

Ambleside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122460
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	340153
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	600
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Thornton
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Hannon
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, parents, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, minutes of governors' meetings, the work pupils were doing and the questionnaires completed by 167 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of action to raise standards and improve teaching and learning, especially in writing and for boys
- the use of assessment for ensuring an increase in progress
- pupils' achievement between Years 3 and 6, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the standards reached by Year 6
- the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning
- the quality of care, guidance and support provided
- how effectively leaders and managers use school performance information to influence their monitoring activities, improvement planning and self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Ambleside is a much larger than average primary school and is situated on the northwest outskirts of Nottingham City. It is located on a local authority housing estate, in an area of high social deprivation. The school moved into a new building in the autumn term of 2007. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with statements of educational needs. Pupil mobility is extremely high and consequently, many pupils join Ambleside having attended a variety of other schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Around one fifth of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English is similar to that found nationally. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes, which are taught in an open plan setting. A Sure Start Children's Centre is located on the school site. There is a breakfast club that is managed by the school.

The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools' award and the Financial Management Standard.

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

Ambleside Primary is a good school where outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils feel valued because of the high quality relationships which exist at all levels. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and report that they feel safe within its welcoming and attractive environment. Their behaviour is exemplary. As one parent commented, summing up the views of many, 'Ambleside Primary is teaching my child well and all staff are polite, friendly and always there to help if needed.' However, despite the school's efforts to promote good attendance, a small number of families have not been able to ensure that their children attend regularly and attendance figures are below the national average.

Since the last inspection, there has been a clear focus on the need to raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils join the school with knowledge, understanding and skills which are well below those expected for their age. A legacy of significant underachievement, dating back prior to the merger of two former schools, means that those leaving Year 6 still do not reach the expected attainment for their age and standards remain low. Nevertheless, there is a rapid trend of year-on-year improvement in attainment bringing standards closer to the national average. This is confirmed by the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2009 which indicate that pupils now reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. The good progress being made by pupils throughout the school is not yet reflected in national test results at the end of Year 6 because pupils currently in Year 5 and Year 6 have more catching up to do. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. However, in some weaker lessons observed, pupils' pace of learning was too slow and assessment information was not used well enough to ensure that lesson activities challenged all the different ability groups to make good progress. An outstanding curriculum supports good outcomes for all pupils. In particular, the effective use of information and communication technology, across all subjects, promotes good levels of independence. The school is highly inclusive and provides well for those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, the majority of those pupils make good progress.

The headteacher, governors and senior management team work tirelessly to provide clear and visionary educational direction for the school. The school's processes for self-evaluation are robust and take into account the views of staff, governors and parents. The rapid progress made since the last inspection, the extremely capable leadership of the headteacher and the school's meticulous organisation, demonstrate

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its good capacity to continue improving further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards across the school by making effective use of assessment for learning strategies within all lessons.
- Improve the quality of learning in all subjects to the level of the best by ensuring that:
 - work is consistently well matched to pupils' differing needs
 - all lessons progress at a good pace.
- Increase the percentage of attendance to above the national average by providing specific support for those few families with persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment by the time pupils leave the school is low, but rising rapidly for all ages and abilities. Attainment is highest in reading and mathematics and lowest in writing. Good progress throughout the school means that attainment is now average by the end of Key Stage 1. The school is successfully closing the gap at Key Stage 2. Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2009 indicate that more pupils reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics than in the previous year. The proportion of girls who reached the higher Level 5 was above the national average. Additionally, standards in writing improved as a result of new initiatives such as 'Big Writing', which have successfully inspired and motivated pupils, particularly boys. Challenging targets have been set for 2010 to raise standards to the national average. The school's own assessment data, as well as the current standards of work observed in Year 6, confirm that pupils are on track to reach these. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different ethnic groups do equally as well as their peers.

The school provides a calm, happy and safe haven where pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. They feel very well cared for by staff and are confident that any problems they have will be sorted out. The 'Place2Be' and 'Place2Talk' pupil counseling initiatives, as well as the successful work being carried out by the learning mentor, are having a positive impact on those most vulnerable pupils, particularly on improving their self-esteem, confidence and behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate high levels of empathy, tolerance and understanding. Consequently, pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. They make an excellent contribution to the school through the lively school council. Additionally, older pupils take their role as buddies for younger pupils seriously. Pupils are actively involved in the wider community through the 'Aspley Partnership', which helps them to understand their responsibilities in caring for the local environment, as well as

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helping people who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils participate with enthusiasm in other community initiatives such as Nottingham in Bloom, Nottingham Canals and The Big Spring Clean. Pupils have a good understanding of why a healthy lifestyle is important. Their good understanding of developing and adopting a healthy lifestyle has resulted in the school receiving the National Healthy Schools' award. The extent to which they develop basic skills prepares them adequately for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	4
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

An exciting, rich, relevant and well-devised curriculum is at the very heart of the school's work. Learning for a purpose has a high priority, as well as opportunities for practical first-hand experiences and these help to prepare pupils for their future adult lives. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate excellent information communication and technology skills and confidently use a wide range of resources. For example, Year 4 pupils produced a podcast for their class assembly and Year 6 pupils created picture stories using a software package to create text, graphics and music. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visitors and visits help children to develop in confidence and self-esteem, as well as to discover new interests and skills. Many pupils take up the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and enjoy performing regularly in the local community. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well, for example, through opportunities to take part in a number of residential visits.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Where teaching is good, it is characterised by teachers' enthusiasm, a brisk pace and good use of the interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning. These lessons are well planned and work is generally well matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers use effective techniques to check pupils' understanding, for example by asking well-targeted questions. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is slower and too much time is given to some activities by the teacher. Work is not as well matched to pupils' needs and sometimes lacks challenge. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are frequently provided with good opportunities to demonstrate their skills of creativity and enquiry through problem-solving activities and open-ended investigations. Pupils are generally clear on what they need to do to raise their standards in English and mathematics and know their targets for improvement.

