

Aston Lodge Primary School

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

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2019

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed and achieve, this ambition is not sufficiently reflected in practice by all leaders and class teachers. Teaching and pupils' outcomes are not good as a result.
- The whole-school approach to teaching does not give pupils, including the most able, enough opportunities to develop their skills as independent, resilient learners. Too few achieve the higher standards at key stage 2.
- Leaders collect a wide range of information about the school's performance. However, they do not analyse and use this information precisely enough to identify what is working and what actions need to be planned next.
- The planning of learning in the foundation subjects is weak. It does not build on pupils' prior learning effectively to deepen knowledge and understanding.
- Some teachers do not use the school's assessment systems accurately to plan next steps in learning, and this limits pupils' progress.
- Children's progress in the early years is inconsistent. Leaders do not check children's progress carefully enough to identify those who may be falling behind.
- Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. However, some pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is limited.
- Additional support staff are not always deployed effectively enough to ensure that they are maximising pupils' progress.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use questioning skills as well as they could to check and deepen pupils' understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- The recent appointment of the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy headteacher brought much-needed stability to the school.
- Staff work hard to keep pupils safe. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors challenge the headteacher and senior leaders effectively. They understand the strengths and areas for development in the school and are proactive in supporting improvements toward these.
- Attendance is increasing rapidly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the trust swiftly implements its plans to develop the expertise of senior leaders in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - extending the expertise and knowledge of subject leaders so that they exert a greater influence on the quality of pupils' learning and the standards in their subjects
 - improving the school's curriculum by ensuring that sequences of learning are well thought out, to develop and deepen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively by planning learning that meets the needs of all pupils, including in the early years
 - setting learning activities that stretch and challenge the most able pupils
 - making sharper use of questioning to check on misconceptions and probe pupils' clarity about tasks that have been set
 - deploying teaching assistants more effectively to promote learning and independence effectively
 - providing activities in the early years that offer a clear purpose for learning.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of British values in order to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In recent years, the school has been through a very challenging period. There have been significant leadership and management disruptions and changes which have limited the school's overall effectiveness.
- However, since the new CEO of the trust was appointed in January 2018, a clear shared vision has been established, leading to marked improvements through effective support. Her strength, resilience and determination to improve the school effectively ensured no further decline in the school's performance. Improvements are now under way but due to limited leadership capacity in school, this progress is slower than it should be.
- Since joining the trust, the CEO, together with school senior leaders, has worked hard to improve teaching. Leaders have reviewed teaching and learning carefully and have provided teachers with opportunities to share practice and work alongside each other. However, although the weakest teaching has been dealt with decisively, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. Pupils' progress is inconsistent. School leaders have high expectations but have not reinforced them stringently enough across the school and so inconsistency in the quality of teaching remains.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve. Some progress has been made in addressing the areas that have been identified. For example, leaders have ensured that pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and writing are improving. Work to improve the accuracy and use of assessment is ongoing and not yet securely established.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility. They make some checks on the quality of teaching and learning. However, these checks do not focus on the progress that pupils make. They do not result in sustained improvements in the quality of education that pupils receive in these areas of responsibility.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that these pupils are fully included in all activities. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils well and tries to ensure that funding is targeted appropriately. However, leaders have not evaluated the impact of this funding on pupils' progress with sufficient precision.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively to provide greater opportunities for pupils to access a wider range of sports, enter competitions and develop staff skills. Leaders think innovatively about ways to engage pupils in sport through a wide variety of clubs, such as trampolining, cricket for girls, futsal and cheerleading. In addition, pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 are given regular opportunities to take part in outdoor adventurous activities, such as canoeing, kayaking, sailing, geocaching, orienteering and archery. This has led to a measurable improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour, both in PE lessons and conduct throughout school.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, with a variety of interesting topics taught. However, the planning of foundation subjects is not sufficiently sequential and

therefore does not always build on prior learning over time. As a result, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not always remembered or applied.

- Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were generally positive about the school. However, some parents said that bullying was an issue and that pupils did not behave well. This view was not supported by pupils or by other evidence gathered during the course of the inspection. Parents also said that communication was an issue; they recognised that information is given through the school's messaging service, but felt that individual communication is less reliable.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is extremely well led. The chair is very experienced and has a range of skills to ensure that the governing body fulfils its responsibility to hold the school's leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors are relentless in their drive to improve the school.
- Governors have a good grasp of their role and responsibilities in holding the school to account. They have an accurate overview of the effectiveness of the school and are confident in challenging the headteacher about school performance.
- Governors have put into place a comprehensive programme of checks to make sure that the school is meeting its statutory responsibilities.
- Governors are aware of how the additional funding is used. They ask searching questions to check that there are improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of safeguarding that permeates school life. Leaders carry out regular checks on staff's understanding of the agreed safeguarding processes to ensure that staff are clear about their responsibilities.
- Staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding training to ensure that they are up to date with changes in legal requirements to keep pupils safe.
- Regular checks are carried out by the school to ensure that staff are suitably qualified and vetted before they are permitted to work in the school. School leaders are aware of what they must do to be alert to radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is better but still requires improvement.
- Some teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils can do and consequently do not plan work which is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Some work does not build securely on prior learning. This leads to some pupils finding the work either too hard or too easy and does not help pupils, especially the most able, to make strong progress. On occasion, the most able pupils have too much support, which does not

help them to think for themselves, limiting the progress they make.

