

Amesbury Archer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133775
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	316218
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanna Pike

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 on roll	
School	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	penny Gambon
Headteacher	Maggie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Shears Road Archers Gate Amesbury SP4 7XX
Telephone number	01980 625944
Fax number	01980 626613

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspection number	316218

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2006 on a new housing development and is smaller than the average primary school. Pupils came from other local schools as the new housing development was still being built. The school has grown rapidly to its current size. Numbers are expected to continue rising and the school will eventually have 14 classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that in most schools, but the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. A few pupils come from service families. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The school recently gained the Sports Activemark, bronze level Eco Award and International School Award foundation level.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Amesbury Archer is a satisfactory but rapidly improving school. The headteacher has successfully established a new school where children really love learning. As one parent said, 'A really exciting school where the children cannot wait to get to in the mornings.' The headteacher's good leadership has ensured that all staff and governors share her vision of building a strong school community with high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, even though new pupils are arriving constantly, they quickly settle and become part of the community and enjoy contributing to it. Pupils' personal skills are developed well through the good care and support they receive. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school, because of the effective behaviour policy. Pupils play an active role in contributing to their own and others' safety. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles because of the emphasis the school puts on eating healthy snacks and taking lots of exercise.

In 2007, results in the national tests for the few pupils in Year 6 were broadly average. Although standards overall are average, those in reading, writing and mathematics vary between each year group. Achievement also varies between different year groups and subjects, although it is satisfactory overall. An effective way of assessing new pupils was implemented quickly, together with a system to track their progress closely. As a result of this good information, teaching is being targeted at specific groups of pupils. Additionally, the school is making good use of initiatives to boost progress, especially helping pupils to understand how to learn well. Middle leaders have introduced successful strategies to raise achievement, such as the story telling project. Although these developments are still relatively new, some signs of improvement are already apparent in pupils' progress in writing in Year 2, which is now good, and in the very positive approach to learning that pupils have.

Teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good and some that is outstanding. However, its quality is inconsistent. Although teachers tell pupils what they are going to learn, sometimes they do not make this specific enough or explain the small steps in learning that pupils need to make in the lesson. This results in pupils not being clear about what they are learning, and lessens their progress. Senior leaders are providing good training to help teachers improve their practice, and are checking that this has a positive impact. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers plan interesting activities. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to supporting learning, resulting in pupils with additional learning needs making progress similar to that of others.

The present satisfactory curriculum meets the needs of the pupils. Strong links with the local environment, which is rich in history, are used well to enthuse pupils. The new building is greatly enhanced by superb displays, which stimulate and inspire. The school is quite rightly developing better links between subjects so that pupils' satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) can be further extended through applying them more frequently in different subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in the Reception class, their knowledge, understanding and skills are typical of children of this age. They make good progress and achieve well because of the effective teaching they receive. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children reach or exceed the

expected levels in most areas of learning. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning because adults plan exciting activities and create a 'can do' atmosphere. Adults are adept at extending pupils' skills and knowledge through questioning. However, sometimes the activities are not tightly focused enough to develop specific skills. Checks are carefully made on children's progress so that their next steps can be planned accurately. Adults provide good care and support so that children feel happy and safe. Strong leadership has quickly established this good provision where children develop effective learning skills. This successful approach is being shared with the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistently good teaching in all classes and make pupils aware of the small learning steps they need to make in the lesson.
- Develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through other subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average by Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Each year group has a high number of new pupils starting during the year, which causes a great range of ability between each class. The school has very quickly established systems and structures to help pupils achieve well and some of these are beginning to take root. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make good progress because of the strong emphasis on becoming a good learner. This approach is now developing across the rest of the school and has led to older pupils who came to the school with negative attitudes to learning and low self-esteem becoming very positive and eager to learn. Pockets of good achievement are beginning to be apparent, particularly in Year 2 and especially in writing. There are no differences between the achievement of most pupils and that of different groups of pupils, such as children from service families or pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like the 'wake and shake' activities and physical education, and know how these contribute to being healthy. Their attendance is good because they thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils work well on their own and with others. They treat each other and staff with respect. They benefit from good opportunities for self-reflection and empathising with others. Pupils know about different world religions, but their awareness of the diversity of cultures in Britain is not so strong. The school council gives pupils an effective voice in the school. Pupils are regularly consulted about changes to the school and they contributed to the anti-bullying policy. They feel confident about approaching staff if they are upset. Pupils relish the many ways they contribute to the school and local community, including organising fund raising events and the recent Spring Concert. As a result of these opportunities and the 'Learning to learn' project, pupils have developed good learning skills and self-confidence, and with their satisfactory achievement in literacy and numeracy, they are being soundly prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan lessons well so that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, which keeps pupils on their toes. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils' thinking. Good opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas are helping to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. In the best lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding carefully so that misconceptions can be picked up. Books are marked regularly and teachers give pupils useful advice on how to improve. Where pupils are given the chance to respond, it is clear that they make good steps forward. When teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not build learning in small enough steps or share these with pupils. Sometimes, explanations are not sufficiently thorough. These weaknesses hinder pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched well with trips and visitors linked into the topic programme but with a strong focus on the rich local cultural heritage. Pupils' understanding of living a sustainable lifestyle is promoted well by strategies such as the Junior Travel Plan Committee. Gifted and talented children are beginning to benefit from a growing number of opportunities. High numbers of pupils participate in the good range of clubs and activities outside lessons. These contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being. The Green Club and the Garden Club help parents feel involved with the school as they and their children work together to develop the school grounds. Opportunities to learn about other cultures are not frequent enough to promote pupils' understanding of how different people live in Britain and across the world. As yet, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT, nor do they apply their literacy and numeracy skills enough in other subjects to improve these basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Robust safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school has been quick to develop effective liaison with outside agencies and organisations and this contributes well to the good support offered to vulnerable pupils so that they achieve as well as others. Good efforts to involve parents in the school through workshops, concerts and clubs are helping develop an effective partnership. Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Senior leaders make good use of the effective tracking system to identify when pupils are not achieving and to take action to remedy this. A growing strength is the way that pupils are involved in setting their own targets as this helps them understand how to improve. Most classrooms have attractive displays of pupils' targets. However, this is still at an early stage and is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Within 18 months, the headteacher has developed a strong team of staff and governors. She has managed well the move to a new school, organised resources, put effective structures and

