

The William Amory Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131073
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	360201
Inspection dates	17–18 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Burton
Headteacher	John Ross Martin
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was carried out. Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 64 parents and carers, 79 pupils and 10 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors looked at how well pupils are developing their writing skills.
- They considered how successful the school has been in improving the quality of teaching.
- They explored the degree to which the curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment and how well it is adapted to meet their needs.
- They evaluated the effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures in relation to driving improvement.

Information about the school

The William Amory is smaller than most primary schools. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently well below average, but this varies between year groups annually. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single Reception class. There are five further classes, two of which are mixed-age classes. The school recently completed a local authority programme (the ISP) to raise attainment. The school holds the Activemark award.

There is an on-site Care and Fun Club for pre-school children. This is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection.

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

The William Amory is a satisfactory and improving school. Pupils are well cared for by the staff and they enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their attendance which is above average. Attainment in Year 6 in 2010 was average, but it was higher in mathematics than in English, largely due to some weaknesses in pupils' writing skills. School leaders have worked determinedly, supported effectively through the local authority programme, to improve pupils' literacy skills. Their efforts are starting to bear fruit, as evidenced in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. Across the school, the rate of pupils' progress is steadily improving. Their overall achievement and outcomes are satisfactory and this means that The William Amory prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stages of their lives.

Outcomes for children in Reception are good, partly as a result of useful changes to provision. School leaders demonstrate a firm commitment to raising attainment. Procedures for tracking and assessing pupils' progress have tightened up since the last inspection. Teaching has improved and, while remaining satisfactory overall, the proportion of good lessons has risen. Some weaknesses remain in planning lessons to ensure all groups of pupils learn well while working independently. Insufficient use is made of assessment in the second half of lessons to focus pupils on the criteria teachers set them for success and to extend their learning. The curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning well. Effective links are made between subjects to foster pupils' interest and responsiveness. Increased opportunities are now in place for pupils to exercise responsibility and to have their opinions heard and acted upon. Consequently, many aspects of pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, have improved in the last three years.

The capacity of the school for further improvement is satisfactory. Leaders' commitment and focus on raising pupils' attainment through improving teaching have been unwavering. Nevertheless, self-evaluation, school development planning and monitoring arrangements, including the organisation of record-keeping and the documentation of procedures, lack sufficient rigour to ensure rapid improvement and complete accountability. Leaders other than the headteacher do not have sufficient opportunities, for example through lesson observations, to gauge the impact on the quality of pupils' learning of the useful strategies they have implemented.

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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:

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- sharpening systems for self-evaluation and improving the quality of school development planning
- implementing more efficient measures for organising record-keeping and for documenting school procedures to enhance teamwork and accountability
- providing more opportunities for leaders other than the headteacher to evaluate the impact on pupils' learning of the strategies they have implemented.
- Improve the quality of pupils' learning and progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning enables all groups of pupils to learn more effectively while they are engaged in their independent tasks
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment opportunities to focus pupils on their success criteria and to extend their learning.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Their skills when they join Year 1 are generally average. Currently, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is average in both English and mathematics. This reflects an improvement in pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' progress from their starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The work scrutiny demonstrated that, since September, most pupils have added depth, interest and variation to their writing by incorporating a wider range of descriptive vocabulary. Observations of pupils' learning and progress in lessons show that pupils are developing these skills steadily. For example, Year 6 pupils identified adjectives such as 'desolate' and 'spectacular' to describe the Atacama desert. They were able to explain the meaning of these terms and suggest a useful range of synonyms. More-able pupils were aware that the literal meaning of 'petrified' was 'turned to stone'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities managed to compile a small range of relevant adjectives, spelt correctly with the aid of a thesaurus. Similarly, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 produced some imaginative vocabulary, such as 'ice-like crystals,' to describe cloud formations in the Antarctic.

Pupils enjoy school very much and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They relate well to each other and the staff and most pupils are responsive in lessons. They show a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe in the playground and in the classroom, for example in practical lessons when handling water and paint containers. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles as reflected in the school's award. Pupils make very effective use of opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example, as prefects and play leaders. School councillors are proud that they had a role in choosing the incoming headteacher. The head boy and head girl are highly respected as excellent role-models on account of their maturity and skill in advocating opinions and ideas on behalf of their peers. Other pupils make a good contribution to the wider community as well as to school. For example, they have supported the local community by designing mosaics for the local children's centre. Pupils' workplace skills are satisfactory overall due to their average standards in literacy and numeracy.