- Teachers do not consistently check how well pupils are getting on in lessons or whether pupils are clear about the tasks set. Sometimes, pupils do not understand how they should complete the work.
- Some staff do not use questioning skilfully enough to check or deepen pupils' understanding. Too often, pupils are asked questions that are too easy for them, which results in them losing interest.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers display secure subject knowledge and use this knowledge to model tasks well. They carefully explain learning and are quick to address errors or misconceptions in pupils' understanding. When this happens, pupils learn and understand quickly. When pupils are clear about what they are expected to do in each part of the lesson, and work is well matched to their ability, they make stronger progress.
- There is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils are able to match different letter combinations to the sounds that they make. They use this to help them read new words. Teachers and teaching assistants are very well trained and this is resulting in stronger progress in phonics.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly, resulting in pupils making much better progress across the school. Pupils' fluency and confidence in their arithmetic skills are strong due to more focused teaching of the skills in mental mathematics.
- Leaders have improved the way that writing is taught. This has resulted in pupils' improved understanding of how texts are structured and formulated. As a result, the sequence of learning is more coherent and builds towards an end goal. However, expectations of what pupils can produce are still too low across the school. This is especially the case when pupils write in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils. They know their pupils well, and when the curriculum is well thought out and sequenced appropriately, teachers plan activities which engage and motivate pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are confident and happy to speak about what they have learned, they present themselves well and are very proud of their school. However, they do not always take pride in their work.
- Pupils show a great deal of empathy and care for pupils with additional needs. They sensitively recognise that some pupils need extra support.
- Pupils do not always have a clear understanding of modern British values. They can discuss the school values but, due to a lack of teaching opportunities, have a limited understanding of concepts such as democracy.

- Pupils do, however, accept others' differences and are harmonious in their day-to-day school life. One pupil said, 'It's good to be different because you're gorgeous how you are.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in and around school and are courteous, well-mannered and confident to engage in conversation. They hold doors open for adults and regularly say 'please' and 'thank you' to adults and to each other. They listen well to adults and their peers and show respect for the views of others. They play cooperatively on the playground and move around the school in an orderly way.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance. Meetings are arranged with parents to explore reasons for frequent absence and, at these, targets and actions are agreed. Following such meetings in the autumn term, there has been a significant improvement in attendance.
- Leaders provide effective support for pupils who experience difficulties with behaviour. All staff manage pupils' behaviour well, using a consistent approach. The previously high levels of exclusions have reduced.
- In some lessons, pupils can lose focus when the work that they are given does not challenge them.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was significantly below average. Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, too many pupils fail to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in reading and writing.
- Progress in mathematics is improving due a greater focus on developing pupils' number fluency. As a result, the majority of pupils are now working at a standard expected for their age, with an increased proportion working beyond this.
- Current pupils' work shows that progress in writing is also improving but it is not consistently good in all year groups. From their various starting points, some pupils, especially the most able, do not make good progress. Pupils' work is limited and lacks depth due to expectations not being high enough.
- In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' books show they are making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been broadly average for a number of years. The majority of pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing proportion of pupils achieve the higher standard in these subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is now good and ensures that pupils grasp the basic sounds that letters represent. Where adults have received appropriate professional development, they show a high level of expertise in delivering phonics.

- Pupils read widely, often and with fluency, confidence and understanding. Younger pupils use their phonics skills well to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with expression and can interpret their reading and make inferences about a text. All pupils recognise the importance of reading and the books provided ensure that pupils have a good selection of high-quality texts to read.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start school with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. During their time in the early years, children's progress is not as good as it should be. Not enough children reach a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class.
- Although staff assess children regularly, their confidence in, and accuracy of, making the assessments are not yet secure. This means that staff do not plan well enough to meet children's learning needs, which limits their progress.
- Where learning is strong, tasks are pitched well with an appropriate level of challenge. However, when this is not the case, children struggle to access learning because the focus on what they need to do is unclear.
- The relationship between adults and children is a strength within the early years. Children are happy and willing to give things a go.
- Leaders have established effective partnerships with external providers and parents. They work hard to ensure that they have all the relevant information to support children in their learning when they start school. Staff carry out home visits and liaise with other providers to ensure that children settle in smoothly.
- Children behave well in the early years and enjoy spending time at school. They experience a wide range of activities and they play cooperatively. Children also demonstrate strong personal social skills. One boy in Reception helped a girl, who was struggling with reading, in a caring and supportive manner.
- An inviting range of activities and a stimulating environment support all areas of learning. Most activities have a strong focus on developing all learning aspects but at times a lack of purpose is evident, for example when Nursery children were riding bikes.
- Welfare requirements are met and staff ensure that children are safe and cared for. Good transition arrangements are in place and help children settle well into Nursery and Reception.

School details

Unique reference number	143055
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10089013

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Hayley Middleton
Headteacher	Lisa Stones
Telephone number	01142 872432
Website	www.astonlodge.org.uk/
Email address	office@astonlodgeprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy on 1 August 2016. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- Most pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Almost all observations were done jointly with senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and representatives from Wickersley Partnership Trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents by considering the 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of a range of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and met with a group of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They looked at work in pupils' books with school leaders, including the leaders of mathematics and English.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- Inspectors examined the school's records of current pupils' progress and attendance. Safeguarding procedures were also reviewed, including the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Amarjit Cheema

Ofsted Inspector

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