

Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kitchener Road, Amesbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 7AX

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The headteacher leads with determination and integrity. Since her appointment, she has rapidly improved many aspects of the school. However, turbulence in staffing means that she has not yet secured consistently good teaching.
- Key stage 2 pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is not strong enough, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have not overcome the weaker teaching from the past.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not making the progress of which they are capable, particularly in key stage 2.
- In the Reception Year, the most able children do not make rapid progress in reading and writing from their starting points.
- Some pupils rely too much on their teachers, when they could take the initiative themselves.
- Teachers' planning does not use assessment information to ensure that work challenges pupils sufficiently, particularly the most able.
- Teachers' questioning of pupils is not well developed. Too often, pupils have little time to grapple with problems before they are given the answer.
- Where learning is not structured effectively, some pupils lose concentration too easily. This slows their learning.
- Senior leaders' analysis of the impact of pupil premium funding is not sufficiently detailed. As a result, efforts to help these pupils are not well targeted.
- Middle leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is not precise enough to enable them to improve its effectiveness quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the improvements that need to be made.
- The well-structured curriculum provides a good balance of experiences for pupils.
- Governors provide effective challenge to senior leaders. They are a skilled group which is ambitious for all pupils to thrive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievements by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6
 - planning appropriate support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make better progress
 - supporting the most able children in Reception to make stronger progress in reading and writing
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan learning that meets the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so that questioning has a greater impact on pupils' learning and is a more effective tool in supporting, extending and assessing learning.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - making sure that pupils are engaged in their learning so that they concentrate well and are motivated to succeed
 - providing pupils with teaching programmes that build their resilience and improve their learning skills.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - Ensuring that senior leaders' analysis of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is more detailed so that extra help for these pupils is directed more effectively
 - developing the accuracy of middle leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over the past year, the headteacher has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of, and has challenged ineffective teaching. She has restructured the senior leadership team and clarified senior leaders' roles and responsibilities. As a result, senior leaders and middle leaders are being held to account more effectively for their performance.
- Senior leaders support the headteacher's vision of high aspiration and a 'no excuses' culture at the school. However, their efforts to improve the quality of teaching have been hindered by a high rate of turnover among staff.
- Senior leaders have established many new procedures. For example, new systems have been introduced for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for managing teachers' performance. Senior leaders are well aware of the school's remaining weaknesses. However, they still do not have a precise understanding of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for service children.
- Middle leaders are not fully established in their roles. Their checks on teaching and pupils' progress are not yet detailed or frequent enough. As a result, although they have provided good general advice across the school, their work with individual teachers has not eradicated inconsistencies in their practice.
- Teachers receive high-quality training that is linked to the school's improvement priorities. For example, training this year on mathematics teaching has significantly improved teachers' skills.
- Teachers' performance is managed through a realistic and rigorous process. Newly qualified teachers are well supported in their first year of teaching. The overwhelming majority of staff who completed the staff survey believe that the school is well led and managed. Staff say that they are treated fairly and with respect by senior leaders.
- The curriculum is well organised and provides a good breadth of subjects. Pupils find learning meaningful because themed projects often have a high-profile outcome. For example, Year 5 recently performed 'The Wind in the Willows', drawing together successfully their work in English, art, music and drama.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a number of sports clubs. Pupils were particularly proud of their success in hockey and football this year. Senior leaders' use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium has increased the take up of sporting activities as well as raising teachers' confidence and skill in teaching PE.
- The school is committed to ensuring that pupils develop a good understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils understand the principles of democracy and they are tolerant of others' views. Pupils spoke eloquently about the acceptance that is offered to all pupils, no matter what their background.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Along with volunteers from the local church, pupils are involved in

planning and producing regular worship assemblies. Teachers support pupils to develop effective teamwork skills, especially through sporting activities.

