

Aston Springwood Primary School

Aughton Lane, Aston, Sheffield, South Yorkshire , S26 2AL

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- Standards, including in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have declined since the previous inspection and are below average.
- Attention given to spelling, grammar and punctuation is inconsistent and so pupils' skills by the end of Year 6 are below average.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and requires improvement. Pupils' learning is sometimes held back because teachers give pupils work which is too easy.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils are clear about what they are required to learn or how well they are doing.
- The quality of marking is variable. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve to help them make good progress.
- The roles of subject leaders are still developing. They are not yet fully involved in checking how well pupils learn and so do not yet fully hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching do not always focus sharply on how pupils of different abilities learn.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership is improving teaching quickly. Most teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. More pupils are now making good progress and so standards in English and mathematics are rising by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They feel safe and are well cared for.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start because of good teaching and provision.
- The headteacher and senior leaders set high expectations, tackle weaker performance successfully and give the school clear direction for the future.
- Governors have significantly improved their effectiveness. They now support and hold the school to account well.
- Rigorous checks of pupils' progress through the school are helping leaders to secure better progress and to ensure that any pupils falling behind immediately receive extra support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by eight teachers; four were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and talked to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to three pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ work in all classes, especially focusing on Years 2, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors studied a range of documents including: the school’s own evaluation documents; plans for the school’s future development; detailed notes of leaders’ observations of lessons and monitoring records; safeguarding policies and records; the school’s analysis of data on pupils’ progress; and attendance information.
- The 12 responses on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Inspectors also studied the analysis of a recent questionnaire sent out to parents from the school and questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Derek Pattinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Foster	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a below average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been many changes of staff since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements already started to raise the quality of teaching further and to ensure that all teaching is good or better in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - checking that activities are always challenging
 - checking that pupils are always clear about what they are required to learn and how well they are doing
 - improving teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve, especially in mathematics
 - making sure that pupils always have opportunities to share what they have learnt, and make it known to teachers what they are unsure about so that teachers can build carefully on what pupils know and can do
 - giving more attention to improving pupils' spelling skills.
- Strengthen further the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they are fully involved in checking how well pupils learn in lessons so that they can fully hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that leaders focus even more sharply on how pupils of different abilities learn when they check the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupils are challenged.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and so standards by the end of Year 2, given pupils' previous starting points, are lower than expected. Although many pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 2, some are still catching up for learning that in the past has been inconsistent.
- Children start school with skills that are typically below those expected for their age, especially in language, communication and social skills. The warm, caring, supportive approach of all adults in the Reception class, combined with the good teaching and provision ensure that they make good progress in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to learn well in Key Stage 1.
- In Key Stage 1, the many changes in staffing since the last inspection have contributed to a picture of declining standards. In 2013, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, recent improvements to teaching in Key Stage 1 are starting to have a positive impact on reversing this decline. Standards, especially in writing, where there is a clear and rigorous focus on its promotion, are now improving. However, teaching in Key Stage 1 is not consistently good and, as a result, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving strongly, for example, in Year 3 as a result of leaders' actions. For many, progress is now good because teaching has significantly improved. In Year 6 in 2013 for example, standards in reading, writing and mathematics all improved. They were broadly average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. School data and inspection evidence show that currently across the classes in Key Stage 2, these improvements in standards are set to continue. Even so, although pupils are starting to make up for ground lost, there is still more to be done to enable pupils to catch up fully, especially for those pupils currently in Years 3 and 4, despite the clear evidence of accelerating progress for these pupils. As a result, achievement overall in Key Stage 2 still requires further improvement.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2013 made good progress from their previous starting points in mathematics, with an above average proportion of pupils making and exceeding the expected rate of progress. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding the expected rates of progress in reading and writing was at least average. However, standards were below average in spelling, punctuation and grammar indicating that these areas require improvement. Although an average proportion of pupils made or exceeded the expected rate of progress in reading and writing, too few pupils made enough progress in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving. In Year 6 in 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 overall was broadly average and slightly above in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is below average. Activities are not always challenging enough for them to reach their potential, so their achievement requires improvement.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special needs is improving but remains variable and reflects the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Although some pupils make good progress, as seen for example, in Year 6 in 2013 in mathematics, overall they make expected progress.
- Pupils receiving support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress similar to that of others in the school. In Year 6 in 2013, eligible pupils attained standards in English and mathematics that were about two terms behind non-eligible pupils in the school. This gap is similar to the gap that exists nationally. However, school data and inspection evidence show that progress for this group is now also accelerating and, as a result, gaps are narrowing. This shows that equality of opportunity is being promoted increasingly well.

