

Aston-on-Trent Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112502
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310905
Inspection date	7 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kim Hodgkin
Headteacher	Mrs Lindsey Kalirai (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Long Croft Aston-on-Trent Derby DE72 2UH
Telephone number	01332 799478
Fax number	01332 799478

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how well the school is improving pupils' writing, how effectively information and communication technology (ICT) is used to support learning across the curriculum and how well teachers with subject leadership roles carry out their responsibilities. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work and observation of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Aston-on-Trent is an average sized primary school that has one class for each year group. There is a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about half the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. The substantive headteacher has been seconded from the school for the past two years and has resigned her post with effect from the end of August 2008. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher for the past two years and has been appointed to the post on a permanent basis from September 2008. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in People, Healthy School, Sports Activemark (Silver) and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aston provides its pupils with a good standard of education. It is on an upward trend and has some significant strengths. The school is deservedly popular with parents. 'A caring school that sets high standards within a friendly, nurturing environment' is typical of parents' comments. The acting headteacher has made an outstanding start and she already commands the respect of governors, staff, parents and pupils. Parents rightly suggest that her leadership is pivotal to the school's continuing success. Her determined and sensitive leadership has ensured that the school has developed and improved on the many strengths that were found at the time of the previous inspection.

The school's motto, 'Achieving success for all' is evident in the school's work and is reflected in the delight and energy with which the pupils join in everything that the school has to offer. Care, guidance and support are excellent. All safeguarding regulations are met in full. The school's positive and caring approach results in the pupils feeling safe and is responsible for pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils are very friendly, their behaviour is excellent and they take a particular pride in making sure that their friends and classmates enjoy the day as much as they do themselves. Relationships are very positive and are based on mutual respect and trust. By the time that they leave the school, pupils develop into mature and responsible young people who are prepared well for their move to secondary education. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. They delight in talking about local traditions, such as the village well-dressing, and the recent 'world celebration week', which helped pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures. This included many activities such as visits to the Sikh Gurdwara and Muslim mosque. Pupils also take their responsibilities seriously, whether as 'mediators' on the playground, members of the school council, or mini-leaders who play and lead games for other pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle. This is the result of the school's high quality provision which includes an excellent focus on healthy eating and which recently led to each class designing healthy school lunch menus that the cook then proceeded to prepare.

Pupils' progress and achievement are good in all year groups. Standards at the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high and results in national tests for Year 6 pupils show standards that are high and, on occasion exceptionally high. In the past there has been a marked difference between standards in reading and writing, particularly for boys. The school carefully analysed its provision and attainment in writing and introduced well-founded improvement projects that have ensured that attainment in writing now matches that of reading. These improvements have also had other spin-offs to support learning. For example, staff decided that there was a need to strengthen pupils' understanding of their literacy targets so they are now shared and displayed in the classroom. In addition, pupils are now much more clear about what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve in writing and other subjects. The next planned step, for pupils to check their own and others' work against success criteria, has already begun; whilst this is having a positive effect, it needs to become better embedded in all classes. The curriculum is well organised and teachers' planning ensures that the school's good range of ICT resources are used well to aid learning across the curriculum.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils love learning. 'Our teachers make our learning interesting. They provide good activities that have a reason and a purpose. This makes us relaxed', was the mature comment of a Year 6 school councillor. Lessons are planned well and the good relationships that the staff have with pupils ensure that classrooms provide a calm and purposeful

atmosphere. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and those that are in danger of slipping behind are identified early and good programmes are put into place to ensure that their progress matches that of their classmates. The team of talented teaching assistants, including specialists in areas such as modern languages and ICT, make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements.

Although supportive of the school, a number of parents commented that communication between parents and the school is not effective. This was investigated and it was found that the school's arrangements at least match those of many other schools. As well as having opportunities for parent consultations there are open evenings, termly letters about areas being taught for each class, reading record books in which many parents make comments to teachers and also workshops for parents. There is also a monthly newsletter.

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher's deep commitment to enhancing provision and strengthening achievement has paid off. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and robust. She works in close partnership with staff and governors. Teachers with subject responsibilities are directly involved in the monitoring of the school's provision and pupils' achievements, and their clear plans are reflected in the good quality school improvement plan. They fulfil their roles well although, as yet, there are not action plans in all key areas. Staff morale is high and teamwork is very strong. The improvements made demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

A number of parents commented on how quickly their children settle on entry to the Reception class. This is because the staff provide a good induction programme, and the warmth of their care helps children to feel secure and provides an important bedrock for good learning. Children enter with skills and abilities that are above those typically found, particularly in their personal and social development. They make good progress in their learning and by the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are much above those expected. Almost all reach the expected learning goals and a majority exceed them. The well-resourced outdoor area contributes effectively to all learning areas. Staff plan interesting and exciting outdoor activities. The staff work closely as a team and they carefully note children's achievements and ensure that future activities are planned to meet individual needs. However, there is one weakness. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding in directed activities, too few opportunities are provided for children to initiate their own learning and play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further enhance learning by embedding the procedures for involving pupils in checking their own and others' work into all classes.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to initiate their own play and learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Aston-on-Trent Primary School, nr Derby DE72 2UH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you recently. You were all extremely polite and keen to talk to me about your work and your school. I was particularly interested to hear about the well-dressing! There are many good things about your school. These are some of them:

- You reach high standards and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave exceptionally well and work hard to help others.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and the good range of things there are for you to do. I was very impressed with your singing in assembly.
- All the adults make sure that you are looked after and care for you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher, and all the other people who help run your school, are very good at making sure that you receive a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. However, all the adults want it to be even better. I have asked Mrs Kalirai, the staff and governors to do two things:

- Make sure that you get more chances to check your own work and that of your classmates;
- Ensure that the children in the Reception class have more chances to choose activities for themselves.

You can help by continuing to work hard to meet your targets.

With best wishes Yours sincerely,

Keith Sadler Lead inspector