- Senior leaders oversee the use of funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Since her appointment in September 2017, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has reorganised the support provided for pupils in the nurture centre. Most of these pupils' individual needs are now being addressed more closely.
- Many parents are unhappy with the changes that have taken place this year. A significant number of parents who responded to the Parent View survey expressed concern about the number of temporary staff at the school. However, the majority of parents who responded, and those who inspectors spoke to, would recommend this school to other parents.
- Senior leaders have been successful in recruiting staff for next year. The school is well placed to improve because all teaching and leadership posts are filled for September 2018.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has supported the headteacher strongly through a challenging year. The chair of the governing body is ambitious for all pupils. She shares the headteacher's vision of raised aspirations at the school.
- Governors receive accurate reports from the headteacher about the performance of the school. They ensure that additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for the development of PE and sport is spent well. They are aware of the need to improve their oversight of pupil premium funding.
- The governing body maintains close links with the church so that the Christian ethos of the school is preserved. It makes sure that staff are suitably trained and the policy for safeguarding pupils is fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders have reviewed all aspects of safeguarding practice at the school and made improvements over the past year. Record-keeping has improved significantly. Senior leaders maintain accurate records of any concerns that are raised about pupils' well-being.
- Senior leaders are swift to engage with outside agencies when required. They use a range of local services to support vulnerable pupils and families at times of greatest need. The majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey say that pupils are kept safe at school and are well looked after by staff.
- Detailed recruitment checks are made on all staff before they are appointed, to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. All staff know their roles in keeping pupils safe. They know what action to take if they are concerned about a pupil's

welfare. New members of staff receive effective training, and so they understand the importance of safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it varies too much between year groups and between classes. Several changes in staffing, particularly in key stage 2, have slowed pupils' progress in some classes.
- Teachers' use of questioning does not typically challenge pupils enough. Some teachers give pupils little time to think deeply about problems or new ideas. This inhibits pupils' resilience when they are faced with unfamiliar situations.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. However, a common approach to the assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding has only recently been introduced and is not fully established. As a result, teachers sometimes plan learning activities that are not well matched to pupils' abilities, especially the most able pupils.
- Staff understand the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils. Efforts to promote the progress of these pupils have had mixed success because the school's strategies to help them are not consistently applied.
- The SENCo is rapidly improving the quality of teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, particularly those pupils who have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs are now identified quickly and staff are given precise information about the extra help that they require. Even so, senior leaders acknowledge that the provision for these pupils is still not sufficiently effective.
- Teaching of reading has improved because teachers identify accurately pupils who need extra support. Pupils receive additional help quickly, and in proportion to their needs. Pupils who require the most help read with staff every day.
- New approaches to teaching mathematics have been introduced in Years 1 to 4. Mathematics teaching is now more effective because teachers' understanding of the demands of the curriculum has been clarified. Senior leaders have raised the level of challenge for all pupils. However, mathematics teaching in Year 5 and 6 has not developed as quickly and so gaps remain in pupils' mathematical skills.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas before they engage in creative writing. This helps pupils structure their writing and develop their ideas. However, many pupils' handwriting is not as good as it should be.
- Teaching in the wider curriculum often brings different subjects together well under a common theme. For example, Year 3 pupils' work on the effect of car pollution from the A303, and on the proposal for a Stonehenge tunnel, developed their understanding in mathematics, science and geography well.
- Where teaching is at its best, time and resources are used well to challenge pupils to extend their understanding quickly and deeply. This was seen in Year 5, where pupils learned the necessary vocabulary to be able to express feelings in French.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Over time, not enough teaching has encouraged pupils to act independently. As a result, some pupils rely too much on their teachers to give them direction.
- Pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as head boy and head girl, by being part of the school council or as house captains. However, day-to-day teaching has not successfully instilled a resilient attitude to learning in pupils.
- Pupils believe that bullying is not common. However, if it does happen, they are confident their teachers will deal with it effectively. The school has attained a quality mark for its work to prevent bullying.
- Staff at all levels care for pupils well. Pupils feel safe and told inspectors that they feel well looked after at school. Staff provide a safe, positive environment for pupils to learn in. For example, frequent checks are made on play equipment, and when a fault is suspected, immediate action is taken to make the equipment safe.
- Pupils are able to describe how they keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They have a good understanding, appropriate to their ages, of the risks associated with using the internet.
- Pupils have access to a variety of sports. This aspect of the school's work is well developed and strongly supports pupils' physical health and wellbeing. Pupils' emotional needs are met by counselling programmes that develop their emotional literacy and build their self-esteem.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A minority of pupils find it difficult to maintain a focus on their work in lessons, particularly when teaching does not provide sufficient direction and structure.
- At breaktime and lunchtime, pupils enjoy playing with each other and using the extensive outdoor play equipment. Although there is some boisterous behaviour, pupils' conduct is generally good at these times and around the school.
- Teachers use the school's behaviour policy consistently, and so pupils say that incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively in most cases.
- The rate of pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Senior leaders work effectively with families to help all pupils attend school regularly. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school.
- The rate of exclusions from the school is above average this year. Senior leaders have high expectations of pupils' conduct. They ensure that pupils are given help and support when they find it difficult to meet these expectations. Senior leaders and

governors only use exclusion as a last resort, and when they do, they ensure that all procedures follow statutory guidance.

