

Aston Springwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106901
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	324484
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	190
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Barton
Headteacher	Mrs J Long
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aughton Lane Aston Sheffield South Yorkshire S26 2AL
Telephone number	0114 287 2597
Fax number	0114 287 9203

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Inspection number	324484

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Aston Springwood is an average sized school. Nearly all pupils live in the area surrounding the school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups or at an early stage of learning English. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award and the Basic Skills Award. The school is about to experience a change of leadership when the present headteacher retires in December. The new headteacher takes up his duties in January 2009.

Within the school grounds is the externally managed Aston Springwood Whizzkids childcare provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aston Springwood Primary is a good school. The care, support and guidance it provides for the pupils are outstanding. Effective leadership has created a happy school where it is fun to learn. Good relationships between pupils and staff are evident. Pupils are happy and secure and work with enjoyment across a range of opportunities.

Achievement is good. From a largely average starting point in Year 1, pupils make good progress and go on to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils have opportunities to use the skills they have learnt in other subjects and this increases their understanding. The trend of boys' underachievement compared to girls at the last inspection has been successfully addressed. The school has also done much to improve writing throughout the school and this is now showing an impact on standards. These improvements demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further. The strong tracking system ensures a good knowledge of pupils' standards and the progress they make, this allows teachers to identify concerns early. As a result, the school's targets for national tests are challenging and its predictions are largely accurate.

The quality of teaching is good. It is improving as a result of effective monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Good practice is shared and weaknesses are identified and addressed. Teachers have readily taken up leadership of individual subject areas. Changes in approach to learning, including more lively teaching methods have been successful. This has ensured a better engagement of pupils through practical tasks in which they learn actively and enthusiastically. In some lessons, learning is not as effective because the activities are not always planned well enough to take into account the span of pupils' abilities.

Opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects have also had a positive impact and give pupils good support for their future learning. Pupils engage well in their learning particularly when they are actively involved. They grasp opportunities to develop their skills and their confidence and self-esteem rises.

Pupils do not always have regular opportunities to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. Good social and cooperative skills are promoted through 'Talking Partners' and 'critical friends' as pupils discuss problems and situations and decide how best to resolve them.

The clear vision of the headteacher and leadership team has enabled the school to embrace challenges successfully. The governing body is a particular strength of the school with governors using their particular expertise to good effect through a range of sub-committees and individual responsibilities. Governors challenge the leaders of the school and their vision is committed to the further its success. Central to the success of the school is the understanding of the needs of different pupils and this is reflected in the views of parents who are wholly supportive of the school and its work. One parent notes, 'The school strives to see all the children as individuals and brings out the best in each child.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

From starting points that are below those expected for their age children make good progress. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) most are working in the expected levels in all areas of learning and a few exceed this. Children settle quickly and feel safe. This enables

them to become increasingly independent and achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development. They enjoy working with friends, sharing and taking turns. They engage quickly and effectively in learning new skills.

Questions posed by the teacher challenge perceptions and give the children many opportunities to talk together and draw conclusions. For example, during a lesson about Red Riding Hood the children were highly engaged in describing to each other the differences between the granny and the wolf. Further activities around the classroom enabled children to extend their learning further through role play and taking on the roles of the characters in the story. Opportunities for extending children's learning from the classroom into the outdoor environment are however limited, although opportunities are available for the children to have access to large apparatus.

The leadership of the EYFS has strengthened over the past year. The recognition of the social needs of these young children is rightly identified as a priority and as a result, children quickly feel secure. Assessment is now firmly established and is based on close observations of children from which are determined their next steps of learning. Good links have been established with Year 1 ensuring that children move into main school easily. The developing links with the Nursery on the school site add to teachers' knowledge of children on entry to Reception and make transition more seamless.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently match lesson activities to pupils' abilities so that they all make better progress.
- Ensure that all pupils have enough opportunities to practise their ICT skills through different subjects.
- Develop provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. From broadly average standards on entry to Year 1, pupils progress well to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2008 and evidence presented by the school during the inspection indicate standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. The school sets very challenging targets, which are very well met, at the expected levels but pupils' performance is not quite as strong at the higher levels. Strong leadership, accurate assessments of pupils' achievements and a focused use of accurate data have enabled teachers to meet the needs of pupils effectively and pupils' skills are improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the extra support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. They say they feel safe and bullying is not an issue. Pupils understand why it is important to live a healthy lifestyle and demonstrate a growing understanding of how the way they live can affect the world they live in. They take full advantage of many good opportunities to become physically fit through a considerable range of sports activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have time to reflect and are encouraged to consider their actions and the consequences of them. As a result, behaviour is

good. However, in some lessons where tasks are not well matched to pupils' need interest levels fall and this can lead to low level disruption which, in turn, slows learning. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn about a wide range of different cultures through the school's topic- based curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities within the school community. For example, the involvement of the school council in the appointment of the new headteacher enabled them to be an active part in the decision making in the school. They identified the particular skills and expertise that they thought important for each candidate and fed their findings back to the governing body. Although the role of the 'playground leaders' is still being developed, younger children already say that they appreciate the leaders' roles in helping their play and supporting them when they have concerns. Pupils' future economic well-being is firmly established given the good standards pupils reach in the basic skills when they leave in Year 6.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A common feature of all lessons is the good relationship between teachers and learners. As a result, pupils work hard and are keen to succeed. The use of interactive whiteboards is enhancing teaching as pupils are motivated and engaged, especially when they have the opportunities to be actively involved in their lessons.

