

Aston Hall Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106925
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	377492
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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 of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Cooper
Headteacher	Donna Humphries
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2006
School address	Church Lane Aston Sheffield S26 2AX
Telephone number	0114 287 9811
Fax number	0114 287 6831
Email address	Aston-hall.junior-infant@rotherham.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited thirteen lessons and observed eight teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, school policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 76 parents and carers, 99 pupils and 18 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What progress do the pupils make in writing and numeracy throughout the school?
- Whether teaching is effective in helping pupils make maximum progress.
- How effective is the leadership of the school in raising performance and driving improvement?

Information about the school

Aston Hall Junior and Infant School is below average size for a school of its type. A large majority of pupils are of White British origin and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. However, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Healthy School Status, Activemark and Basic Skills Agency Qualitymark. It has also received the International School Award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, in which pupils make good progress. It has several outstanding features. It provides an excellent caring and supportive environment, particularly, but not exclusively for those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. Pupils feel extremely happy and safe in the school because of the excellent relationships and good safeguarding arrangements. Consequently, they enjoy school and their attendance is very high. As one said: 'School is a lovely place to be in because it's friendly and teachers are kind. We have lots of fun but we also learn lots of new things.' Pupils know well how to keep healthy and fit, and they are impeccably behaved and courteous.

The school is popular with parents and carers. This is reflected in their very positive comments on questionnaires. For example, one wrote: 'The school is a lovely school with excellent staff who provide a very happy, safe and secure environment for my children. My eldest child left school recently, but still carries fond memories of the school.'

Pupils' achievement is good. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress through the school and by the end of Year 6 they attain slightly above-average standards. However, standards in writing continue to lag a little behind those attained in mathematics and reading due to some inconsistencies in practice. For example, pupils do not always use extensive vocabulary within their written work. The school is aware of the importance of writing, and this remains an area for continuing development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress because of the excellent support which is provided for them.

The curriculum is good. It is well organised and imaginative, and pupils' learning is enriched by many exciting in-school activities, as well as a range of visits and visitors. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The majority of teaching observed was good. A small minority of lessons are, however, no better than satisfactory. In these lessons, the challenge and the opportunities for independent learning are less pronounced than in the better lessons. Moreover, teachers' assessments of learning during lessons are not so sharp, so activities are not quickly adapted to move pupils forward more rapidly in their learning.

The school is well led by the headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff. Morale is high and teamwork is strong. Self-evaluation is effective, drawing on observation of lessons and analysis of data. Excellent use is made of outside partnerships to benefit pupils' well-being and learning. The knowledgeable and challenging governing body is systematically involved in monitoring the school to hold it to account in all areas. The school gives good value for money and demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school by:
 - formalising opportunities for pupils to encounter and learn extensive vocabulary when they are reading or listening and encouraging the use of this vocabulary in their writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - planning and implementing strategies which give pupils opportunities to become more fully involved in their own, independent learning
 - carrying out sharper assessment of pupils as they learn and adapting activities to meet pupils' needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. They are polite, bright and cheerful and appreciate the opportunities to work in groups to tackle problems. They affirm that they feel remarkably safe in school. They adopt healthy lifestyles well, and a very large proportion participate in sports activities. Around the school, behaviour is excellent. In lessons, too, the behaviour of the vast majority is impeccable and is a major factor in pupils' good progress. Pupils are engaged and stimulated when they are given opportunities to be involved in their own learning. However, this is not consistent. On those few occasions where an activity does not challenge pupils or they sit passively for too long, the pace of the lessons slows, and this in turn slows the pace of pupils' learning.

The large majority of children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age. Overall, pupils make good progress and attainment is rising; it is a little above average when they leave school at the end of Year 6. A few pupils entered the school in Year 2, or even later years. They came with much lower than expected standards, but some have made outstanding progress from their starting points to attain standards that are broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified promptly, supported well and make good progress. There is no difference in the progress made by boys or girls. Pupils are proud of, and undertake with maturity, their numerous responsibilities within school. They contribute to the running of the school as members of the school council and as playground buddies. They also play an important role as junior local councillors, joining the local police and fire service representatives to discuss matters of relevance to the children at school. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Their attendance is very high. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their quiet reflection in assemblies, their clear

understanding of right and wrong, their good relationships with each other and their appreciation of others’ cultures and traditions.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	1
Pupils’ attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Good relationships and good subject knowledge are strong features of teaching throughout the school. Most lessons are brisk and lively with teachers making good use of well-chosen resources, such as the interactive whiteboard, to promote learning. In the best lessons, teachers use frequent checks and questioning to ensure activities remain finely tuned to pupils’ needs as the lesson progresses. However, this practice is not yet the case throughout the school. In the small number of lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the pace is slower, teachers speak too much and pupils are passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning.

