

Askern Spa Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106673
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	377445
Inspection dates	15–16 March 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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Ridley
Headteacher	Jo Giddins
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Clark

Karen Foster

Jennifer Firth

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons taught by 10 teachers, including a joint observation with a member of the school's senior leadership team. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the chair and other representatives 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, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and minutes of the governing body meetings. Parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed from 58 responses, together with those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Askern Spa Junior is an average-sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The majority of pupils is from White British backgrounds. About 14% come from travelling families, including Romany, Gypsy and Irish heritages. This is an increase from the previous inspection. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has achieved several awards including Activemark Gold and Artsmark.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2011. Over a third of the teaching staff is new since the previous inspection.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers are positive about their children’s enjoyment of learning and appreciate the improvements since the previous inspection. Overall effectiveness is not yet good as some weaknesses in the quality of teaching sometimes limit the progress pupils make. However, pupils’ achievement is satisfactory overall and they reach average standards in English and mathematics by time they leave in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and behaviour is generally well-managed. The new leadership team provides a positive role model for effective teaching. However, teachers do not always set clear enough expectations and fully engage pupils throughout the lesson. The effective work of the school’s inclusion staff is supporting disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and others whose circumstances might make them vulnerable; consequently they achieve in line with their peers. On a few occasions, weaknesses in the use of marking and feedback inhibit pupils from making even better progress.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory overall. Pupils behave well in the large majority of lessons and incidents of bullying are rare. Occasionally pupils are not as attentive and actively engaged in their learning as they could be. Pupils say they feel safe and parents and carers agree. The pupils respond well to the initiatives to improve behaviour such as the ‘Always Club’ and ‘Golden Time’.
- The new headteacher, supported by the senior staff and governing body, is making increasingly effective use of self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement and all know the school’s strengths and weaknesses. However, systems to tackle the weaknesses identified speedily, particularly in the quality of teaching, are not yet fully embedded. Therefore the school has only a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is good or better teaching in order that pupils make good progress by:
 - making expectations for all groups of pupils explicit and challenging
 - ensuring that pupils are active learners and build systematically on their basic skills of literacy and numeracy
 - insisting on work being presented well with correct spelling
 - making full use of marking and feedback to engage pupils in reflecting on and improving their own work and checking that guidance is acted upon.
- Increase rates of school improvement by:
 - setting consistently challenging targets for improvement
 - ensuring that all staff act promptly and effectively in responding to the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation, particularly of teaching.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment is average in English and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress through the school from their starting points in Year 3. However, pupils' progress through the school is uneven because of variations in the quality of teaching. Effective improvements to the teaching of English have largely tackled a dip in writing standards, particularly for the more-able. Overall, pupils enjoy school and relationships are good. However, pupils do not always produce work to the highest standards of which they are capable because teachers do not make their expectations clear enough. As a result, their basic skills are not always built upon. For example, their written work sometimes lacks care and spelling is inconsistent. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers and their peers and increasingly speak pertinently in response to carefully-framed questions. Sometimes, however, they are too passive in their lessons and not fully engaged because the work is not presented in an imaginative and fast-paced way. When given the opportunity, pupils work well collaboratively in group activities and enjoy the many opportunities for discussion in pairs. Pupils increasingly take responsibility for managing and improving their own work by, for example, making use of reference resources, such as dictionaries and the Internet.

Pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory and standards are average by Year 6. There are good procedures to identify any pupils who have weaknesses in letters and word-building skills when they start school in Year 3 and to tackle them. Parents and carers share in their children's progress in reading through the home-school books. There is no significant difference in the progress that different groups of pupils make although there are between classes which reflect the quality of teaching. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress which is generally in line with that of their peers. They largely receive well-trained adult support and appropriate interventions from teachers and teaching assistants, ensuring that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed systematically and applied regularly. Pupils from traveller families also make similar progress to that of their peers because the school is sensitive to their individual needs and works well

to fill in any gaps in their learning. The school is closing the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and the rest. Parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaires show that they feel that children make good progress. Inspectors judge that progress is satisfactory overall, but learning is not always consistently good enough to ensure good progress.

Quality of teaching

Relationships are good and contribute well to pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' questioning skills are often good and used well to deepen pupils' understanding. In the best lessons, pupils of all abilities are set clear expectations to aim for and learning is fast-paced and motivating. This was very evident in a Year 5 lesson on probability where all groups had work throughout the lesson sharply-matched to their needs and consequently they all made good progress. In these lessons, teachers encourage pupils to be self-critical and measure their own achievement against agreed success criteria. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, in some lessons teachers do not identify precisely enough what they expect pupils of different ability to achieve. For example, the learning outcomes expected in some lessons were the same for all groups of learners such as, write a poem. Sometimes the explanations teachers give are too long and pupils lose concentration. Very occasionally, behaviour suffers as a result.