Strengths in teaching are characterised by a good pace and clear learning objectives well matched to tasks which reflect the needs of pupils and their abilities. Some teachers are particularly skilled in questioning pupils of all abilities to extend their thinking and understanding. In the small number of lessons where teaching is less successful, the planning of tasks is not always sufficiently focused upon the needs of all pupils. Consequently, on these occasions, pupils lose interest, learning slows and this can lead to inappropriate behaviour.

Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and make a good contribution to lessons especially so in small group-reading sessions. Marking, overall, is generally good and where most effective it clearly describes the next steps of learning and encourages pupils to become independent learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and has a significant impact upon pupils' personal development. The recent improvements have strengthened links between subject areas, whilst ensuring that richness and diversity have been retained. Consequently, pupils develop skills effectively as they progress through the school. By offering more opportunities for pupils to take ownership of their own learning, pupils find their tasks more relevant. For example, a topic on water changed its focus to address the questions raised by the recent flooding in the area. As a result, the topic engaged the interest of pupils and parents, too. The school has firm plans to improve pupils' use of computers to support their learning in all subjects.

The school makes good use of gifted and talented workshops within its cluster of schools to extend pupils' skills in a range of sporting, academic and creative activities. Visits and visitors help to bring learning alive and a considerable range of extra- curricular activities are well

attended by pupils, extending the opportunities they have to develop skills and to access the wider world in which they live. French is now established within the school and is well supported by the local high school to include the cultural aspect of life in France. Other cultural experiences within the curriculum enable pupils to consider different religions, times and places.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is outstanding in the way it takes care of its pupils. They are guided and nurtured particularly well. Systems in place for the safeguarding of pupils and the recruitment of staff who work in the school are robust. Pastoral care is given a high priority and is very well supported by the work of the learning support mentor who works well to develop relationships between families and the school. Systems are well placed to support children as they join the Reception class and transfer to other schools at later stages. The school recognises that good attendance is crucial to learning. It continues to work with parents to reduce absence levels, especially those absences due to family holidays. As a result, the school has been successful in raising levels of attendance over recent years.

Systems for assessing and tracking pupils are very effective and contribute to the good progress made by pupils. Each individual is tracked and those who fail to make expected progress are quickly identified and supported. The provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. Pupils are supported very well through specific intervention initiatives and parents are encouraged to engage with programmes to help their children learn. As a result, pupils progress well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders have a very clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The recent changes of staff have been managed particularly well. The school has high-quality induction procedures and as a result, staff have developed well as teachers and managers. The delegation of curriculum roles with supportive training has enabled staff to develop their responsibilities and have ownership of them. As a result, there is a strong sense of purpose and teachers feel empowered and they have succeeded in developing good opportunities for improving pupils' learning further. The school actively promotes equality and works hard to address any imbalance of attainment. This is well evidenced by its success in closing the gap between boys and girls' attainment. The developed policy for community cohesion ensures that pupils have the opportunity to learn about other cultures and societies. The tracking of pupils' performance is extremely detailed. It is an effective tool for teachers but has been used less well to analyse trends and patterns of achievement. This is now being addressed and the school is moving towards the implementation of systems, which will give a sharper view of pupils' progress. Challenging targets have been set for pupils' attainment and to improve attendance. The school self-evaluation is accurate giving a clear picture of teaching and learning throughout the school. The school improvement plan recognises the need to further raise achievement and standards and has clear actions to bring about such improvement.

The governing body offers good support to the school and takes the opportunity to question and challenge leaders and their decisions. There is a strong commitment to the continued good

development of the school and the recent appointment of the new headteacher was very carefully considered.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you so much for the warm welcome we received when we came to inspect your school. We did enjoy talking to you about your work, listening to what you thought of your school, looking at the excellent displays on the walls and seeing you work hard and enjoy your lessons. We judge that you go to a good school where you learn well.

You are all very enthusiastic about your school and very proud of your achievements. It was very good to see how well you worked and played together. You are well taught and your headteacher gives very good help and support to everyone.

It is part of our job to tell the school what it needs to do to improve further. This is what we have asked your school to do and these are the reasons why.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure the tasks they give you are closely linked to what you need to learn next so that you can make even better progress.
- We would like you to have more ICT equipment so that you can improve your skills and use them more in other subjects of the curriculum.
- We would like to see the very youngest children be able to go outside to learn.

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited the school and for talking so openly to us.