- In the most recent national checks at the end of Year 1 on pupils' ability to link letters to the sounds they make (phonics), an average proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard. Most pupils make at least expected progress in learning to read accurately and fluently and for information and enjoyment. As a result, a proportion of pupils similar to the national figure reach both the expected and higher levels in reading by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Some younger pupils lack confidence in 'having a go' and are unable to recognise short familiar words in their stories to help develop understanding. A few pupils, mainly boys, are reluctant to read at home to help improve their reading skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving and is now mostly good, especially in Key Stage 2, it still requires improvement. This is because the quality of teaching still varies between classes, especially in Key Stage 1. Teaching over time has not been consistently good and staffing upheaval has contributed to falling standards in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils do not always learn at a good rate. This is because teachers do not always make it clear enough to pupils what they are required to learn in lessons. Nor do they always ensure that they know how well they are doing so that pupils can see how much progress they are making. Work given is not always at the right level of challenge for pupils of varying abilities, including the most able. Sometimes the work for some is too easy while for others it is occasionally too hard.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable, especially in mathematics. Marking does not always make it clear enough to pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to share what they have learnt and what they are still unsure about to ensure that teachers know precisely how to build carefully on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Despite having to accommodate a significant number of staffing changes, school leaders have successfully addressed much of the weaker teaching practice and much teaching is now good.
- Teaching in the Reception class, for example, ensures that children make a good start to their learning. All adults work hard to engage children in conversation, stimulate their curiosity, extend their knowledge, develop important skills and nurture independence. For example, children make igloos using boxes, design pasta pictures, build towers with bricks and write simple sentences about polar bears.
- In Key Stage 2, teaching has improved strongly so that most is now at least good. In a lesson in Year 6, in which pupils were challenged to solve an imaginary crime, pupils made outstanding progress in developing their speaking, reasoning, teamwork and listening skills. This was because of the teacher's very good organisation and use of time, her high level of enthusiasm and secure subject knowledge. As a result, pupils knew precisely what was required of them and worked hard to solve the crime.
- Strong relationships underpin learning and teachers give their pupils much encouragement. This ensures that pupils are keen to learn and there is a good working atmosphere.
- Teaching assistants skilfully ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those who receive additional funding through the pupil premium make progress at least similar to that of other pupils.
- The teaching of reading and writing is increasingly effective. More regular reading sessions are now provided and this, along with making sure pupils' reading is heard often, especially for boys, is helping to raise achievement in reading. Improvements to the teaching of writing, with pupils provided with many more opportunities to write, are helping to drive up standards. For example, pupils in Year 4 write character descriptions and plan and write letters while those in Year 6 complete diary entries and write about 'The War Horse'. Even so, too little attention by some teachers to improving pupils' spelling skills continues to hamper their achievement in writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and is underpinned by good relationships at all levels. This is confirmed by records, observations and discussions with pupils.
- Pupils enter the hall for assemblies quietly, listen respectfully and answer politely. An assembly about bullying seen during the inspection captured pupils' attention and reinforced the importance of working together. Indeed, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with its strong emphasis on care and consideration for others, is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils know about the five key words which underpin the school's important values and increasingly ensure that they are upheld. For example 'responsibility' and 'positive attitudes' are clearly demonstrated through their approaches to any task they are given to complete.
- Pupils' good behaviour is making a significant contribution to their improving achievement. Classrooms are calm and orderly and most pupils apply themselves well, for example, during reading sessions. When pupils are particularly 'fired up' by the task, pupils' attitudes to learning are especially positive. When this occurs, such as during a mathematical investigation by Year 5 pupils and when Year 4 pupils used holiday brochures to work out the cost of a family holiday, they show a willingness to 'pull out all the stops' to solve the problems and do their very best.
- Behaviour is usually managed well. Occasionally in Key Stage 1, a few pupils become restless and lose focus on their learning when listening to their teacher. This means that pupils do not always make good progress.
- Most parents and pupils are unreservedly positive about behaviour. Pupils like the system in place to reward them for their efforts.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It is given strong emphasis. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and understand the importance of safe practices. For example, they comment on improvements to site security and that all visitors in school must wear a badge. They have good understanding of the different forms of bullying; say that 'it is rare and always dealt with'. Pupils say that there is no racism. Most say that 'pupils work and play happily together'.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and all adults in school help them learn. This helps to explain why almost all pupils are punctual. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. It is continuing to improve because leaders' efforts to promote good attendance are successful.

