

Amesbury Archer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133775
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360588
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Clough
Headteacher	Maggie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and governors, and inspectors spoke to parents and carers informally. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, the school's tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning, the school development plan, minutes from meetings and the questionnaires received from 54 parents and carers, as well as responses from staff and pupils.

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

- The impact of the school in raising achievement by increasing the rate of progress across the school, particularly for boys in writing at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The effectiveness of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to improve their progress.
- The consistency with which strategies to improve teaching are implemented and how well tracking of pupils' performance is used to ensure work matches pupils' needs. The effectiveness of leaders across the school in evaluating the impact of strategies to improve teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This school is of average size; since opening in 2006, the number on roll has been rising steadily. Considerably more pupils join the school at times other than the usual because of the ongoing increase of new housing in the area. About 15% of pupils are from families in the armed forces. The percentage of girls is higher than usual, particularly in some year groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These include pupils with: specific, moderate or severe learning difficulties; profound and multiple learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; speech, language and communication needs; hearing impairment; physical disabilities; and medical needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. The school has achieved the Investors in People and the Healthy Schools awards.

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

Amesbury Archer school has improved since its last inspection and provides its pupils with a good education. This is because the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her senior leadership team has tackled considerable difficulties with vigour and brought about the right changes to improve teaching, raise attainment and increase the progress for pupils. Other outcomes are also good; attendance is high. Pupils say they love being at school because teachers make learning fun, and they have lots of things to do. Teachers care a great deal about the personal development of pupils, as much as their academic success, and the care, guidance and support pupils receive are outstanding. Staff go to great lengths to help pupils become successful learners. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, and its success in bringing about change for the better demonstrates the good capacity for improvement.

Pupils have joined the school from a range of other settings, with skills and knowledge that are below the expected levels for their age. The good curriculum, increasingly good teaching and support that pupils receive in lessons mean that they make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave. Boys and girls make similar progress, particularly in writing, following specific strategies to support the boys and close the gap with girls. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make at least good, and occasionally outstanding progress. Teachers are very knowledgeable and use a wide range of strategies to embed learning, such as physical gestures to help pupils remember that 'add and multiply are friends'. Marking in books includes helpful comments about what pupils need to do next, but responses by pupils are too infrequent. On occasions, teachers spend too long explaining what the pupils need to do, when many of them are already confident they can do the task. Teaching assistants are involved in assessing the needs of the pupils and are well informed so that they make a good contribution to learning.

The school is highly dedicated to ensuring that every pupil has equal opportunities to learn and participate in a wide range of experiences and take on responsibilities. For example, pupils with physical disabilities or profound and multiple learning needs are fully involved in school life and the curriculum, and their learning is celebrated by staff and by the pupils. Behaviour is good because there are clear strategies to encourage pupils and these are applied consistently. The very few pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are supported well by the staff and through the strong partnerships the school has developed with appropriate professions beyond the school. A minority of pupils indicated that they are not sure that occasional incidents of poor behaviour are always well managed, and the school is reviewing its strategies to address this perception.

In the time it has been open, the school has developed a strong sense of community and purpose, with an admirable awareness of its historical background. As a result, pupils feel

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very proud to be part of their school. The school's 'learning words', which pupils said, 'helps us to take responsibility for our actions', are proving effective. Pupils are well aware of the care of the staff, and a pupil said, 'It makes you feel like you are one of the bricks in the building.' A parent echoed the views of many, saying, 'When you walk into the school you feel a warmth from all the teachers and teaching assistants. They give the impression that they enjoy their jobs, which in turn reflects onto the children and they really want to learn.' This emphasises why the school has rightly achieved the Investors in People award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment through the school, particularly in writing, by:
 - allowing pupils time to respond to high quality comments in their books
 - ensuring teachers spend less time explaining and give the pupils more time to do the tasks set for them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From their starting points of skills and knowledge, which are often below those of pupils their age, pupils make good progress through the school to attain standards that are broadly average. The focus on improving skills in mathematics means that, halfway through the year, the very large majority of pupils in Year 6 have already reached the levels expected for their age. In lessons seen, pupils make good progress because the tasks they are set are well matched to their abilities and needs. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are provided with tasks that are appropriately adapted. The use of a new approach to teaching handwriting, alongside the use of drama, visual stimulus, engaging topics and animation software, has helped boys to improve their writing so that it is of similar quality to that of the girls. A practical approach meant that pupils in Year 3 enjoyed learning their times tables and applying what they know about these to tackle a range of different sums. The good strategies embedded mean that pupils are confident to attempt more difficult work and they support each other in finding a solution. While they know the staff will help them if they need it, they develop good independence.

