

Amesbury Church of England Primary School

Kitchener Road, Amesbury, Salisbury, SP4 7AX

Inspection dates 18–19 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing, English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good rates of progress from generally below expected starting points.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and some is outstanding. High expectations and stimulating activities help all pupils to learn well.
- A nurture group, funded by the pupil premium money, skilfully supports those pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- Pupils' behaviour towards each other and the adults who help them is courteous and friendly, both in lessons and around the school.
- The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governing body work closely together to ensure strong, effective leadership and management of the school.
- The shared understanding by all staff and governors of the school's aims and ethos means that all groups of pupils are well supported in their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well fostered through the school's close links to the local church and community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing need to improve further.
- Teaching in Year 3 is not as strong as it is in the rest of Key Stage 2.
- Some pupils do not have sufficiently well-developed independent learning skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons including joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors considered the 34 responses gathered from parents and carers through the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also the 35 staff questionnaires submitted during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the Chair and members of the Governing Body, leaders and managers at all levels in the school as well as talking to groups of pupils. The lead inspector also spoke to the local authority school improvement adviser about his work with the school.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, including homework, and also at a number of different documentation. This included the school's data on tracking and progress for different groups, minutes of governing body meetings, documents relating to safeguarding as well as attendance and exclusion information over time.

Inspection team

Marion Hobbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Lake

Additional Inspector

Colin Lee

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than most schools.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The percentage of pupils supported at school action is 22% which is well above the national average. The percentage supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average at 18%.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is 51% which is above average.
- The school population has increasing numbers of pupils from service families moving in and out of the area.
- Prior to the appointment of the current headteacher in September 2010 there had been considerable turbulence in headship, with ten headteachers in six years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum set for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing by:
 - embedding the recently introduced school strategies that are supporting all pupils to engage more fully in their writing
 - giving all pupils high quality speaking and listening opportunities that will help them to rehearse ideas aloud before writing.
- Improve independent learning experiences by:
 - deepening all pupils' thinking skills through the Philosophy for Children project
 - providing further pair and small group activities to promote personal resilience.
- Raise the standard of teaching in Year 3 to match the rest of Key Stage 2 by:
 - building on the existing practice that exists elsewhere in the school
 - providing the appropriate training and support to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills that are well below those normally expected at this age and especially in language development. They make good progress through Reception and Years 1 and 2. This is reflected in both school data and the sharp rise in Key Stage 1 attainment.
- Gaps in learning evident in 2011 national tests for Key Stage 2 are now rapidly closing. The school has good evidence to show how this is so for all groups. Writing, however, remains the comparative weakness.
- Groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, are now making better progress than expected. The low attainment of the last few years has been addressed and attainment is now rising faster than in all schools nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. The very effective support of teaching assistants is helping those with speech, language and communication difficulties to learn well. The gap between their attainment and that of all pupils is closing. Pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to provide for this.
- Pupils are clear and articulate when discussing their work in lessons and also when talking to adults about their learning.
- Most pupils read well and say they enjoy reading. The school has moved swiftly to address the needs of the small groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 for whom phonics' understanding has been a problem.
- Standards of presentation and handwriting in work across the school are high. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and audiences and are encouraged to use vocabulary that is precise for the task in hand.
- Numeracy skills are equally well developed throughout the school. Younger pupils are encouraged to use number in solving different problems as part of child-initiated activity while older pupils enthusiastically engage in manipulating numbers, often making rapid progress in lessons. They quickly apply strategies mastered, for example in carrying out three and four figure subtractions, and can justify their approaches.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils learn well because the large majority of teaching is consistently good and at times outstanding. As yet, pupils in Year 3 are not as fully engaged as their peers in Key Stage 2 owing to slower pace and challenge in their lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan for a range of interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn. Work is appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of different abilities and teaching assistants are deployed skilfully to support identified individuals and groups of learners.
- Typically, the pace of lessons is brisk so that pupils learn quickly and acquire new skills. Questioning often allows pupils to deepen their thinking and response. In some classes there is too little opportunity to reflect on learning through shared talk with the result that some pupils fail to fully develop personal independence.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge means that literacy and mathematics are taught effectively. Reading is promoted at every opportunity and the newly refurbished library offers an attractive, stimulating environment in which to enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Teachers and teaching assistants plan together effectively to support the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Tasks and activities are well matched to need and enable these pupils to make good progress in line with their peers.
- Books are marked regularly and frequently and school policy is followed consistently to ensure that pupils understand the next steps they need to take in order to improve their work.

Increasingly, pupils are invited to comment on their work.

- Regular homework enables pupils to build on what they have learned in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is positive throughout the school. They are eager to learn and enthusiastically engage with all kinds of activities.
- When asked, pupils were fully confident that bullying in any form is not an issue at their school and that they feel safe. This response was matched in the returns from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also by the comments of those spoken to at the school gate.
- All staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors, manage behaviour well. Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility in outdoor play by 'signing in and out' the equipment they select and say they like this opportunity. School data, showing the reducing number of exclusions over the past two years, also support this positive picture.
- The school works very effectively with the groups of pupils who have complex behavioural, emotional and social needs. The nurture centre provision allows pupils to enjoy a safe environment and expert adult support to help them with their personal circumstance before re-integration into classrooms.
- Attendance has improved over the past two years since the appointment of the current headteacher and is now above average.
- Pupils confidently engage with the wider aspects of their learning, for example through the school council and activities in, and for, the local community. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment in September 2010 and following a sustained period of turbulence for the school, the headteacher has worked tirelessly with both staff and governors to establish the collaborative, collegiate ethos of the school. As a consequence, the school is a thriving community that values and supports all.
- The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governors are fully consistent in the way that they communicate high expectations and ambition to see the school improve further. Staff, pupils and parents and carers all appreciate this.
- Performance management is closely linked to improving outcomes for pupils as well as meeting the needs of staff development. Governors work with teachers and leaders at all levels in the school to support this. All leaders are vigilant in ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils are treated equally.
- Detailed interrogation of progress data is being increasingly used to ensure that no groups of pupils are falling behind in their learning.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating activities that are well matched to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The expertly run nurture centre means that pupils with complex needs are fully supported to reintegrate with their peers as quickly as possible.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the taught curriculum, a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities as well as through the close links between the school and the local church.
- The school site creates a highly positive environment for learning. Bright, vibrant colours used

throughout classrooms, corridors and offices are matched by well-maintained grounds that include spaces for children to develop their gardening skills, look after small animals and enjoy open areas in which to play safely.

- Effective partnerships with other local schools and organisations are instrumental in giving memorable experiences for all groups of pupils. These include Year 6 pupils annually organising and hosting a 'Night of Honour' for local residents in the town and staged at a nearby secondary school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is pro-active in its support and challenge to the school at all levels and across academic as well as extra-curricular activities.
 - Governors are fully involved in the running of the school. Direct engagement in supporting classroom activity, for example helping Reception children to make porridge, is matched by their regular discussions with parents and carers in the playground before and after school. A weekly coffee morning for parents and carers offers a safe environment in which to speak to governors about any personal need or concern.
 - High standards of committee work mean that aspects of the school's smooth running in relation to finance and distribution of the pupil premium, safeguarding, site improvement, teaching and learning and leadership are all well supported.
 - Governors make effective use of local authority support through the school improvement adviser to help the headteacher in her role.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131215
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	406421

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqueline Lord
Headteacher	Yvonne Harris
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2011
Telephone number	01980 623009
Fax number	01980 626727
Email address	office@amesbury.wilts.sch.uk

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