



Aston Lodge Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106888
LEA Rotherham
Inspection number 277648
Inspection dates 19 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lodge Lane
School category	Community		Aston
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S26 2BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2872432
Number on roll	195	Fax number	0114 2876997
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Green
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Latimer

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size primary school has a 26 place morning Nursery. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is larger than average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. Excellence in Cities funding supports the learning mentor role and the gifted and talented programme. The school achieved the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark (2004). The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since January 2006. The substantive headteacher takes up post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. The school's written evaluation of its own performance is largely accurate, although modest with regard to the outstanding personal development shown by pupils. Care, guidance and support are good rather than outstanding because pupils do not yet have a consistently clear enough understanding of what to do next to improve their work. Pupils achieve well and standards by Year 6 are above average and rising. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good, particularly children's language and social skills. Even so, children in Reception do not have ready access to a suitable area for outdoor play. Pupils delight in coming to school and attendance is above average. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are first class as they develop into well rounded, self-confident and articulate pupils. Stimulating teaching, coupled with a rich curriculum, opens a treasure trove of creative and sporting experiences for pupils. Teachers are skilful and the best lessons engage pupils well in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and guidance from teaching assistants and mentors. There are well established links with other schools and agencies. Parents are increasingly active partners in their children's learning and are very supportive of the school. The acting headteacher is successfully steering the school through the transition between substantive headteachers. Challenging governors support the staff team and help to set correct development priorities. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and shows good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the organisation and delivery of outdoor learning for Reception children to aid their academic, physical and social development.
- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve their learning and accelerate their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. They join school with skills below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age, particularly in their language, social and creative skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world. By Year 6, pupils attain above average standards and this represents good progress. The recent focus on improving writing skills resulted in better 2005 national test results. This improving picture has been sustained. Overall, test results confirm that pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils respond well to challenging targets set by teachers. Children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) get off to a flying start, particularly in terms of their personal, social and language skills. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly good progress because of the skilled support they receive from mentors and teaching

assistants. The needs of pupils with particular gifts and talents are well tracked and met by staff, sometimes with the support of external specialists. For instance, more pupils work at higher levels in mathematics due to the input of a skilled mathematics teacher. Pupils experience regular 'eureka' moments in terms of their knowledge and understanding of, for example, the calculation of areas of polygons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and a strength of the school, although the school modestly judges them as good. Pupils make exceptional progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, becoming increasingly aware of the needs of others within and beyond their own school and local community. Pupils and their parents say they are happy at school and 'thoroughly enjoy their lessons'. School councillors ensure that the 'pupil voice' is loud and pupils recognise their contributions to school life. Pupils grab every opportunity to be active learners. They play and work with equal determination. Pupils chat eagerly about the many good things they associate with their school, such as 'friendship and working with and helping others'. Older pupils showcase their work with pride, introducing slide shows and moving image presentations with a slick confidence. Younger pupils show impressive self-organisation skills in response to the exacting demands of teachers. These help them settle easily into new social situations. Pupils enjoy school and most parents support their regular and punctual attendance, both significant features for future success. Pupils choose from an increasingly healthy lunchtime menu. Many agree that fruit and vegetables are better for them than crisps and sweets and that exercise keeps them healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully planned and well managed by teachers who have very high expectations of pupils in terms of their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils say that teachers 'make learning fun'. There are examples of very challenging lessons that result in significant rates of learning and progress for pupils. For example, in one outstanding literacy lesson, pupils had to practise and then list the sequences for the construction of a raft. They exhibited excellent attitudes and high levels of application to the challenging tasks set. In the very best lessons, pupils are thoroughly involved in their own learning and often evaluate their work with 'talking partners'. However, this does not always happen and pupils are not always clear enough about how to improve. Most teachers match work well to pupils' individual needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who also receive skilled support from teaching assistants and mentors. The school's assessment and tracking systems are used well to plan future learning.

Teachers in the Foundation Stage rightly focus on the promotion of children's language and social skills and children make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is innovative and exciting. A key feature is the topic based approach to learning in which the promotion of reading, writing and mathematics is often interwoven through the curriculum. Pupils experience high levels of enjoyment in their learning which, in turn, lead to higher levels of achievement as they often work in pairs or teams. However, children in Reception do not access fully the curriculum outdoors because of accommodation restrictions. Pupils really value all that the school offers. One said, 'There are so many wonderful opportunities and the teachers are so friendly.' Pupils learn how to remain healthy and safe through a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme while external agencies and specialist teachers add an additional dimension to pupils' learning. The curriculum is further enriched through the many opportunities for pupils to visit and study in the local environment and by means of a well supported range of extra-curricular activities and clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good rather than outstanding as the school judges. Although pupils are aware of some improvement targets, they do not yet show a consistent enough understanding of what they need to do to make their work even better. The school's early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective and they receive good support. Child protection procedures, including statutory checks on new staff, are in place. Risk assessments and fire drill procedures are firmly established. Teaching and specialist support staff play a strong role in providing high levels of emotional and practical support to pupils. Focused mentoring highlights the importance of regular attendance and parents are generally conscientious about sending children to school regularly and on time, establishing good habits for children's future well-being. Parents say they are well informed about issues affecting their child's progress. One commented that staff are 'friendly and understanding' when she has any concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The strong legacy left by the last headteacher has assured the school's continued success and enabled the acting headteacher to maintain a clear focus on improvement. His calm diligence ensures the loyal support of staff as they strive to meet challenging targets and accelerate pupils' progress. He, along with the governing body, has shown unwavering resilience in accepting nothing less than the best for the school during recent months of staff

turbulence. To their credit, none of this has had a negative impact on pupils' attainment or progress which continues to improve. Leaders at Aston Lodge set the bar high and teachers, governors and pupils do not disappoint. Clear systems to evaluate school performance lead to correct development priorities. These ensure that standards are rising and that pupils make good progress. More consideration is needed in terms of how to provide more effective outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception. Productive links with local secondary schools ensure pupils are well prepared when they move into Year 7. Parents attend family learning classes and say they are better able to 'help their children's learning at home and school'. Parents feel that their opinions are listened to and generally acted upon. Fully committed governors offer staff well informed support. Along with conscientious kitchen and lunchtime staff, teaching assistants, administrators and caretaking personnel, they are good custodians of the school's caring ethos and financial security. They have ensured good improvement since the last inspection and show ample capacity for this to continue.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit to your school. You had so much to tell us during our many chats and we agree that there are many good things for you to enjoy and celebrate in school. Here are some we liked the most:

- the good progress you make in your learning and how you always try hard
- your first class behaviour in school
- the many skilled visitors and helpers who add interest to your learning
- teachers prepare exciting lessons for you and make learning fun
- your uplifting singing during your 'Voices' sessions
- school council members help you all have a say in making your school more as you'd like it.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do now to make your school even better:

- help you understand how to improve each piece of work so you keep improving
- make the outside play area for Reception children better so they can climb, pedal and learn even more out there.

Enjoy all the 50 year anniversary celebrations and keep working hard!