



Anston Park Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106896
LEA Rotherham
Inspection number 277652
Inspection dates 25 January 2006 to 26 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Park Avenue
School category	Community		North Anston
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S25 2QZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01909 550 779
Number on roll	279	Fax number	01909 561 091
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Waterfield
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr D Holland

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. For the last three years, the school has experienced significant disruptions to staffing. These are now largely resolved. The local area is less disadvantaged than the average nationally and fewer children than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are very few minority ethnic children, all of whom speak fluent English. More children than average have a statement of special educational need. Pupils are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and the school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory and improving school has some good features as it emerges from a period of staff turbulence, which culminated in disaffection among a significant proportion of last year's Year 6 children. Standards are now broadly average and showing signs of further improvement after three years of decline. Children achieve better now because permanent, experienced teachers are in post. All groups of children make satisfactory progress. Behavioural issues exhibited by a proportion of last year's leavers have been resolved and no longer present a barrier to learning.

Children behave well and are eager to learn. Their above average attendance continues. They mature well and relish taking responsibility for aspects of school life. Teaching and learning are continuing to improve. Nevertheless, some marking does not focus clearly enough on what children need to do next to improve and teachers do not always draw enough attention to untidy presentation. The widening curriculum incorporates an interesting variety of activities to spark learners' enthusiasm. Staff care for pupils well.

Senior leaders have been overly positive when evaluating some aspects of the school's recent performance but have identified the right development priorities. Governors and staff work closely to improve the school's performance. They have successfully addressed many of the issues raised by the previous inspection. The school is well set to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on raising children's achievement by:

- ensuring children's targets more accurately match their individual needs
- achieving greater consistency in the quality of teachers' marking so children know exactly what they need to do next to improve their work
- ensuring children take more care in the presentation of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children's achievement had declined over the past three years and was particularly disappointing in the 2005 writing tests.

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with just above average standards. In 2005 children's attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average, which represented inadequate progress. This decline in standards and achievement began in 2003 due to staffing disruptions which destabilised a previously successful school team. The disruption made it very difficult for the school to ensure all pupils were achieving as well as they should and to tackle the poor behaviour and lack of concentration of a significant number of pupils who were identified as a cause for concern on entering the school.

However, improvements to staffing stability, quality of teaching and behaviour management systems mean that behaviour is now much improved. As a result, children are now making adequate progress and are all achieving satisfactorily. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with particular gifts and talents make similar rates of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Children are attentive and most try their best. They are proud of their school and enjoy the varied activities on offer, as seen in their good levels of attendance. They develop good habits for their later lives. Children behave well and live up to adults' high expectations. Children say they feel safe at school, 'it's friendly here' - a view endorsed by most parents. The happy, purposeful atmosphere is built on mutual respect and strong relationships. Children enjoy the newly enlarged playground, along with input from the lunchtime sports' coordinator. Health initiatives such as a new lunch menu are greeted with caution but children are gradually becoming more used to the 'funny tastes'.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their social values are particularly well developed, as shown in their wholehearted involvement in the work of the school council. This is an effective vehicle for change and helps children to learn the value of teamwork. Children respect the needs of others. Their artwork, music and generosity of spirit help them to become increasingly sensitive members of the community. They are familiar with their local heritage and are learning more about what it means to live in a modern, multicultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. For three years, the school experienced a series of staffing difficulties which resulted in declining achievement and standards. The school has already begun to regain lost ground, having largely resolved its previous problems. Through rigorous monitoring by senior managers there is now a consistent quality of provision and pupils learn satisfactorily.

The best lessons are well planned and lively. They maintain children's interest well. Children say how much they like the way teachers use role play and discussion to make learning more exciting. Teachers link experiences to make learning more purposeful. For example, Year 6 children really entered into the spirit of the Middle Ages through their writing after visiting Connisborough Castle.

Teachers mark children's work thoughtfully. The best marking, seen mainly in Year 6, spells out for children exactly what they need to do next to improve. However, this quality of marking is not consistent throughout the school. Group targets are set according to need but there is an absence of individual targets to speed up progress.

Although the presentation of children's work improves as they mature, it is satisfactory at best by Year 6. Teachers have not given enough focus to this aspect of children's work.

Skilful teaching assistants help children with additional learning needs to achieve as well as expected in relation to their particular targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors find the curriculum satisfactory, although the school views it as good. The curriculum is relevant, with strengths in respect to enrichment and an emphasis on healthy lifestyles. It meets statutory requirements; provision for English and mathematics is sound. Children enjoy their work. The school is building upon this and widening the curriculum to give children more opportunities to make links between subjects. Opportunities to develop learners' multicultural understanding through experiences such as arts' weeks and inter school links remain limited. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Opportunities for children to develop skills that prepare them for the world of work and to contribute to the community are satisfactory. A wide range of additional activities enhances work in the classroom and contributes to children's academic and personal development. There are established links with several European countries and good use is made of residential and local visits. These are enhanced by a good range of extra curricular activities involving all teachers and many children. Thriving outdoor provision is impressive and features specialist areas for environmental work, sport and reflection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school judges this aspect to be good although inspectors find it satisfactory. Staff work tirelessly to provide a safe and secure environment. Children acknowledge the levels of care shown to them, saying they feel safe and very well looked after. Child protection procedures are robust. There are risk assessments on premises and prior to outings. Children are aware of potential hazards and strictly observe the rules about use of restricted areas of the school grounds, such as the pond. Children with additional needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are given the necessary personal, emotional and academic support to help them achieve as well as others. Those children with particular gifts and talents are supported in classrooms and through effective local authority schemes.

Whilst the school clearly cares well for its pupils, academic guidance is not quite as strong. Systems for tracking and monitoring academic performance are no better than satisfactory and provide an accurate overview of progress throughout the school. The school does not make effective use of setting individual academic targets to help pupils improve more quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are judged satisfactory and improving by inspectors, although the school views them as good. An effective staff team has been re-established and is already enabling children to make faster progress.

Senior leaders, governors and staff show strong commitment to improving outcomes for all learners. They are particularly successful in ensuring effective personal development for children who blossom in the supportive school environment. The headteacher has worked diligently during a taxing period in the school's history to compensate for prolonged staff medical absence, key staff changes and significant problems of disaffection from some Year 6 children last year. The school has correctly identified key priorities and effective strategies are already in place to promote improvement. However, the full effect of these initiatives has yet to be seen.

Subject coordinators are enthusiastic, experienced and are leading improvement in their subjects. New, well-qualified staff contribute effectively to the school's drive to raise achievement. The school demonstrates a clear capacity to improve. Parents say their opinions are valued. They are generally very happy with the school. Well established links are nurtured with other learning partners such as the local secondary school.

Governors are supportive and have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They ensure the school meets legal requirements. Resources are deployed effectively and the recently extended accommodation benefits all learners.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We were delighted to meet you during our recent visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us all about your life in school and all you do.

The things we particularly liked were:

- you behave well and work hard for your teachers
- you learn lots about healthy eating and keeping fit
- the new lunchtime playground activities give you lots more fun
- your headteacher and all the staff take good care of you and keep you safe
- the school council helps you all to contribute to your own community.

This is what we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do now to make it even better:

- continue with the work to raise the standards you achieve by the time you leave Year 6
- give each of you targets so you have a clearer idea of what you need to do next to improve your work
- make sure that the teachers' marking in your books shows you how to improve each piece of work in some way
- help you to make your work neater and better presented.

We are sure that you and your teachers can do these things. We hope you continue to work really hard and enjoy school.