

Amberley Parochial School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115689
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338639
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Duncan
Headteacher	Peter Godfrey
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 10 lessons and five teachers, scrutinised a sample of pupils' work and held discussions with staff, governors, pupils and the school forum. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents including those relating to safeguarding, improvement planning and the curriculum. The latest pupils' survey and 47 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the impact of recent improvements in assessment for learning on the rates of progress for groups of pupils
- the quality of the curriculum, to evaluate how effectively this engaged all pupils
- how effectively teaching helps pupils understand the next steps in their learning
- if the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation stage ensures children make progress in their learning and development across all areas of learning.

Information about the school

Amberley is a small village primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of their education are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. There are three other mixed age classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There is a temporary teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage and all the teaching staff, including the headteacher, have been appointed since the school was last inspected.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In their short time at the school, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have established important strategies that are helping to secure an improvement in the academic achievements of pupils across the school. At the same time, they are building on the strengths identified by inspectors when they last visited. Parents recognise these improvements and welcome the commitment of the school leadership and the enthusiastic, supportive staff.

Most children start school with skills that are above expectations for their age and they leave with above average attainment. They make satisfactory progress overall in their academic achievements. There are some areas in which pupils make slower progress. In the main, these are boys in writing in Key Stage 2 and a minority of pupils in mathematics. These pupils have some gaps in their understanding or skills. The school and governors recognise this. They have taken decisive action to tackle shortcomings in the quality of assessment strategies and improve the teaching in the mixed age and ability classes. There has been an upward shift in teachers' expectations; whilst this has not yet been enough to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress, teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The new and improved methods for tracking pupils' progress are beginning to show teachers what individual pupils should learn next to ensure good progress. However, teachers are not always using effective strategies to convey these concepts or targets to the pupils. Consequently pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.

Pupils' personal development and their well-being are good and make an important contribution to securing pupils' very positive attitudes to school. Pupils enjoy their time in school, which is enhanced by a good curriculum. They are keen to attend. They are resourceful and independent learners who also work well with each other. The quality of care, guidance and support is good and the school works productively with those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learning and progress is satisfactory for these pupils.

There has been some rapid improvement over the last two terms in the quality of the curriculum. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on an effective range of evidence. However, subject leaders do not yet check sufficiently on the impact of their actions to improve teaching. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress in mathematics and for boys in Years 3 to 6 in writing by ensuring that assessment information is analysed carefully and teachers address

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the gaps in pupils learning in lessons.

- Extend the good elements of teaching and learning through:
 - providing pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work so they can meet their personal targets
 - developing ways to communicate targets so that every pupil knows clearly what they have to do to improve
 - using probing questions to challenge pupils' understanding and raise their expectations in the majority of lessons.
- Implement a programme of closely focused lesson monitoring to check that actions and policies are being implemented.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and are above expectations at the end of the Reception Year. Good progress was evident during the inspection, particularly in their reading and writing skills, due to effective teaching strategies. The majority of pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, and performance data for the last three years show that the proportions reaching the higher levels are generally above average. Inspection confirmed the good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a range of subjects which contribute to these outcomes.

Pupils' achievements are not as high as they could be by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has improved the range of opportunities for writing this year, with some immediate benefit to pupils in Year 6. A systematic approach to the craft of writing, and a strong emphasis on planning through discussion and use of engaging topics is helping develop pupils' ideas, language and vocabulary, particularly for boys who have ground to make up. The less able pupils and more reluctant writers are well supported but not enough high quality feedback is given to reflect higher expectations. Increased practical work in science has improved outcomes since the last inspection for all pupils. In mathematics, too many learners are given insufficient challenge in the application of computation skills. This is caused by weaker matching of work, particularly for the more able, to where it will have most effect.

Pupils have a very good understanding of their own personal conduct and behaviour. Pupils and children in the Reception class show resilience when asked to work independently, and respond well to teachers' questions, particularly where these really probe their thinking and understanding. Very strong relationships have been established with all the adults in the school and pupils are treated with respect. They know that their views are valued. In lessons, pupils think and learn for themselves. They have a high level of interest in all they do at school and pupils of all ages show responsibility and initiative. Projects, such as the recent work with the National Trust and thematic work, are well planned to develop and build on pupils' interests. The chance to meet and work with people from outside the school adds a further stimulus for learning and outstanding attendance.

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Pupils feel extremely secure and appreciated. They told inspectors that there are few incidents of bullying and if this occurred it would be dealt with well. They are instrumental in offering effective solutions where safety is a concern. They look out for each other and this is evident in their approach to playtimes which are happy and harmonious occasions. Pupils have a very positive view about how to stay healthy, and particularly enjoy the wide range of sports on offer. Many stay for after-school sport, music or environmental clubs. The school forum members take their role seriously, knowing that it helps make the school a better place. For example, they have harnessed pupils' enthusiasm for healthy activity through their walk-to-school programme. Pupils' understanding of the contribution they make to the local community is very strong. They make well-informed choices about their charitable work.

