pupils and provides a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is enriched by good partnerships with nearby schools and the local authority. Opportunities are missed for applying skills learned in English and mathematics across the curriculum. Pupils do not yet sufficiently contribute ideas towards improving their experience of the curriculum. Curriculum planning is enhanced by linking subjects through themes

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

though plans do not consistently respond to the local context.

The school provides a caring and welcoming learning environment for all pupils. There are strong arrangements for transition between stages, particularly from Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher quickly identified and communicated the priorities for school improvement. She has a very clear view of the current strengths which can be developed further and weaknesses that need to be addressed. She has communicated an appropriate sense of urgency in bringing about the required changes. Roles of staff have been reassessed so that expectations of various functions are more appropriate for their level of responsibility. Governors have remained supportive but reports to governors do not contain sufficiently detailed, measurable outcomes to help them hold the school to account.

The school has made a satisfactory start to promoting equalities by tackling the gap in performance between girls and boys and groups of pupils. There have been no reported incidents of racial harassment or discrimination. At the time of inspection, safeguarding arrangements were met and in line with current government guidance. Parents and carers are regularly consulted about the progress made by their children. The school encourages and supports parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning. The contribution to community cohesion is satisfactorily addressed within the school community and through charitable fund raising. While links with local, national and global aspects are satisfactory they are not strongly embedded.

There are no major shortcomings in the management or use of resources. Limitations are well understood and appropriate plans are being considered by leaders and governors.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	3

school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the pre-school and Reception classes with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in most areas of learning because teaching is consistently good and children's welfare is promoted well. The majority of children enter Year 1 working within the expected level for their age. Children are happy, well behaved and have excellent attitudes to learning. Relationships with parents and carers are outstanding and they appreciate the regular communication with staff.

Provision is good. Child-centred activities organised for both inside and outside are well planned, stimulating and engaging. During the inspection, children worked with excitement and enthusiasm in the outdoor area. 'Come and look at this!' shouted one child who was thrilled to discover a large, ripe strawberry growing in the garden. They work independently and cooperate well when working with others. There is a good balance between activities the children choose for themselves and those led by adults. All activities are carefully matched to children's needs and interests and so children's reading and writing skills develop at a good rate.

Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is fully involved in the monitoring of provision in this phase. She regularly evaluates the quality of provision and works effectively with the pre-school manager to assess and plan children's progress. The strong staff team work very well together. Their ongoing assessment of children's progress is very effective. Moderation of children's attainment at the end of Reception is thorough. Transition arrangements from the pre-school class into Reception are robust, as they are for the transition from Reception into Year 1.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



## Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the school overall. Inspectors thoroughly investigated issues raised by parents and found there to be no current basis for their concerns.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Amblecote Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 421 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	29	4	0

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007/8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007/8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007/8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Amblecote Primary School, Stourbridge, DY8 4DQ

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your behaviour and how much you enjoyed telling us about your school. Your singing in assembly was a real delight.

The staff know you very well and it was reassuring that you reported how well cared for you feel. They work hard to make sure you are safe and receive all the support you need. Your recently appointed headteacher has lots of good ideas to improve your school and help you achieve higher standards. Children in the pre-school and Reception class make good progress and inspectors would like all teachers to make sure that you continue that rate of progress throughout your time at school. We have asked Mrs Mason and all the adults to:

- measure your progress very carefully so they can match your learning more accurately to your needs
- make teaching even better by expecting more from you and asking for your ideas about how to make lessons more exciting
- help the governors by adding more detail to plans and reports.

Thank you again for being so helpful. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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