- The majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey believe pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Key stage 2 pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics is not strong enough. The proportion of current pupils attaining the expected standard is too low. Weak teaching in the past has left gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Many disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 are not making rapid progress, because teachers' expectations of them are not consistently high. Extra support to help these pupils has not been well targeted in the past. Recent interventions have been more effective, but they have not been evaluated fully by senior leaders.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in key stage 2. A large proportion of current Year 6 pupils are working at the expected standard.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 1. By the end of Year 2, most pupils attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. New approaches to teaching mathematics have been introduced this year and these have improved the quality of teaching in this subject. More pupils are being challenged to go to greater depth in key stage 1.
- In Year 1, pupils' results in the phonics screening check are in line with the national average. Teachers read with pupils often. Pupils who need extra support are identified early and receive the help that they need.
- The most able pupils' progress is variable throughout the school because teaching varies considerably between classes and year groups. Where the teaching is most effective, these pupils are challenged well and make strong progress as a result. However, their progress is not rapid when teaching is not well planned.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not been supported well in the past. However, this year, strong leadership of this area of the school's work is leading more of these pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- In 2017, key stage 2 pupils' attainment in spelling was below the national average. The school's assessment information shows that current pupils' spelling is improving, particularly in key stage 1. A new scheme for teaching spelling has been introduced, and this is improving pupils' ability to spell a range of common words.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. Efforts to improve their speaking skills are paying off. Teachers regularly ask pupils to talk through their ideas before moving on to write them down. This helps pupils express their ideas clearly.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the early years is not consistently good, and does not ensure that children make strong enough progress across all aspects of their learning.
- Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has been above the national average in recent years, it has dropped this year. Although still in line with the national average, too few children make good progress from their starting points.
- Children's progress in writing is slower than in their other areas of learning. In particular, their writing is hindered by weak pencil control. Leaders have correctly identified children's weak hand strength as a barrier to achievement, but their actions have not led to swift improvements.
- Children in the early years do not make sufficient progress in reading. Teachers do not ensure that children's reading books are matched closely to their phonics knowledge. Consequently, children's ability to read fluently is hampered. Phonics teaching does not provide sufficient challenge for some middle-ability children and the most able children.
- The early years leader communicates well with local pre-school providers. Teachers use information from pre-schools well to support children as they start at school, and so children settle quickly when they arrive.
- Children are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning because relationships between adults and children are strong. Where teaching is matched to children's needs, children listen carefully and behave well. Children move sensibly between activities and show consideration for others.
- Children with SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because teachers liaise well with external agencies and follow advice closely.
- Leaders provide many opportunities for parents to come into school and find out how to support their children's learning at home. Parents receive information about their children's progress through online learning journals. Although many parents value the information that they receive, a minority express concern that the information is sporadic.
- Adults are well trained in procedures to make sure children are safe in school. The Reception team works together effectively to provide a safe and engaging learning environment. Indoor and outdoor classroom spaces are well resourced and set up to support all areas of learning. Children move safely around the areas of learning and show respect for the equipment.

School details

Unique reference number	131215
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10048974

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Bagg
Headteacher	Terry Hall
Telephone number	01980 623 009
Website	www.amesbury.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	head@amesbury.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2018

Information about this school

- The chair of the governing body took up her role in September 2015. The headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a 'nurture centre' which provides support for a small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have social and emotional needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is average. More pupils than average have parents who serve in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- Governors arranged a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection in November 2015. At that time, the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school were judged to be outstanding.
- The school operates a breakfast club, which provides breakfast for up to ninety pupils before school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and two other governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed learning across all age groups and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with teachers and teaching assistants about their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of pupils from Years 3 and 4 and met with pupils from the school council. Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime. The lead inspector visited the breakfast club and spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Informal discussions took place with several parents. Inspectors also took account of 159 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 29 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Hannon	Her Majesty's Inspector

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