



# Aston by Sutton Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110993  
**LEA** Cheshire  
**Inspection number** 278563  
**Inspection dates** 21 November 2005 to 22 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Aston Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Aston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 3DB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 711 953
<b>Number on roll</b>	95	<b>Fax number</b>	01928 711 953
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs B Coker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Abbott

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 November 2005 - 22 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278563
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small school situated in a very small village between Runcorn and Frodsham. Most children do not live near the school and attend by parental choice. Virtually all children are of white British ethnicity and speak English as their first language. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children with statements of special educational need is below average. The school is part of the Small Rural Schools Learning Network and has earned a Healthy School award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school which promotes all aspects of children's education well thus helping them make good progress through the school. It provides good value for money. All the parents are delighted with their children's school.

Children reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Children achieve well in mathematics and science but in English only make satisfactory progress because not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of reading skills. Also, writing tasks sometimes have too little challenge for the most able children. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good where children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted very well. They learn well through practical experience.

Children's personal development is good. They behave well and have an outstandingly positive attitude to school. They have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. Children readily accept the many responsibilities given to them. They feel safe and well cared for. Residential visits, trips and visitors play an important role in broadening children's experiences.

The school is well led and managed and the senior managers have the capability to move it forward. The governing body meets its statutory duties in full. Governors rarely visit the school and so have little first hand knowledge of what is happening. The school has responded positively to the issues from the last inspection. It uses its outstanding links with other schools and organisations to promote children's well-being and learning. The senior management team willingly listen to new ideas as they strive to improve the school further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's reading skills by monitoring and evaluating the impact of learning and teaching more closely.
- Provide greater challenge for children's writing skills, particularly for the most able children.
- Encourage governors to engage in planned visits to observe the work of the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children's standards on entry vary from year to year because year groups are very small. They start school with standards that are broadly similar to those found nationally. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage because learning is well planned and managed. Most children reach the standard for five year olds before they enter Year 1.

By the end of Year 2 standards are average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Overall children make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 6 standards in mathematics and science are above average and those in English are

average. Children are confident learners and generally make good progress across all subjects, though progress in writing is no better than satisfactory because writing tasks are insufficiently challenging. Children are much more confident using computers and tackling tasks in physical education, two significant improvements from the last inspection.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They are well supported in class by adults and often by their peers too. They also benefit from regular, skilfully taught small group sessions with a teaching assistant.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children are very happy in school. They are friendly towards each other, helpful to staff and very caring with the youngest children. High levels of attendance reflect the children's enjoyment of school and very positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe because they know that staff care for and look after them. They also know how to take care of themselves in basic ways, like road safety and handling gymnastic apparatus carefully. Children have an outstanding knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy. Pupils in Reception class sort foods into healthy and unhealthy whilst the oldest are very aware of the dangers of medicines, smoking and alcohol. Children's outstandingly positive attitudes towards learning and their good basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their learning. The school gives them a wide range of responsibilities and they respond wonderfully. Parents particularly appreciate how this helps their children mature.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know about and have an understanding of other cultures through their studies in religious education and from the visits by drummers and storytellers. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Children are encouraged to initiate charity fundraising events and do so with great confidence and skill.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is effective in helping children make good progress through the school. Teachers encourage pupils to try their best all the time and make good use of praise and rewards. Lessons are well planned and tasks are usually matched to children's abilities because assessment data is used well. This is especially true in mathematics where effective use is also made of games to aid learning. Children want to learn and are patient even when adults dominate discussions. Staff have yet to come fully to terms with the learning needs of one class in which, this year, there are many more boys than girls. For example, some writing tasks lack challenge for higher attaining children. At the beginning of lessons staff recap thoroughly on children's previous learning but sharing what will be learned is inconsistent. In the Foundation Stage

children learn well because tasks are mostly practical and interesting. Specific reading skills are taught well, for example children know the parts of a book from the lively sharing of 'big books'.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by the teaching assistant. She varies the activities to maintain children's interest and uses praise very well to raise their self-esteem. In class these children get good support from teachers and tasks are set at the right level for them to learn.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum broadly meets the children's learning needs and statutory requirements. The Foundation Stage curriculum is effective in helping children learn through mostly practical activities. In Years 1 to 6 there is an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. The children are excited by the topic work and theme weeks they experience. The physical education provision is much improved thanks to the exceptional links with local high school. Children benefit from music being taught by a visiting specialist and Years 5 and 6 learn French.

Children look forward to the annual residential visits. Parents are delighted that the teachers take the children because they feel it helps them to become more confident. There is a satisfactory range of after school clubs. Children enjoy the visits to places of interest. Recent visitors, like the theatre group and the storyteller, have fired the children's imagination. Effective use is being made of the new library to encourage good reading habits.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff care about every one of the children and because they know them all are able to share in their celebrations and be supportive in times of need. Staff expect children to care about each other and because of this children feel that there is no bullying and everyone gets on well with each other.

Keeping children and staff safe has the highest priority. Health and safety procedures and risk assessments are all in place. Child protection procedures are in place but only the named person has had formal training which he has shared with colleagues.

Vulnerable children are very well cared for and their parents kept fully informed of their progress. The school provides parents with a good level of information and reports are said to 'paint a clear picture of my child'. Induction procedures into the Reception class are very good. Teachers talk to children about how they might improve their work but a system of individual learning targets is not yet fully utilised.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is capably led and managed by the senior staff. They work effectively as a team and are clearly focussed on providing the highest quality education for the children and thus raising standards. The school has an accurate view of itself because monitoring is quite rigorous and its response to all the issues from the last inspection has been good. This clearly demonstrates its ability to improve further. For instance, the information and communication technology provision has improved considerably and children are now very confident when using the Internet to research.

The school reviews its performance regularly. It makes good use of data from children's tests and has started to identify trends but this is not yet sharp enough. Teaching and learning are monitored by the headteacher and his views are accurate. Parents and children are asked for their views and they are appropriately acted upon. Future planning is manageable and focussed on improving provision for children. Success criteria are sometimes vague and thus it is unclear whether or not improvements are achieved. Subject coordinators are effective in supporting colleagues and the provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed.

The governing body performs its statutory duties. Other than ceremonial occasions the governors are rarely in school and so do not have an informed picture of the day-to-day work of the school.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I agree with your views that you have a good school. You were polite and well behaved throughout my stay and I am very pleased with how hard you work for your teachers. You take on responsibilities, like monitors, as well as I have ever seen. I am really pleased that you feel that everyone is friendly and kind in your school. Your 'family' groups are a really good idea and allow you to say what you think about the way your school is run.

Other things that I like about your school are:

- you all make good progress and by Year 6 achieve standards which are above average
- you and your teachers get on very well and they help you to learn
- the trips, residential visits and visitors to the school make a massive contribution to your learning
- the adults care about you very much and make sure that you are safe
- all your parents fully support your school.

Yours is a good school but every school has some things which need to be a little better. I have asked Mr Abbott and his staff to do the following:

- improve your reading skills even further and you can help by reading regularly at home and using your new library
- make sure that writing tasks are exciting and interesting so that you always do your best and most creative work
- ask the people who oversee the school to come in and see you working so that they know how good your school is.

The children who talked to me, shared their work or read their books were wonderful and a credit to your school. Many thanks to them for their help and to all of you for making my short stay so enjoyable.