Teachers sometimes make good use of multimedia technology to present lively animations or interactive games to bring learning to life but occasionally these lack sufficient imagination. As part of the planned curriculum, lessons are designed to provide positive opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills throughout the curriculum. However, they do not always ensure that this builds well on their previous work. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and marked. Although teachers often identify steps for pupils to improve their own work, they do not always ensure that they do so.

Teachers usefully display examples of high-quality written work to demonstrate the levels pupils can achieve. However, they do not consistently reinforce these expectations in the pupils' daily work. For example, pupils do not always set out their mathematical calculations in an orderly way and, consequently, they make errors. Some of the work in English books lacks the care and precision seen in the best examples. This limits the pupils' ability to write fluently and accurately on every occasion. Parents and carers are positive about the quality of teaching in the school and pupils also say that they enjoy their learning. Inspectors found there to be some good teaching, but judged it satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The majority of pupils behave well and show kindness and consideration towards others. Occasionally some pupils do not apply themselves to their work and very occasionally disrupt others. This slows learning. The learning mentors and inclusion manager work effectively to ensure that pupils with emotional and social difficulties manage their own behaviour well. There have been very few exclusions. Recent initiatives to support pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable and robust monitoring have improved attendance which is now broadly average. Pupils are involved in setting school rules and respond favourably to the 'Golden Time' rewards and the 'Always Club' for those who always do the right thing. Parents and carers have mainly positive views about pupils' behaviour and feel they are well looked after. Pupils also agree that behaviour is good around school

and in their lessons. A small number of parents and carers believe that lessons are occasionally negatively affected by behaviour. Inspectors agree.

The school maintains appropriately detailed records of any behavioural and racist incidents. These are rare, and strong and appropriate action is taken to tackle them. There is very little indication of bullying of any kind and pupils and pupils, parents and carers are confident that it would be swiftly and appropriately managed. The pupils are well-informed about the dangers of cyberbullying and steps to take to avoid it. The curriculum provides useful opportunities for pupils to learn about personal safety such as drugs and alcohol awareness and road safety.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new senior leadership team is ably led by the headteacher and has established a clear direction for school improvement. There is a positive and caring learning environment. Staff are increasingly well-motivated and ambitious for the school. The senior leaders and middle managers are becoming established in their roles and appreciate their responsibility. However, although appropriate areas for improvements are identified, steps to set the most challenging targets and tackle the weaknesses identified are not always clearly established and taken promptly enough. This limits the rate of improvement, particularly to the quality of teaching. The governing body is ambitious and eager to contribute to school development planning and have worked with the headteacher to established new procedures to contribute to monitoring. They are well-informed by the headteacher's analytical reports and presentations. There is a good commitment to professional development, especially through close links with neighbouring schools. There is no significant difference between the achievement of various groups in the school and it satisfactorily promotes equality and tackles discrimination. The school has a largely accurate view of its provision and has a satisfactory capacity for continuous improvement overall. The safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and staff and the governing body manage them well.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meet needs satisfactorily. It has several strengths and is a central focus for improving the quality of the school's work. The breadth of experiences that pupils receive is satisfactory overall but the school make especially good use of specialist teaching of art and music. This is evident in many displays of work and pupils' performances. However, the curriculum does not always ensure that pupils' learning skills are consistently built upon as they move through school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are aware and empathetic to the needs of different groups within and beyond school, for example they are particularly aware of the culture of those from traveller heritage. However, pupils' self-awareness and ability to reflect on their own learning is not fully established.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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 up 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.
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.
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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Askern Spa Junior School, Doncaster, DN6 0AQ

Thank you for making the inspectors feel very welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons and joining you at playtimes. You go to a satisfactory school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You reach average standards in English and mathematics by time you leave school.
- Most of you behave well all the time and are friendly and polite.
- Your teachers take care of you and teach you how to stay safe from harm.
- Teachers make most lessons interesting and keep you busy. You enjoy your lessons and work well together.
- Teachers are effective when they make it clear enough what you are expected to learn and keep you fully involved throughout the lesson.

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

- making it clear in your lessons what you should be aiming to do
- making full use of marking and feedback to involve you in improving your own work and helping you quickly reach the next step in your learning
- making sure you are always actively and enthusiastically engaged in the lesson
- We have also asked leaders to act promptly on their findings when they check how well the school is doing.

You can help by always trying your best, working carefully and continuing to enjoy and attend school.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Clark
Lead Inspector

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