

Aston Lodge Primary School

Lodge Lane, Aston, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S26 2BL

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not consistent across the school and not enough teaching is good or better. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress.
- Standards are not rising quickly enough in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates is too wide.
- The system used to assess pupils' progress does not provide teachers with enough information about the small steps of progress pupils are making. As a result, work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils of different abilities are not always high enough. Teaching does not always challenge the most-able pupils fully and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable in quality.
- Work in pupils' books is not of a high enough standard. Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback from teachers.
- The new systems for teaching literacy and mathematics are not fully in place in all classes. The basic skills are not taught consistently well.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in the monitoring of standards in their area of responsibility and this limits the impact of their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and head of school have acted quickly to make improvements at the school. They have accurately identified the main priorities and have put plans in place to raise standards and ensure the school continues to improve.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. Relationships are good and effective teaching ensures children make good progress from their starting points.
- Governors have responded well to the challenge of making improvements. They are committed to supporting school leaders and are taking full advantage of training opportunities to ensure they are in a position to challenge the school effectively.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school. Staff care for the pupils well and relationships in the school are good. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in all classes and visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books.
- Meetings took place with the executive headteacher, head of school, other leaders and staff members. Inspectors also met with governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was considered by inspectors including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's data on achievement, attendance records and information relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times of the school day including school assembly, lunchtime and during breaks. They had discussions with groups of pupils and heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took into account 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as responses to the school's most recent parent survey. Inspectors also talked to parents informally at the beginning of the school day and at other times during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Twaits

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- There is a Reception class for children aged four and five who attend full time and a Nursery where children attend part time.
- The school works in partnership with Aston Hall Primary School, sharing the time of the executive headteacher between the two schools. This arrangement was put in place in September 2014 and will be reviewed at the end of this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always good or better by:
 - ensuring all teachers follow the recently introduced systems and expectations for the teaching of basic skills in literacy and mathematics
 - ensuring teachers' marking shows pupils how to improve their work and pupils have regular opportunities to respond to this guidance
 - improving the quality and quantity of work in pupils' books so that it reflects high expectations and demonstrates good progress.
- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
 - refining the new assessment system so that small steps of progress can be measured more accurately, enabling teachers to plan the next steps in learning more precisely
 - ensuring all groups of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points by giving them work with the right amount of challenge for their abilities
 - improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils so they achieve as well as other pupils
 - ensuring middle leaders are fully involved in monitoring standards in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because there are too many variations in pupil achievement and the quality of teaching which have not yet been rectified, despite improvements brought about by the recently appointed executive headteacher.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have developed an effective working relationship and have taken action to make improvements and set a clear direction for the school. They are promoting a culture of high expectations and have put systems in place to check how well the school is performing compared to other schools.
- The school's self-evaluation is thorough; the executive headteacher and head of school have accurately identified the main priorities and have put plans in place to raise standards and ensure the school continues to improve. The plan is regularly reviewed by school leaders and governors.
- A new assessment system has been introduced which enables school leaders and teachers to monitor how well pupils are doing and check the progress they are making towards the expectations of the new curriculum. Although this is now established in most classes, it needs refining so that smaller steps of progress can be measured, enabling teachers to respond quickly to pupils at risk of falling behind or not achieving as well as expected.
- Senior leaders monitor the work of the school and provide support for colleagues. The quality of teaching is checked regularly and teachers are given the opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other, including working with colleagues from the partner school. Teachers have regular meetings with senior colleagues where they discuss the progress of pupils and set targets for improvement which are linked to pupils' attainment and progress.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and are aware of the main priorities for improvement. However, they are not yet fully involved in monitoring standards and so do not have enough opportunity to support colleagues or to have a direct impact on improving standards throughout the school.
- The pupil premium funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and extend the range of experiences and opportunities available to them. A large proportion of the funding is spent on extra staffing to help pupils with their learning and also provide other types of support, if needed. The executive headteacher and governors are currently reviewing this spending to improve the effectiveness of the support for learning so that achievement is better for this group of pupils.
- The primary sports funding is providing some specialist teaching of physical education and a wider choice of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils also get more opportunities to take part in competitive sports and events with other schools in the area.
- The curriculum has been planned with the pupils' interests in mind so they are motivated to learn. Themes such as 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Myths and Monsters' enable pupils to learn a range of skills and gain knowledge across a number of subjects. School visits and events, such as 'Diversity Day', enrich learning and promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their knowledge of other cultures.
- Exploration of British values, such as tolerance and respect for others, set the expectations for behaviour in school and more widely in modern Britain. For example, a local church group led an assembly and told a story of how Jesus helped two groups of people with different beliefs to live together in friendship.
- The local authority supports the school effectively and has supported the governors to secure the leadership of the school. The partnership with Aston Hall Primary School and the sharing of the executive headteacher between the two schools has ensured the school is in a position to improve and carry out the necessary work to raise standards.
- School leaders and governors are aware of their duties regarding safeguarding and make sure that the school's arrangements meet requirements. They make sure every child has the equal opportunity to achieve, regardless of ability or circumstance. There are effective systems in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to supporting school leaders and are taking full advantage of training opportunities to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to challenge the school effectively. They have also welcomed the opportunity to work with the partner school, through the joint committee, and this is helping to strengthen the governing body as a whole.
 - Governors know about the school's strengths and weaknesses through the executive headteacher's reporting on standards and are developing their understanding of how the school compares to others

nationally. They know what needs to improve to ensure all pupils are achieving their best and are now actively involved in monitoring and evaluation activities with school leaders. They make regular visits to the school and report on their findings.

