

Aston Lodge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106888
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	395572
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Clark

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Hayes
Headteacher	Hazel Turner
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Clark

Additional Inspector

Anthony Kingston

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed seven teachers teaching thirteen lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with a group of pupils; representatives, including the Chair of the Governing Body; and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. Parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed from 38 responses, together with those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Aston Lodge is smaller than an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which sets the minimum standards expected by the government. Amongst the school's awards are Basic Skills 3 Award, Healthy Schools Gold Accreditation and Silver Artsmark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. The school is not yet outstanding because, very occasionally, the quality of teaching does not promote the best rates of progress. Purposeful and imaginative leadership ensures the school is always improving. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the caring ethos and their children's learning experiences.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress through school. They reach at least average standards by Year 6. Standards of reading are above average. Pupils have very positive attitudes and are eager to learn. Their independent learning skills are well developed. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, use and apply well-established basic skills effectively throughout the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and increasingly outstanding. Lessons are imaginative and challenging. Teachers use marking and feedback well to involve pupils well in improving their own work. Very occasionally the teaching strategies used and pace of learning do not fully challenge all pupils. Vibrant displays of good quality pupils' work promotes their desire to be the best they can be.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Levels of attendance are above average. Pupils are very considerate and thoughtful towards each other and highly committed to making the school a safe and welcoming environment.
- The thoughtful and incisive leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision for improvement and strong guidance to staff and pupils. There are rigorous self-evaluation procedures which contribute to effective performance management. Team work is good. The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. However, middle leaders are not yet consistently engaged in first-hand observations of teaching and learning to secure the

sharpest improvements. The rich curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase rates of pupils' progress further through bringing the quality of teaching to that of the very best by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders in the direct monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of learning in their areas of responsibility
 - removing any inconsistencies in the pace of learning and the teaching strategies used to fully challenge pupils throughout the lesson.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and they are well prepared for Year 1. Children are happy and eager to participate in the many exciting activities they meet indoors and out. They enjoy listening to stories and make particularly good progress in acquiring early reading and writing skills. As a result, the gap between the achievement of the least able children and others is successfully reducing.

Pupils make good progress in reading throughout school. Their attainment is average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading from a wide range of books, carefully chosen to expand their knowledge and love of literature. Pupils develop a good knowledge of how letters are written and combined to make different sounds, which enables them to learn new words quickly and effectively. Pupils make good progress in developing more advanced comprehension and referencing skills and applying them independently in many different contexts. Pupils of all abilities learn to enjoy reading regularly for different purposes. Pupils also make good progress in writing. They increasingly write at length and take pride in presenting work carefully. For example, handwriting is neat and cursive and spelling is largely accurate. The pupils rise well to teachers' high expectation for imaginative use of vocabulary and sensitive writing. For instance, Year 5 pupils writing poetry based on views of the Taj Mahal wrote, 'In the day, the Chrystal lake shimmers in the sunlight.' and 'Closer now, bustling bodies engulf the amazing sight.'

Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They often have fast recall and deep understanding of mathematical terms and facts. For example, Year 2 pupils described precisely how they identified multiples of two, five and ten to organise the products in their shop. These skills make a good contribution to their ability to work independently and solve mathematical problems. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology in this and many other subjects.

Pupils work well in groups and make good use of opportunities to share ideas with a partner. They respond well to teachers' questions in lessons and through marking and feedback. Pupils of all abilities take significant pride in their work and effectively aim to improve it. They develop good self-critical skills and make pertinent comments to help their peers make improvements to their work. The more-able pupils increasingly reach higher levels because they are challenged to reason for themselves and select the skills to apply. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. They are often very productive.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers appreciate the good quality of teaching their children receive. Relationships are excellent. As a result, lessons run very smoothly and pupils have many opportunities to work independently around the school.

Lessons are exciting. They are well planned to ensure that all lessons systematically and thoroughly build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This contributes to the good progress made by all groups of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and evident in the sharply focused and challenging questions they ask. Teaching assistants are also well informed and clear about their roles. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, develop an accurate use of language and a willingness to share their knowledge. For example, in a lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage children described hidden shapes as, 'three-dimensional with eight corners and straight edges' in response to fast-paced questions. Teachers use a wide range of strategies, such as named lolly sticks, to ensure the lessons are fully inclusive for all abilities. On a very few occasions, pupils do not make the best rate of progress during the lesson because the pace or style of learning does not fully match their needs.

