

Amberley CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125970
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359977
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs M Clifford
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited four lessons and six part-lessons, observing three teachers and several teaching assistants. The inspector also held meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. She scrutinised samples of pupils' work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including policies, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. She considered the 19 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at the following.

- The attainment and rates of progress for all groups of pupils, but particularly in mathematics, for girls and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which teaching, the curriculum and pupils' involvement in their own learning are having an impact on raising attainment and pupils' enjoyment.
- The impact of overall leadership in embedding ambition and driving improvement in order to raise attainment across the school.
- The extent of the successes since the last inspection, including the effectiveness of the soft federation.

Information about the school

Amberley is a very small first school catering for pupils from the ages of 4 to 10. Pupils are organised in mixed age classes. Reception-age children share a class with Year 1 pupils. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mainly moderate learning difficulties, although some pupils have more complex needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school has the Active Mark. It is involved in a soft federation with a local primary school. The headteacher shares her time equally between the two schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Amberley is a good school. It has some outstanding features, particularly in the quality of care it gives to all pupils and the highly positive way it ensures equality of opportunity across all aspects of its provision. It is sensitively led by a caring, thoughtful headteacher who has ensured a learning environment where children feel safe and enjoy their learning. Excellent relationships and effective teamwork ensure good provision within a supportive, nurturing environment. Consequently, pupils are keen to attend school and as a result learn and develop well. Parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the progress their children make.

Children start in Reception with a range of skills and understanding that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. Good induction and a friendly welcome ensure they settle well into school routines. They make sound progress in most areas of learning. They make good progress in writing due to the regular use of a new phonics scheme, which effectively supports their writing skills. Although there is a wide range of activities that children undertake by themselves, planning for these is insufficient and this, coupled with a lack of challenge in teacher questioning, slows children's progress. Due to good provision and excellent support, pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 5 so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 5, records show that standards are above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics, although there is still not enough emphasis on problem solving activities within the subject.

Good teaching, coupled with effective assessments which enable staff to plan work that clearly meets the variety of pupils' needs, is helping to accelerate progress. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to develop their thinking fully by explaining their ideas during whole-class sessions. The school's emphasis on teaching the curriculum through topics has generated huge enthusiasm from the pupils, particularly through enrichment activities such as India Day. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive considerable support, enabling them to make good progress.

The headteacher and her staff are fully committed to driving improvement. This can be seen in the way they have successfully raised achievement for all pupils. A good working relationship with their partner school is facilitating a sharing of resources and expertise which is beneficial to pupils and teachers alike. Accurate self-evaluation and a new, detailed school improvement plan effectively enable the school to improve provision and monitor the success of initiatives. The school has improved well since its last inspection. In addition to the improvements in mathematics, the school has ensured more accurate self-evaluation and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. On the evidence of the progress

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made, the school has a good capacity to further improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage through:
 - more rigorous planning for activities that children undertake by themselves in order to extend their learning
 - more challenging adult interactions to accelerate children's progress.
- Improve pupils' involvement in their own learning by using their ideas more effectively in lessons in order to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Provide more opportunities for problem solving in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Well-planned topics engage their interest and promote their learning. Pupils enjoy their work and have good attitudes to their learning. This was clearly seen at the start of the day when they settled quickly and sensibly to their spelling and mathematics activities, concentrated really hard and were very pleased with their success. Good support from the teacher and teaching assistant ensured they did not get stuck. They respond well to activities such as their walk round the village with a local historian whose extensive knowledge and enthusiasm provided them with a valuable insight into the history on their doorsteps as well as the main focus which was to find out about the use of materials. Pupils use the school grounds well, for example when finding out about materials in science. They also enjoy the outdoor activities generated by the Forest Schools initiative where, amongst other activities, they use tools, build shelters and track animals. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they frequently receive individual attention to their specific needs. For example, they are given good support to develop their reading skills.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They say they feel very safe in school and that there is no bullying. They are proud of their contribution to the school community, particularly as members of the Eco Team, who put up energy- saving posters. They are also proud to be members of an elected school council. Pupils take on responsibility willingly and this was clearly seen in the way they helped set up the hall for the mother and toddler group. It showed in their kindness and consideration as they interacted with the small children. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, particularly the importance of fruit, vegetables and exercise. They particularly enjoy their fruit at snack time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan and organise lessons well. This, coupled with good relationships and the effective use of praise, means that pupils are keen and motivated to learn. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants; for example, in a mathematics lesson, they supported small groups of pupils effectively, making sure they stayed on task and helping them when they encountered problems. Most teachers explain things clearly to facilitate good understanding. This was particularly noticeable in a mathematics lesson, where clear explanations ensured pupils developed their understanding of fractions. However, there are missed opportunities when questioning pupils as teachers do not always give pupils enough time to answer fully or give form to their reasoning, and this slows their progress. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and use this well to plan appropriate work. For example, they use the analysis of termly writing assessments well to plan tasks and set targets for pupils. Pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour are dealt with consistently and supportively so that they do not disrupt the learning of others.