The imaginative and motivating curriculum has a strong focus on extending pupils’ literacy and language development through writing across a range of subjects. There is focus on ensuring pupils encounter challenging vocabulary in their reading or when they listen to language, in order to acquire a wider range of words. However, some opportunities are missed to embed this important aspect of learning throughout the school. Pupils’ learning is enriched through a range of visitors and visits, including a residential visit for Years 5 to York and Filey. Year 6 make much of their French lessons and the school’s international links by having reciprocal visits with their twinned school, L’Ecole Quentin Barre’, in France. There are very strong partnerships with other schools and organisations, such as Rotherham United Football Club, who provide coaching in sports.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Staff provide high levels of supervision for pupils to ensure their safety. Excellent promotion of attendance has reduced the rate of absence significantly. Strong and highly effective links with the appropriate outside agencies ensure that pupils, including those from the most vulnerable

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

circumstances, make good progress in both their academic and personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is vigorous in leading and managing the school's drive to provide the best education possible for the pupils. She is ably supported in this by her recently appointed deputy headteacher. These leaders provide very good examples to their colleagues as professional practitioners both within and outside the classroom. Staff have responded very well to their energetic and dynamic leadership, and are all going the 'extra mile' in pursuing the best interests of the pupils. A wealth of information has been gathered about pupils' attainment and progress, and this is analysed well to identify patterns in learning and to ensure no group underachieves. Development planning is sharply focused on the results of monitoring, and, as a result, outcomes are continuously improving.

Strong and effective links have been formed with other educational establishments. A 'family learning partnership' programme has been set up which encourages parents and carers to come to workshops in school in order to find out how their children are learning English and mathematics, so that they can support them more effectively at home and with homework. These, together with the excellent links forged with health and other professionals, are very successful in reducing barriers to learning. Governance is good. Members of the governing body are closely involved in the school and are robust in holding the school to account. They meet their responsibilities effectively, particularly concerning the health and well-being of all pupils and adults. As a result, safeguarding is good, with all aspects regularly monitored and practice updated.

The school is a cohesive, harmonious community, where pupils have equal opportunities to access all the school offers. The provision for community cohesion is good. The school has some links with communities abroad, particularly in France, and sound plans exist to further extend pupils' understanding of other peoples and cultures internationally and nationally. Food is used well as an entry into this topic, and there have been successful Indian cookery days in school, and a particularly stimulating visit to local Chinese restaurants. There are some strong links with the local community, particularly in terms of educational liaison with schools in the Aston Hall cluster.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of the good provision. Teaching is good with a suitable balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities that cater well for children’s academic achievement and personal development. Good use is made of the outdoor area for further learning, especially for raising boys’ attainment in speaking and writing. However, the extensive school grounds give scope for more opportunities, not yet fully utilised, for large physical play, such as climbing and wheeled transport play. Staff provide many opportunities for children to write using the letters and sounds which they are learning, but do not always give enough direct teaching and practice on how to form the letters. Children have a good understanding of keeping safe and healthy, and enjoy the visits by the police, and the fire service, who bring their fire engine with them. Children are obviously at ease with routines that involve sharing and waiting one’s turn.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The school complies with all the requisite welfare conditions, and pastoral care is very good. The leader is enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable. Staff work well together, and good assessment systems, and the information gleaned from them, are used well to plan the next steps in the children’s learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 40% of the parental questionnaires were returned. The vast majority of them were very positive. Parents and carers say overwhelmingly that they find staff helpful and supportive, and they appreciate the support given to them by the school. Where children have had some problems, whether academic, developmental or emotional, the vast majority of parents and carers were fulsome in the praise of how the issues were handled by the school. There was a very small number of questionnaires, which indicated some parental concerns about communications with the school, and support for their child's learning, but the vast majority praised the school for, 'its openness in all matters'. The inspection team found communication with parents to be good, and support for learning to be outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aston Hall Junior and Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	63	27	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	59	31	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	33	45	59	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	51	33	43	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	54	32	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	38	39	51	7	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	34	47	62	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	37	35	46	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	42	40	53	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	38	40	53	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	34	38	50	7	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	45	38	50	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	61	29	38	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aston Hall Junior and Infant School, Sheffield, S26 2AX

First, may I say what an enjoyable time my colleagues and I had when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We especially enjoyed hearing about what you did in the themed weeks, and how much you enjoyed eating different foods. You obviously enjoy school a lot and feel very safe and happy there.

You told us you thought the school was good; and we judged it to be good, too. Your headteacher and teachers have done much to make your days fun while you are learning, and it is clear that they have good success already, because you are making good progress.

We have asked them to do these things that will help the school improve even more.

- We have asked them to give you more opportunities to learn more exciting vocabulary ('wow' words) to use in your writing.
- We have also asked that the teachers give you more opportunities to learn things by doing them yourselves. We have also asked them to check how you are doing more frequently during lessons, so they can make sure you are learning quickly.

We know that you will help your teachers by working as hard as you can in all your lessons.

Best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Ronald Cohen
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.