Teachers make good use of stimulating and attractive resources including information and communication technology both to inform and involve pupils. For example, in Year 2 the teacher made outstanding use of digital recordings of voice messages from the class soft toy characters to engage and motivate pupils. In many classes pupils regularly use touch screen and other technology to plan, organise and develop their ideas. Teachers make good use of learning in other subjects to enable pupils to practise and apply their skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, the Year 6 theme of 'How to become a spy' generated a wide range of data gathering, mathematical problem-solving and writing opportunities. Pupils write very sensitively on many issues such as how different world faiths deal with birth and death. The high-quality relationships, challenging questions and opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in larger groups, make an outstanding contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers make good use of targets for pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and other subjects based on frequent and accurate assessments of progress. These contribute well to pupils' achievement in lessons. As a result pupils are eager to reach their targets and produce the best quality work they can. Marking is regular and purposeful because teachers give pupils time to respond to the guidance given. Teachers make good use of praise, rewards and friendly competitiveness to promote

pupils' personal awareness and ambition to succeed. This is very successfully used in the 'Accelerated Reading' project and other imaginative projects.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' typically outstanding behaviour makes a strong contribution to the quality of learning throughout the school. Parents and carers strongly agree that behaviour is of a high standard, as do the pupils. Pupils say that their teachers respect them and they receive respect in return. They appreciate how hard everyone connected with the school works to keep them safe and secure. Teachers consistently apply a very clear behaviour code in which pupils are encouraged to make decisions about the sort of person they want to be and what they want others to think of them. Through the school council and other areas of responsibility pupils are actively involved in creating and managing the school rules. Pupils with emotional and social difficulties are well supported in developing a responsibility for managing and improving their own behaviour. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are rare and are very effectively managed. A strong partnership with parents and carers and effective monitoring and promotion ensure pupils' attendance is above average.

Through assemblies and well planned personal and social education lessons, pupils develop an excellent understanding of different forms of bullying, such as gender and racial bullying, and how to keep themselves safe. The pupils feel that, as a result, they are well prepared for their future well-being. In particular, the 'Miss Dorothy' programme helps pupils solve 'real-life' emotional and social problems and develop the skills they need to stay safe as they grow older.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has created a school leadership team which is sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement in an open and inclusive manner. Staff, governors and parents and carers feel they have a voice in school improvement and that their views are respected. The senior staff and the good governing body use an effective range of strategic methods to analyse pupils' progress and identify features for development. These targets are used well in the performance management of teachers and teaching assistants. This is bringing the quality of teaching more closely to outstanding and supports a good trend in rising standards. The school has a good capacity to build upon these strengths and further improve. However, not all middle leaders are fully involved in the first-hand evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. The school promotes equality and diversity well. This is helping to narrow any gap between the progress made by different groups of learners over time. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the school is vigilant in tackling the rare examples of discrimination and in ensuring all aspects of pupils' safety.

The curriculum is outstanding in its breadth and balance and promotes pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. The school has extremely well-planned activities for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and applying them across the curriculum. All activities are woven together very well to give pupils a well-rounded learning experience and the opportunity to produce high quality outcomes whatever their ability. The school's 'Inspiration Library' initiative, for example, not only encourages a depth and purpose to pupils' reading

experiences but also promotes strong links with parents and carers and high quality work in art, design and technology, writing and many other subjects. Regular visitors and trips, such as residential visits to Whitby and other contrasting places, brings learning to life and extends pupils' social and cultural awareness.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aston Lodge Primary School, Sheffield, S26 2BL

Thank you for making the inspectors feel warmly welcomed when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons, at playtimes and in assembly. You go to a good school. These are some of the best things we found out about it.

- You all make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You use the skills you learn well in lots of different subjects.
- Teachers make lessons exciting and fun to take part in. You make good use of all areas of school, both indoors and out, to find out more about the world around you.
- You use computers and other technology well in your work.
- The school's excellent curriculum helps you become very thoughtful and sociable young individuals who are well prepared for your future learning.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You attend well and arrive on time ready to learn.
- Your teachers take good care of you and teach you how to stay safe from harm.

To help your school to improve further, we have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to make the teaching and learning even better by:

- making every lesson the best it can be so you make even more progress
- asking leaders to watch lessons closely to make sure that all teaching is the very best.

You can help by continuing to enjoy school and always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead inspector

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