

# Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131215
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360233
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tony Shield

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacqueline Lord
<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvonne Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Kitchener Road Amesbury Am SP4 7AX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons, and 12 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, members of staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. In reaching their judgements, they took into account the views of 104 parents and carers, in addition to those of pupils and staff, expressed in questionnaires.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether progress is improving and is at least satisfactory through the school, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The extent to which teaching is improving and consistently challenging for all pupils.
- Whether attendance and punctuality are improving as a result of school action.
- The quality of the school's analysis and self-evaluation and whether all leaders make an effective contribution to monitoring and school improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school that draws its pupils from Amesbury and beyond. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with only a small number from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than is found in most schools. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social problems. In addition, a small number have physical disabilities. The school has received the Healthy School Award and Activemark. There has been considerable disruption to the leadership and staffing of the school in recent years, although a new headteacher was appointed in January 2010 and staffing has recently been more settled.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Amesbury Primary is a satisfactory school, and one that is improving rapidly. It has taken some formidable strides forward in the last year, as the headteacher's determined leadership has inspired confidence and trust. Decisive action has been taken to raise expectations and tackle some long-standing weaknesses. Accurate and incisive self-evaluation, informed by a detailed analysis of pupils' performance, has been the cornerstone on which improvements have been founded. Already strong improvements in behaviour, the climate for learning and the quality of teaching are leading to accelerated progress for most pupils. The governing body and staff know there is much still to be done, but there is a good spirit and sense of teamwork throughout the school community. This lends confidence to the view that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

There are a number of key strengths and some weaker areas.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The well-managed provision ensures they settle quickly into school routines and make good progress.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics remains low, because many pupils still have much to catch up, including those with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented, and too many have poor attendance. However, attainment is rising and, given their starting points, most pupils make satisfactory progress.
- Teaching is improving and much teaching observed was good. Nevertheless, teaching is currently satisfactory because of its impact on pupils' learning. Teachers do not always use assessment effectively to plan work geared to the individual needs of pupils. Nor do they always inform pupils how well they are doing, give them enough opportunities to work on their own or use questions to make pupils think for themselves. However, some teaching inspires and excites pupils to work hard and do their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they are often enthusiastic learners and are kind and considerate to each other in the playground.
- The school's sensitive attention to pupils' care, guidance and support encourages pupils to feel safe. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are particularly well supported and the work of the Nurture Group in providing a 'safe haven' for these pupils is especially effective.
- Relationships are respectful between adults and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This ethos of care is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are reflective and take part respectfully in the school assemblies. Links with the church are close and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

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- Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most eat healthily and participate enthusiastically in physical education and sports. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community and take responsibilities seriously.
- While the school has tackled the issue of low attendance robustly, too many pupils miss too much schooling. This adversely impacts on their progress. Nevertheless, the impact of recent initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality is making a difference and overall poor attendance rates are declining.
- The governing body is providing good support and challenge. They are increasingly knowledgeable and committed partners in the school's leadership.
- Leaders at all levels are making a good contribution to school self-evaluation and improvement. Monitoring is regular and effective in driving improvements. The school's plans for improvement clearly set out the way forward. Progress in moving the school forward is routinely monitored by the governing body and the school is poised to make more rapid improvement.

Most parents and carers are pleased with the school, and a very large majority say they are happy with their child's experience at school. Typical of several comments made to inspectors were: 'The school has made significant improvements in many areas during the past year which have positively reflected on the attitudes and enthusiasm of the children.'

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate the learning and progress of all groups of pupils, including the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
  - leveraging up the quality of teaching to that of the best
  - raising expectations of what every individual pupil can achieve
  - making more consistently effective use of assessment information to set and adapt tasks in lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils and challenge them all to do their best
  - making better use of questions to deepen pupils' understanding and make pupils think more carefully
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves and develop independent learning skills.
- Improve attendance, particularly that of a small number of persistent absentees, by:
  - working more closely with families to promote the importance of regular schooling.

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

<b>3</b>
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While attainment at the end of Year 6 has been stubbornly low in recent years, attainment through the school is improving as more pupils make up lost ground and reach expected

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levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils lack confidence in their ability to achieve academically, but this is beginning to change as the impact of measures to improve teaching and create a more productive climate for learning begins to bite. Pupils lack confidence in manipulating numbers and in solving problems independently of the teacher. Standards of written presentation are not always high enough and pupils sometimes have difficulty in articulating their ideas clearly and using appropriate grammar and punctuation in their written work. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is improving across the board. Some good progress was seen. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils' progress in extending their thinking and developing an understanding of the use of adjectives was especially good. Pupils were given the confidence to do so by vibrant and skilful teaching which challenged them to work things out for themselves. Outcomes were enhanced by the good pace of learning and the teacher's sharp awareness of how well individual pupils were progressing. There are no significant differences between the outcomes for boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually good, but concentration can wander when tasks do not involve them actively. Their behaviour is sensible and mature. While exclusions were high 12 months ago, there has been a marked reduction as pupils get to know the school's revised expectations. On occasions, a very small minority of pupils present challenging behaviour, but staff manage this exceptionally well. Older pupils take seriously the opportunities to act as assembly monitors, buddies to younger pupils or as members of the school council. Pupils take part in a growing number of events in the wider community, including the Amesbury Carnival and Flower Festival. Pupils' basic skills, including computer skills, are satisfactory, although they do not confidently apply these in different contexts. They develop good interpersonal skills and teamwork, which prepares them satisfactorily for their futures beyond primary school. Pupils have a keen interest in others' beliefs, feelings and values, and their links with a school in The Gambia provide them with a perspective on global friendship.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving and much is characterised by well-planned learning and tasks which fire the imagination of the pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers demand much of their pupils, encouraging them to think for themselves and reflect carefully on their own learning. While some excellent and incisive questioning was observed, prompting pupils to think more carefully about their work, this was not consistent. Planning is not always geared effectively to the range of pupils' abilities in the class. While marking is carried out diligently, pupils report that they do not always know how well they are doing, nor what they should do to improve.