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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	3
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	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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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 includes several strengths. Lessons get off to a good start. Teachers make effective links with prior learning and discuss learning objectives with the pupils. Pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and most are keen to answer the teachers' questions. Topic-based literacy lessons engage pupils' interest well, enabling them to make connections in their learning and draw parallels with their personal experiences. These promising features are not fully capitalised on to ensure good progress during pupils' independent work. Tasks are not sharply matched to pupils' different levels of attainment to enable all groups to achieve the success criteria which have been set for them. Opportunities are often missed to use mini-summaries to help pupils evaluate, refine and develop their ideas. Marking is regular and provides pupils with useful guidance about how individual pieces of work can be improved. However, it is inconsistently linked to pupils' termly targets and a new initiative to engage pupils in written self-assessment is not yet embedded across all classes.

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development and interest in their learning well. Very effective links are made, for example, between English, history, geography, and information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Pupils make good use of opportunities in art lessons to develop their understanding of colour-mixing techniques to indicate different shades in landscape painting. Extra-curricular opportunities, including sport and an annual residential visit, are popular. Provision for the

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small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are supported very sensitively through one-to-one tuition, which enables them to take small, but steady steps towards independence in their learning.

The school's 'family feel' is reflected in the questionnaire responses and in pupils' comments to the inspection team. Pupils feel safe at school, because the site is secure and staff are considerate when called upon to help out. An effective mix of sanctions and incentives has improved pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. The school pays due attention to attendance matters and, as a result, the attendance of the vast majority of pupils has remained above average.

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?

Senior leaders, including members of the governing body, have good aspirations for raising attainment, as reflected, for example, in pupils' targets. Participation in the ISP programme has been largely successful due to the staff's commitment to improving their practice, together with the close monitoring and astute steer provided by local authority consultants. Some recent instability in staffing, caused by changes to the size of the school roll, has had an adverse effect on pupils' achievement and reduced opportunities for some senior leaders to monitor pupils' learning fully. In this respect, the school is now better placed to move forward. At the same time, shortfalls exist in strategic planning and systems for evaluating and reviewing the school's work. There are gaps in the school's organisation of record-keeping and the quality of documentation, which limit effective communication and accountability.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory. Members of the governing body have recently undertaken data training to enable them to hold leaders more firmly to account for pupils' progress. Arrangements for liaising with parents and carers promote pupils' attendance well. Parents and carers of pupils with individual education plans are fully involved in regular reviews. The school makes only a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, as its plans for promoting this nationally and globally are not fully developed. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, as reflected in satisfactory outcomes for all groups of pupils.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

As a result of a recent increase in the size, nature and make-up of the catchment area, children's skills and knowledge when they begin Reception are now below those expected for their age. Girls and boys achieve equally well. The curriculum, particularly for children's learning indoors, is well focused to enable them to acquire and consolidate new skills and concepts. Children's achievements are regularly noted and the observations made inform the next steps in their learning. Children have good opportunities to develop their learning across a range of media. For example, while working on their current dinosaurs topic, children produced some interesting clay models, drew or constructed caves for the dinosaurs and, with support or unaided, were able to write down some body parts on their fact cards. The classroom is well organised, safe and tidy. Children play their part in maintaining this good order. They behave well and move sensibly between activities without requiring direction from an adult. During painting activities, they show good awareness of hygiene routines by donning protective clothing and washing their hands independently. Small group sessions, led by the class teacher are very effective in developing children's skills. On a few occasions, for example, during lesson endings, opportunities are missed to challenge children. Relationships are good and children's welfare needs are met. The Reception leader has successfully addressed some weaknesses in children's skills, for example in their creative development. Leadership and management are satisfactory as there are some weaknesses in self-evaluation and monitoring arrangements.

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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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was above average. The statistical responses, as reflected in the table below, and the tone of comments received, indicate that the large majority of parents and carers have a positive view of the school's work. Inspection findings largely endorse this view. Eleven per cent of parents and carers disagreed that their children were making sufficient progress. As described elsewhere in the report, inspectors judged that pupils' progress, while remaining satisfactory, is improving.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The William Amory 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	77	14	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	75	15	23	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	61	23	36	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	52	22	34	6	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	53	25	39	5	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	47	28	44	5	8	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	32	50	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)	33	52	27	42	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	56	24	38	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	52	26	41	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	52	27	42	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	64	18	28	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	64	21	33	2	3	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 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).

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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



21 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The William Amory Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9PN

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found.

Yours is a satisfactory school but there are some good things about it.

The staff look after you well and you feel safe in school

You enjoy school a lot. Good reasons for this are the improvements to pupils' behaviour and the curriculum since the school was last inspected.

Your rate of progress, while remaining satisfactory, is improving.

When you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment in English and mathematics is average. To raise your attainment and help you to learn better, I have asked the headteacher and his staff to:

- improve arrangements for checking up on the quality of the school's work and planning for the future
- improve teamwork by making sure information can be shared better through good organisation and paperwork
- make sure all senior leaders have chances to come into your lessons to observe how well you are learning
- make sure teachers' planning helps you to learn more effectively while working independently
- give you better chances through mini-plenaries to contribute to your learning and meet your success criteria.

You can help by trying your best at all times, especially with your writing tasks.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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