- Governors are well informed about the way teaching is monitored by school leaders and know about the processes to tackle underperformance. Performance management is in place; governors understand how teachers' pay is determined and how this links to pupil achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and treat others respectfully. The school is a caring community where relationships are positive and supportive.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. At other times, such as playtimes or while having lunch, pupils of all ages are sociable and get on well together. Pupils are clear about the school rules for behaviour. They say that there has been a recent improvement in behaviour; playtimes are better now because 'there are things to do' and adults have a consistent approach to any poor behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. While there is occasional inattention if work is too hard or too easy, lessons are not disrupted.
- Attendance has improved since 2014 and is now broadly average. The school monitors absence and punctuality carefully and has effective systems in place to promote good attendance and follow up any absences.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at school and the majority of parents agree with their children's view.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and can explain how to stay safe online and when using social media.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying. Occasionally, there is name-calling but it is dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils have confidence in staff to sort out any problems.
- The school has good systems in place to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet good in all classes. Although there have been recent improvements, there are still inconsistencies and there has not been sufficient impact on pupils' attainment and progress.
- The recently introduced systems for teaching literacy and mathematics are not fully in place in all classes. The basic skills are not always taught in a way that deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, when there are opportunities for pupils to use or practise the skills they have learned, pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils practised their 15 times table at the beginning of the lesson so they could use these facts later when calculating angles for constructing pie charts.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils of different abilities are not clear enough and they sometimes plan work which is not a good match for pupils' abilities. This means that pupils do not make enough progress in some lessons.
- Teachers have a consistent approach to marking but do not always provide feedback showing pupils how to improve their work. Although pupils are expected to use their 'purple polishing pens' to make corrections, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to redraft and improve parts of their work or to try new ideas and skills at a higher level.
- The quality and quantity of work in the majority of pupils' books does not reflect high enough expectations or provide evidence of consistently good progress. Handwriting and presentation often lack care. The large number of worksheets used in some classes means that pupils do not have the opportunity to practise and develop the skills of setting their work out clearly and neatly.
- Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. On occasions, questions make pupils think hard and they are encouraged to discuss their ideas with each other and draw their own conclusions.
- Teaching assistants often work with small groups during the lessons, but do not always have a sufficiently

clear or purposeful role. This means that pupils are not always well supported. Where teaching assistants are skilled and well directed by teachers, they support pupils of all abilities effectively and good use is made of their time.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards of attainment are below average overall. Not all pupils make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, standards in Year 6 were below the national average for reading, writing and mathematics. The most recent school data for Year 6 show a significant number of pupils are working at levels below those expected for their age.
- Most pupils make the progress that is expected of them in reading and mathematics, but the proportion of pupils making better rates of progress is below average.
- Standards in reading and writing are improving in Key Stage 1 as a result of the recent focus on the teaching of phonics (the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make). The percentage of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check was above average in 2014. Current standards at the end of Year 2 have improved and are broadly average.
- Pupils are encouraged to read often and enjoy a range of books. Older pupils say they like reading the books linked to a computer programme where they can test their knowledge and understanding online. They also find guided reading sessions with the teacher helpful in developing their reading skills, but this does not happen regularly enough to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to help them tackle more difficult words and can read accurately. Older pupils can use other clues in the text to help them with words they do not know.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent across the school. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school varies between classes; where disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs, the gap is widest. 2014 data show disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were up to five terms behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Current information shows this gap is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve standards which are below average; rates of progress for these pupils are variable. The school has recently put systems in place to track progress in more detail for this group of pupils. Intervention and support have been reviewed and are now more carefully planned, but there is not yet enough information to show the impact of these actions.
- The proportion of the most-able pupils achieving the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was in line with the national averages in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Current school data for Year 6 show fewer pupils achieving at the higher levels, but individual starting points were lower. Teachers plan harder work for more-able pupils, but do not always provide enough opportunities for them to improve their work and move on quickly.

The early years provision is good

- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. Although many children have skills and knowledge typical for their age, others have much lower starting points when they join the Nursery. Children make good progress from their starting points and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is close to national average and improving.
- The early years is well led. There are systems in place to ensure children are kept safe. The classrooms and outdoor areas are well-organised learning environments where the children have many opportunities to explore all areas of the curriculum. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere with much to interest the children. Clear routines and expectations promote good behaviour and lead to the good relationships they have with each other and the adults who work with them.
- The quality of teaching is good. Effective assessment ensures activities are well matched to the children's abilities and leads to good progress. Children are fully engaged with their learning, whether in a small group or as a whole class. For example, when practising their mathematical skills they all joined in with counting activities and then enjoyed playing the team game where they took turns finding numbers which were one more or one less than the target number.
- Carefully structured learning opportunities ensure children are well prepared for Year 1. Children learn the basic literacy and mathematics skills they need as well as developing confidence and skills in other areas of learning.

- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children’s learning and are provided with a good range of information.

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	106888
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	461877

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	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Spencer
Headteacher	Miss D Humphries (Executive Headteacher), Mrs L Stones (Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2012
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