Pupils enjoy their good opportunities to take on significant responsibilities as junior receptionists, or caring for others as trained junior first aiders. Their involvement with governors and staff, in evaluating health and safety of the site and various activities, helps them to be confident in feeling safe. Boys and girls have separate opportunities to describe their ideas about their particular learning needs, which they appreciate as they feel more able to express themselves. Pupils get along well and are particularly sensitive to the complex needs of a very few pupils, for example learning what it means to have cerebral palsy, through the input of a parent. As a result, the pupils were keen to know how they could be better friends and are an impressive part of the support mechanism for their peers. Pupils are developing their understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of those who may be different to themselves. For example they enjoyed singing with pupils from many different heritages at the O2 arena, raising awareness of children needing foster care, through the Voice in a Million project.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
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?

Planning for learning is detailed and follows on from accurate analysis of tracking information about pupils' progress. As a result, work is well matched to pupils' differing needs through imaginative learning opportunities. Lessons are lively and cover interesting topics so pupils make good progress. However, on occasions, teachers are too determined that every pupil understands the task they need to do, before the whole class are allowed to get on with it. This constrains the progress of those who understand the task more quickly. Enthusiastic, expert delivery of physical education lessons develops very positive attitudes to keeping fit and these lessons are a highlight for many pupils. This helped the school to achieve the Healthy School award. Working across paired classes is helping to give a purpose to tasks, for example in writing. Year 6 pupils enjoyed writing an adventure choice story for Year 2 pupils, who then responded to their 'author'. French and Spanish lessons, alongside focus-days such as European day, help pupils to understand the wider community beyond their own. Many of the topics covered focus on aspects of the archaeological find of the Amesbury archer, such as exploring his journey to the Salisbury Plains or developing stories of his childhood. The curriculum is also extended to make use of the rich local environment, for example through the 'guardians of the plain' initiative, using resources at and around Stonehenge. Links with local businesses and military units have helped to inspire pupils to high aspirations.

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The documentation about pupils' learning and well-being is of a high quality; learning logs and individual education plans help ensure that parents and carers are kept fully informed of their child's needs and progress. Targets and the comments teachers make about work pupils have done help pupils know what they need to do next, although the lack of response to the latter means this is not fully effective. The well-thought-out start of the day means that pupils enter ready to learn, and that parents and carers have very good opportunities to speak to teachers about any concerns. Other aspects of care, guidance and support are excellent because all adults are aware that 'behaviour is communication'. Consequently, pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their lives, or just having a difficult day, are very sympathetically supported. The school is very adept at finding a way to extend the opportunities for pupils, for example through signposting parents and carers to funding for external clubs and activities.

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 determined and very well-informed leadership of the headteacher has ensured that there is an ambitious vision for the ongoing development of the school. Together with her senior leaders and all the staff, she is passionate about giving every pupil the best possible opportunities to succeed, both in school and in the world beyond. As a result, the extent to which the school promotes equality of opportunity is exemplary. There has been a relentless pursuit of further improvements since the last inspection, and these are carefully considered, strategically planned and then energetically implemented. This has led to a steady increase in progress. The impact on attainment is beginning to be evident as pupils move up through the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning is exceptionally well organised and highly effective in identifying strengths and areas where support or training is needed. As a result, teaching continues to improve and all staff are keen to work together to make teaching outstanding. There is a strong sense that this is a learning community for all stakeholders. Partnerships with parents and carers are developing well, for example by providing opportunities for parental learning, such as how to help their children develop the use of sounds to link to letters. Parents and carers are also encouraged to contribute their own celebration of what their children have done, outside of school, by writing 'golden moments', which are celebrated alongside other personal achievements in whole school assemblies. The proportion of parents and carers who actively engage with the school and the learning of their children is growing. The impact of the school in developing community cohesion within the new, local community is exceptional. The impact on pupils' understanding of their role within wider communities is not as strong but is developing well, for example through learning French and Spanish and