The good standards, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork and their enthusiasm for learning, prepare pupils well for their transition to secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is consistency in the strong features of teaching throughout the school. These

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

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include a clear focus on what is to be learned at the start of the lesson and a good balance of practical activities, discussion and group work. As a consequence, pupils work well as a class and in small groups. The care taken in grouping pupils helps less able pupils keep up, and these pupils are well supported by knowledgeable teaching assistants.

There are some weaker elements. These include ensuring there is a close match of work to the ability of the group, particularly in mathematics. In writing lessons and tasks, the intended outcomes are sometimes insufficiently different for the ability range and this means that pupils are not always appropriately challenged. Marking is improving, but this is still not wholly effective in helping pupils judge how well they are learning. In addition, pupils do not always understand what their targets mean, and the writing targets are not used widely enough across all subjects. Generally, teachers have a good range of strategies to keep the learning moving forward but miss opportunities to use questions to probe understanding, reinforce the intended learning and offer feedback to pupils on their personal targets. Teachers' good use of interactive whiteboards helps to enrich the learning experience.

Trips, events and visits all serve to widen horizons and inspire ambition. The use of topics ensures the curriculum is imaginative and stimulating. Opportunities for the acquisition of key skills in English and information and communication technology are well provided for but there is little to develop the application of mathematical skills. □ The good quality opportunities in learning outdoors are rapidly becoming a strength of the school, from the □weekly welly walk' in Reception to □survival' experiences in Year 6. Some opportunities to extend gifted and talented pupils exist, but are not systematically built into day-to-day planning.

Staff know pupils very well and parents are appreciative of the level of care offered by the school. There is sensitive support for those who have specific social and emotional needs. □ Staff and older pupils are instrumental in providing good role models.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides inspiration and motivation for the whole school community. Governors play a full part in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and, with the leadership team, have an accurate view of the school. The school development plan is well focused on a small number of core priorities and this provides a real sense

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of direction and ambition. There has been considerable emphasis over the past year on improving the quality of teaching and collecting reliable data about the performance of the different groups in the school. As a result, strategies such as changes to the curriculum have been implemented to promote equal opportunities. Momentum has been built up through open and honest discussion about achievement and a comprehensive staff training programme. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning by English and mathematics subject leaders to check on agreed action and its impact.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and systematic. Risk assessments are detailed. The school demonstrates its commitment to promoting cohesion within and outside the school community. It has strong links within the village. Good links made with local schools helps sustain pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school has yet to extend the largely monocultural experiences of pupils by establishing links with global communities, but has a strategy to improve this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	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

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners. They are very much part of the school family. Adult-led learning activities are effective. The class teacher and teaching assistant work as a very effective team to meet children's needs. Day-to-day assessment is good. The classroom and outdoor area, though shared with pupils in Year 1, is well suited to their needs. The teacher plans exciting activities to help them learn and develop. Resources to support

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learning indoors and out are satisfactory but are not always on hand to ensure that during child-initiated activity, children can make the best gains in learning. When provided, they do not always match to the particular expectations for groups of children. As a consequence, learning from experiences both indoors and outdoors is satisfactory rather than good.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation stage has shown an impressive response to guidance from the local authority. There has been rapid improvement in the balance of adult-led activities and those children choose for themselves. She monitors effectively the coverage of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents or carers of nearly a half of the school population responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Their responses show very high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. Eighteen of the questionnaires contained comments. They were generally very positive and there were no common themes or complaints running through the negative comments. Positive comments included that the 'staff members always take time to listen' and the school 'has a welcoming atmosphere' and is 'very supportive of families'. Any matters of individual concern were discussed in confidence with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Amberley Parochial School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection.

In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	70	14	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	64	17	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	45	26	55	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	40	25	53	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	57	20	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	49	20	43	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	40	19	40	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	36	26	55	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	49	20	43	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	60	14	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	72	12	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	70	12	26	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Amberley Parochial School, Stroud GL5 5JG

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. It was a privilege to spend time joining you in lessons, looking at your work and talking with you about your experiences at school. I promised the school forum that I would answer their question as to what I think of your school. So here is the answer.

The inspection found the school to be satisfactory overall. There are many good qualities and some outstanding features. Your personal skills and well-being are good and this serves you well for your future. The school provides you with many good opportunities to broaden your experiences, for example through topic work, sport, music and learning outdoors, and this ensures you have a very positive attitude to learning. The adults care for you well and you have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe.

What needs to get better is the progress some of you make in mathematics and also the rate at which boys learn to become good writers. It is not all down to you, although you can help by paying greater attention to the targets you have been given to improve your work. Your headteacher and the governors know what needs to be done and they have already made some important changes to the way they measure how well you are doing. I have asked the headteacher to check more regularly that teachers are matching the work to your abilities in lessons. Also that they help each other to improve some aspects of their teaching, such as their marking of your work and the quality of the questions they ask. This should help you to get a better idea of how well you are learning and making progress.

I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector

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