The Every Child Matters agenda underpins the exceptionally high standards of care that the school provides for pupils. An extremely caring ethos results in very happy children who thoroughly enjoy school life. The school works exceptionally well with a wide range of external support agencies. As a result, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable children, receive excellent support which enables them to get the best out of their learning. The highly successful work being carried out by the learning mentor is having a positive impact on those most vulnerable pupils, particularly on improving their self-esteem, confidence and behaviour. There are excellent procedures for introducing children to the Nursery and Reception classes and for ensuring their smooth transition into Key Stage 1 and on to local secondary schools. The breakfast club is of good quality and ensures a healthy start to the day in a safe and happy environment.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good because leaders effectively communicate ambition and have a good understanding of the schools strengths and areas for further development. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has led

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significant change with skill and determination since the time of the last inspection. She is passionate about maximising the potential of every child to ‘Achieve, Be Proud and Succeed.’ All staff share her vision and consequently, there is a clear, common purpose which permeates the life of the school. The school’s commitment to equality of opportunity is good. As a result, it is successful in removing the barriers to learning for pupils, improving their life chances and in tackling discrimination. Accurate self-evaluation leads to effective action being taken to remedy identified weaknesses and to the raising of standards through sharply focused school improvement planning. Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding requirements are extremely robust and meet current statutory guidelines. Governors are involved in all aspects of school life and fully understand their role in providing appropriate challenge.

The school works extremely well with outside agencies to support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs. It also works outstandingly well with parents to engage them in their children’s learning. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It promotes cohesion well within its own community and, as the hub of the local community, engages with a wide variety of local partners. For example, the local Police Community Support Officer regularly visits school to support and promote positive role models for boys in reading. Strong links with a partner school in Spain effectively help pupils to understand aspects of the global community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Children enter the school with skills that are well below the levels expected for their

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age. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding because the excellent teaching, care and curriculum enable children to make rapid progress. Children settle extremely well into the Nursery and Reception classes because of highly effective pre-school links with the Sure Start Children’s Centre. As a result, children get off to a flying start in their learning, particularly in developing their independence and confidence. All staff are enthusiastic, well organised and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. As a result, children are very well cared for, show positive attitudes to their work and have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as to follow clearly established routines. They quickly learn to take turns, to share and to work together because these experiences are integrated into all their learning activities. Adults have excellent relationships with children and inspire confidence and success. The richness and variety of the curriculum provides these young children with constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. No learning opportunity is missed because staff use every moment to reinforce, consolidate and move children’s learning on.

Safeguarding procedures are secure and the children’s welfare is promoted well. Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use the information to plan further challenges. This means that by the start of Year 1, increasing numbers of children are approaching the levels expected for their age and they have made excellent progress from their very low starting points. Parents are kept very well informed and are encouraged to become involved in their children’s learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They appreciate the rapid improvements that have been made since the last inspection. They particularly like the way their children enjoy school, the way staff are so approachable and the excellent communication systems that are in place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ambleside Primary 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 167 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 484 parents and carers registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	62	57	34	4	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	110	66	52	31	5	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	95	57	62	37	8	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	93	56	61	37	9	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	96	57	65	39	1	1	3	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	87	52	63	38	11	7	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	46	82	49	4	2	4	2
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)	71	43	77	46	7	4	11	7
The school meets my child’s particular needs	87	52	67	40	5	3	6	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	51	63	38	5	3	8	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	42	75	45	9	5	9	5
The school is led and managed effectively	86	51	66	40	3	2	9	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	100	60	57	34	5	3	4	2

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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>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.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ambleside Primary, Nottingham, NG8 5PN

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed talking to many of you and seeing some of your lessons. Your school is a good school with many interesting things going on. Your headteacher and teachers work hard to keep developing the school, and for this reason, your work is getting better each year.

It was so good to see you all enjoying your learning and wanting to learn more. I enjoyed watching a group of the Reception children doing some superb counting, as well as making tricky patterns using characters and objects from 'Room on the broom!' I was just as excited as the children in Year 5 who were conducting their 'Treasure Box' measuring investigation, with the chance to buy a clue with one of their gold coins! I was impressed by the excellent way in which you make use of laptops, microphones, digital cameras and suitable software to support your learning. All of the inspectors enjoyed watching the podcast assembly made by the Year 4 pupils. Well done! Those of you who sometimes find learning a bit difficult are extremely well supported by teaching assistants. All the staff and governors take good care of you and you are also good at caring for each other. Your excellent behaviour, as well as the respect and understanding you show towards each other, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living, make your school a happy and welcoming community.

To make sure that your school gets even better, I have asked for some improvements to be made. These are:

- to help you to reach higher standards by making sure that your teachers check your understanding in every lesson
- to make sure that the work you are given is just right for you and that you work at a good pace
- to find ways to help you all attend regularly.

You can help by working hard and making sure you come to school every day!

Thank you again for making me so welcome. Always remember to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

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