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through writing to pen pals in France. Members of the governing body are well informed and bring helpful insight and expertise to ensure the school is efficiently run. They ensure that policies and procedures are in place and, at the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were met. As they develop more stability in the make-up of the governing body, they are raising the current satisfactory level of challenge they bring to the school, and are working to ensure that they are well trained.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The bright, busy atmosphere of the Reception class means that children enjoy their learning. When they enter in the morning, often with their parents or carers, they quickly settle to the activities available. Children make good progress because the provision of activities and opportunities is good, and the staff ensure all areas of learning are covered, both indoors and outdoors. However, learning activities do not always give enough opportunity for children to implement their own ideas, to develop their independence as learners. The staff know them exceptionally well and take the time to hear the thoughts and concerns of children and parents and carers. As a result there are excellent relationships and children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The linking of letters and sounds is particularly well taught so that children are making rapid progress in reading and writing skills. This is being promoted further by the excellent opportunities for parents and carers to learn about how they can use a similar approach at home; they greatly appreciate how the school helps them support their children. By the time children join Year 1, they have made up considerable ground and, recently, have been at least broadly in line with expectations; an increasing proportion are above expectations. These improvements have come about because the leadership is good, and staff work well as a team. Good records of the learning of children inform further planning and are used to communicate with parents and carers. This

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information is also used to ensure that any special educational needs are readily identified and the staff work well with other, appropriate partners to clarify and provide support to help children overcome difficulties. All the staff share high aspirations for the children and are working well to achieve these.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires received by the inspection team represented just over a quarter of the pupils, slightly below the average response rate. The very large majority of parents and carers agreed or strongly agreed with most of the statements. A small minority of parents and carers were unsure that their child is making enough progress, or that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Analysis of the school's records of pupils' progress and lessons observed shows that progress is good for the very large majority of pupils, when their starting points are taken into consideration. Inspectors found that the school has good strategies to support and manage the behaviour of a very few pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. While pupils indicated that such incidents happen occasionally, they felt that almost all pupils were well behaved almost all of the time and that behaviour has improved overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	52	24	44	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	50	24	44	2	4	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	37	24	44	10	19	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	41	21	39	3	6	8	15
The teaching is good at this school	28	52	21	39	5	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	39	23	43	7	13	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	39	27	50	6	11	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)	15	28	25	46	7	13	3	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	31	27	50	2	4	8	15
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	26	25	46	9	17	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	30	35	65	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	26	48	8	15	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	41	22	41	6	11	4	7

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.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Amesbury Archer Primary School, Amesbury SP4 7XX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and for telling us what you think about your learning. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing the exciting work you were doing. We looked at many things in your school and have judged that it is a good school.

These are some of the things we found.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have made sure that the things that needed to improve have done so; as a result, the teaching is now good, and you make good progress.
- The topics you study are interesting, and you told us that teachers make the lessons fun, so you like coming to school. Consequently, your attendance has improved a lot, and is now high. Well done; you can be very proud of this!
- Although many of you have joined the school at different times, you get along very well. We agreed with you that behaviour is almost always good, and that the school has good ways to help you remember what you should do.
- Those very few of you who find it difficult to live up to the school's high expectations are helped to understand why this is important, and are helped to become positive members of the school community.
- You are good at helping each other, both in your learning and when you are on the playground.
- Those of you who find learning more difficult are well supported and you make good progress; some of you make excellent progress. The school is helping your parents and carers to support you in your learning, and many of your parents said they appreciate this.

We know that your headteacher wants the school to be an even better place, with your help. We have asked the school to help you do even better, particularly in your writing, by giving you more time to do your tasks, and making sure you do what teachers ask when they mark your books.

Above all you can be proud of the important part you play in making your school such a happy and, as your teachers are apt to say, a 'gorgeous', friendly place to learn. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector

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