The leadership and management are good

- The experienced headteacher provides strong, determined leadership which is helping to drive up standards and improve teaching. He is ably supported by his deputy, other senior leaders, staff and governors. There is good team spirit and all are committed to continued improvement.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school to help provide well-focused challenge and support. New teachers and those returning to the school following a period of absence have been successfully introduced to their school's new way of working and teaching practices.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Professional development, including for the school's newly qualified teachers, informed by secure arrangements for managing teachers' work, is given much emphasis. The many changes in staffing have hampered efforts to ensure that all teaching is of consistently good quality. Nevertheless, arrangements to check the quality of teaching, such as by observing teachers teach, are good. However, when carrying out observations of teaching, leaders still sometimes do not focus sharply on how pupils of different abilities learn, to ensure that all pupils are challenged.
- Improvements in the arrangements for assessing pupils' skills and rigorous reviews of test results provide leaders with accurate information about how well pupils are doing. Leaders use this information well to give immediate support to those falling behind and to set challenging targets to help accelerate progress. These arrangements provide further evidence of leaders' successful drive to raise standards further.

- These improvements also mean that subject leaders and teachers are now being increasingly held to account for pupils' progress. Subject leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, are strengthening their contribution. For example, they know what is working well and what needs doing to improve achievement further. However, they are not yet checking regularly enough on how well pupils learn in lessons. As a result, teachers are still not held fully to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have identified accurately the school's priorities for development. They know, for example, that standards need to improve, especially in Key Stage 1. Targets to help drive up standards further have precise time frames to help secure their rapid achievement and leaders are pursuing them rigorously. The improvements seen already, particularly in Key Stage 2, show that leaders are having a positive impact.
- The curriculum has improved. Subjects are increasingly been linked together in meaningful ways, such as, in art and literacy to help bring learning alive, bring more enjoyment to pupils and to ensure that they are given more chances to practise their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Residential visits, such as to Whirlow, visits, such as to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park and Caphouse Colliery, river studies of Burbage Brook and opportunities for pupils to make volcanoes erupt and dress as Vikings provide evidence of the school's rich and varied curriculum, which is helping 'little buds to blossom'. Clubs, such as in street dance, enterprise and running, help to broaden their horizons.
- The new primary school sport funding has been used wisely to improve resources and appoint coaches to work alongside teachers, such as newly qualified teachers and in Years 3 and 4. This carefully targeted professional development for teachers is helping to secure better quality lessons for pupils. As a result, pupils are developing healthy lifestyles, better physical well-being and are starting to improve their performance.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. For example, arrangements to access the building are secure to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Parents are supportive of the school. However, the views of a very small minority are not entirely positive, such as, about the information they receive about their child's progress. However, inspectors found no evidence to support this view.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the strong leadership of an experienced Chair, the governing body has substantially improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection. Members' involvement in the work of the school, such as through regular reviews of pupils' progress as part of subject teams with teachers and teaching assistants, has significantly increased. As a result, governors know how leaders measure pupils' progress and that ambitious targets have been set to help raise standards further. The governing body has knowledge of how performance management is being used to improve the quality of teaching and ensures that pay increases are linked to pupils' progress. It knows that pupil premium funding is being used wisely to check that pupils who benefit are mostly making similar or better progress to that of their national counterparts. Governors receive comprehensive information from the headteacher, which enables them to ask searching questions about how particular groups of pupils are doing. As a result, they are now effective at holding the school to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106901
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	430924

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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Barton
Headteacher	David Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2012
Telephone number	0114 287 2597
Fax number	0114 287 9203
Email address	aston-springwood.junior-infants@rotherham.gov.uk

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