The curriculum is under review as the school seeks to offer a more exciting and imaginative programme, which gets pupils more actively involved in their learning and provides learning experiences across different subjects. Already a good start has been made, and ensuring progression and the consolidation of skills within this new curriculum is a key priority. Intervention programmes for pupils falling behind are proving effective and there is satisfactory provision for the large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has rightly identified the need to extend and develop its provision for its gifted and talented pupils. 'Club Friday' offers good opportunities for curriculum enrichment, and the school provides a range of visits and visitors to ensure that pupils make connections between their learning and the outside world.

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Pupils and parents and carers say that the school does a very good job of caring for and supporting pupils. Good transition arrangements exist and the school links well with the nearby secondary school. Care for vulnerable children is well managed and the pastoral manager works sensitively in the Nurture Group to ensure these pupils feel included and valued. There are extensive links with external agencies to provide specialist support when needed.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's drive and ambition are shared by the whole school community. As a result, leaders and managers at all levels make a good contribution to self-evaluation and school improvement. Actions taken during the last 12 months have already made a significant difference to behaviour and are creating a more purposeful atmosphere for learning. The rate of pupils' progress has improved sharply and is continuing to do so as targets are used successfully to raise expectations and both teaching and the curriculum engage pupils more purposefully. The school environment has been made more welcoming and conducive to learning. Realistic self-evaluation has been the springboard for these developments.

The governing body is increasingly confident in carrying out its responsibilities and now makes a good contribution to both strategic planning and monitoring. A strong commitment to equal opportunities, inclusion and removing barriers to learning is evident in all school procedures and the care with which individual cases of underachievement are handled. Data are analysed carefully to check the progress of different groups within school. All policies to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils are in place, and staff understand their responsibilities in respect of child protection and pupils' safety. The school has worked successfully to enhance its procedures in relation to child protection and these provide a secure framework. Although the school does much to promote community cohesion within the school and the immediate locality, its thinking is not formalised, nor has its provision been evaluated.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their very low starting points on entry to Reception. By the time children enter Year 1, their skills are broadly average across a number of areas of learning, but remain low in their language and numeracy development. Learning is characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Detailed planning means that a well-balanced programme of both indoor and outdoor activities and a mix of child-initiated and adult-led tasks encourages children to develop their skills across the full range of learning. Children enjoy purposeful play and the 'Bakery Shop' was being well used for imaginative play, with one boy earnestly pretending to mend the tap under the sink! Adults are skilled at promoting children's learning through effective questioning and the encouragement of children to talk about their learning. A range of ongoing assessments are used to build up a detailed picture of each child's development. Individual learning journeys are recorded and shared with parents and carers. Children play together happily, confident in the friendly and kind relationships which permeate the classrooms. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: 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 of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire were very appreciative of the school, and only a very small minority are unhappy with their child's experience. Almost all believe that their children are safe and most think their children are doing well at school, and that the school meets their particular needs. Many parents and carers who added comments said how much they appreciated the changes introduced by the new headteacher. Others commented on the helpful, friendly and approachable style of the staff. There were very few negative comments, and no common pattern to their views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Amesbury C of E Primary 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	55	46	44	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	54	47	45	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	39	55	53	7	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	44	44	42	7	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	45	43	50	48	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	42	49	47	7	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	39	59	57	2	2	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)	40	38	55	53	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	47	45	43	8	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	35	53	51	10	10	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	35	53	51	10	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	45	49	47	3	3	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	47	47	45	5	5	1	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



13 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Amesbury Church of England Primary School, Amesbury, Wiltshire  
SP4 7AX**

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views, which we have taken into account in writing this report. Amesbury Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception class and are increasingly making better progress in the rest of the school. Your good attitudes and behaviour make a big difference to the progress you make. However, some of you still have much to catch up by the time you reach Year 6.
- You told us you feel safe in school, something your parents and carers also like. This is because the school takes good care of you and you get on well with everybody.
- You have a good understanding of how to live an active and healthy life and you contribute in many different ways to the running of the school, such as assembly monitors and buddies.
- While some teaching is good, some is satisfactory and, sometimes, teachers do not expect enough of you, or use information about how well you are doing to set you work which suits your ability. You can help by telling the teacher if you don't know how well you are doing! We have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to work on your own to make you think for yourselves.
- Some of you are not coming to school regularly enough. This will make a difference to how well you do at school. We have asked the school to work with you and your families to ensure you attend as often as you can and get the most out of school.
- All the teachers and the governing body work successfully to make the school better.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

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