systems in place, and coped with a rapidly increasing pupil population. It is a measure of the headteacher's good leadership that this was achieved while keeping the children's well-being central to everything. Long and short-term plans focus well on developments that will make the most difference to the school in helping to raise achievement. These include building leadership capacity further. Effective use is made of partnerships with other schools and organisations to further strengthen leadership at all levels.

Senior leaders know what needs to be done next to improve the school because of their effective monitoring of all aspects of the school, including pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Middle leaders are developing their roles well. They have accurately identified weaknesses through analysis and have begun to implement strategies to raise achievement. The full impact of these actions is not yet apparent. Progress meetings with class teachers are being used well to identify pupils who are underachieving and to plan action to overcome this. The changes in pupils' attitudes to learning and the better progress being made in writing in Year 2 are positive signs that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Governors are very supportive of the school, undertaking their responsibilities satisfactorily. They have developed appropriate links with subjects, which are helping them to know more about the school. They have identified what they need to do next to help them hold the school to account more effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was good to come and see you at your brand new school! What a lovely building! You are very lucky. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the school's inspection. We especially enjoyed the good discussion we had with your school council and the 'Learning to learn' group. We found out a lot. Right now, your school is giving you a satisfactory education and is rapidly improving. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:

- You work hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress. You reach the expected standards. You and your teachers are making good efforts to improve these further.
- Your personal development is good. You really enjoy your learning. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. You behave well.
- Your teachers have been busy working hard to improve things. They provide satisfactory teaching, with much that is good and some that is outstanding.
- Your teachers work hard to give you a satisfactory curriculum and there are lots of exciting things happening, like the 'Learning to learn' project, which is making things even better.
- The school does a good job in making sure that you all feel safe, settled and secure.
- Your headteacher has done really well in settling you and all the staff into a new school and has good plans with the staff and governors to further improve things.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve further:

- Help you to achieve even better by making many more lessons good.
- Develop a curriculum so you can use your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across lots of different subjects.

Thank you again for all your help.

14 March 2008



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Amesbury Archer Primary School, Amesbury, SP4 7XX

It was good to come and see you at your brand new school! What a lovely building! You are very lucky. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the school's inspection. We especially enjoyed the good discussion we had with your school council and the 'Learning to learn' group. We found out a lot. Right now, your school is giving you a satisfactory education and is rapidly improving. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:

- You work hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress. You reach the expected standards. You and your teachers are making good efforts to improve these further.
- Your personal development is good. You really enjoy your learning. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. You behave well.
- Your teachers have been busy working hard to improve things. They provide satisfactory teaching, with much that is good and some that is outstanding.
- Your teachers work hard to give you a satisfactory curriculum and there are lots of exciting things happening, like the 'Learning to learn' project, which is making things even better.
- The school does a good job in making sure that you all feel safe, settled and secure.
- Your headteacher has done really well in settling you and all the staff into a new school and has good plans with the staff and governors to further improve things.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve further:

- Help you to achieve even better by making many more lessons good.
- Develop a curriculum so you can use your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across lots of different subjects.

Thank you again for all your help.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Joanna Pike
Lead Inspector