The curriculum is well planned in a two-year cycle to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils in the mixed age classes. The use of topics enables good cross-curricular links, and pupils speak enthusiastically about them. They particularly enjoyed their work on the Second World War and on Stig of the Dump. The school makes good use of published schemes to support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Work in information and communication technology is developing but not yet fully integrated into all planning. Excellent enrichment such as the drama workshops and an African Assembly fully promote pupils' academic and personal development.

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The school gives outstanding support to its most vulnerable families and parents are very grateful for this. For example, one parent commented on 'the great support for her family and her child' during a very difficult family period.

Pupils with complex needs are particularly well catered for to ensure their successful integration into school life. Pupils and parents new to the school are warmly welcomed, enabling them to settle quickly and become part of the school community.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a strong vision and clear sense of purpose, which she has communicated successfully to all staff, who share her vision, are fully supportive and work extremely well together as a team. This has enabled the school to function equally well when the headteacher is at her other school. All staff have leadership responsibilities within the school. They are enthusiastic and keen to embrace new initiatives and promote their subjects to bring about further improvement. They also value the close links that have been forged with their partner school which have supported their professional development.

Teaching is monitored regularly and carefully, with clear guidance on improvement, which staff find helpful. Regular analysis of data ensures a good understanding of the next steps in pupils' learning. It also identifies those not doing well enough so that the school can put suitable interventions in place. This, together with the work done to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils, the efforts to raise pupils' awareness of disability and the strong efforts to improve attendance, demonstrates the school's excellent commitment to providing equality of opportunity.

There are good partnerships with parents and others, which promotes a strong sense of community. The sports partnership and the Rother Valley link, as well as effective links with their partner school, provide extended services that benefit pupils and teachers alike. The school has carried out an audit and evaluated the impact of its work on community cohesion. Consequently, it recognises the need to develop links with communities further afield in order to raise pupils' awareness of both British and global communities. Systems for safeguarding pupils are good and all policies and procedures are securely in place. Governors challenge the school well and work effectively through their committees to ensure all statutory requirements are met. They carefully monitor the success of the school's priorities through their involvement in the school

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improvement plan and meetings with the school improvement partner.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good relationships and an appropriate range of activities across the areas of learning ensure children make satisfactory progress. Children willingly take part in activities, behave well and are happy to share resources with each other. They enjoy stories, such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears, particularly when they get the opportunity to do paired work with Year 1 pupils in sequencing the story. They use the outdoor area well for physical activity as well as imaginative play, such as using puppets for story telling. The emphasis on teaching letters and sounds is helping to accelerate children's progress in writing. However, planning for activities undertaken by the children independently is insufficiently detailed to ensure all staff are clear about what children are expected to learn. This hampers their ability to question and challenge children fully through their interactions with them. Staff regularly assess children's progress but they do not always use this to ensure work is well matched to their needs. Good links with parents fully support the children's learning. Leadership, although satisfactory, is not always rigorous enough in monitoring the quality of provision and driving improvement.

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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	3

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires show that the vast majority of parents are happy with the school and what it provides. They consider that their children enjoy all that the school has to offer and are safe and well looked after, and the inspector agrees. A very small minority of parents were concerned about behaviour. The inspector found that the school deals very effectively with pupils who have behavioural problems and that the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	58	6	32	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	58	7	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	68	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	58	8	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	63	7	37	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)	12	63	5	26	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	63	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	47	7	37	2	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	63	5	26	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	74	3	16	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	79	4	21	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Amberley First School, Arundel BN18 9NB

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for helping me with the inspection. I was pleased to learn that you enjoy school, particularly your topic work and involvement in the Eco Team.

Your school is a good school. It has some things it does exceptionally well such as taking very good care of you and giving you all an opportunity to be fully involved.

Here are some other things I particularly liked about your school.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are well behaved, friendly and keen to learn.
- You are kind and thoughtful towards each other.
- You feel safe in school and know you will be well looked after.

These are the things I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Help you all do even better by making sure you are given opportunities to share your ideas and further develop them in lessons.
- Help those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn more quickly from your play by planning more carefully how adults can join in activities with you.
- Give you more opportunities for problem solving in mathematics.

I enjoyed talking to you and wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector

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