



# Aston Hall Junior and Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 106925  
**Local Authority** Rotherham  
**Inspection number** 287651  
**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jim Kidd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Aston, Sheffield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		South Yorkshire S26 2AX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2879811
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	173	<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2876831
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss D Humphries
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2003		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Aston Hall Junior and Infant School is smaller than average and serves a mainly residential area. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average and the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical for their age. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Aston Hall is working towards the Healthy Schools 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 with some outstanding features. Parents are correct in their belief that children get a good start in the Reception class and that teachers introduce them to new and exciting experiences, which lead them to learn many new skills and prepare them well for entry into Year 1. Pupils are proud of their school, attend regularly and behave impeccably in lessons and at breaktimes. Although they do not use computers enough in lessons, they thrive on good teaching and on the challenging targets set for them. They therefore achieve well in both key stages, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' writing has improved but it is still not as strong as reading. More able pupils in Key Stage 1 are not quite reaching the levels of which they are capable in writing. Nonetheless, pupils are taking more and more responsibility for their own learning and believe that their lessons are interesting and that their teachers give them fun activities to do.

Pupils enjoy their school and everything it offers them. As a girl in Year 3 told an inspector, 'I couldn't sleep last night because I was so excited about our trip to Manchester Museum today! Do you think we'll see any Egyptian mummies?' They are willing to share their experiences with visitors, tell them how to eat healthily and say that their teachers really care for them. Relationships between all members of the school community are a strong feature and pupils' behaviour is excellent. The support and guidance provided for all pupils, irrespective of their different needs, are outstanding. The curriculum is good and has been improved partly because the pupils, through their school council, said they wanted more opportunities to be creative and use their imaginations. The science and art weeks came about as a result and the 'technochallenge' is now one of the most popular activities in school. Pupils also say they are lucky because they can learn French, go to France, meet French children and take part in their lessons. Indeed, pupils, parents and staff speak highly of the French country dancing in which they took part and also of the French pastries they were able to make in the food technology rooms!

Leadership and management are good and the quiet yet determined leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to improvement amongst all staff. It has led also to good improvement since the previous inspection. There is no hint of complacency. The school continues to make this a better school for its pupils.

In Aston Hall, all members of the school community operate within a safe and stimulating environment. Its mission, care for each individual so that all can do their best, is shared by its parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about what the school offers. Although the school has been rather modest in some of its judgements about provision, inspectors agree with its view about its overall effectiveness. The school has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing to match their reading in Key Stage 2.

- Increase the challenge for the higher ability pupils in Key Stage 1 to ensure that they reach higher standards in writing.
- Make better use of computers as a tool for learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's evaluation of achievement and standards is too modest. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in the Reception class and, because exciting and purposeful activities are provided for them, most reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception year. Many even surpass these goals. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading and mathematics are above average. Although standards in writing are above average also, higher ability pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable. In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well overall and meet challenging targets set for them; attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. The school recognises that standards in writing are still not high enough and continue to lag behind those in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do as well as others because their progress is tracked closely and because they receive very sensitive support from their teachers and learning assistants.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy their school and feel safe within it. The effectiveness of the behaviour code ensures that they conduct themselves impeccably and that they have the freedom to work without harassment. Attendance is above average and has been for some years. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the expertise they gain from the weekly visits of sports coaches. They would welcome more competition with other schools to improve their football skills further. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school council plays an important role in encouraging pupils to express their ideas. Pupils have a strong sense of social and moral responsibility and their cultural development is fostered by the residential trip to France, by the many field visits and by the good range of multi-cultural resources around school. Spiritual development is strong and 'The Best of Me' assemblies foster pupils' self-belief and their willingness 'to go that extra mile for that extra smile.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding practice. Teachers and teaching assistants treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and respect. Pupils

respond positively and behave maturely as a result. In most lessons relationships are excellent and in a Year 6 mathematics session for example, pupils were desperate to make contributions and benefited both from realistic challenge and the high expectations teachers had for what they could do. Similarly, learners in Year 4 thrive on group work and enjoy making supportive comments about what their talk partners have achieved. As pupils in Year 5 say, 'Our teachers make learning fun and show us just how we can improve.' In a minority of lessons, pace slows and opportunities are missed to use computers as a teaching and learning tool.

The assessment of pupils' learning is much improved since the time of the previous inspection. Marking is regular, detailed and informative. As a result, any difficulties pupils have are highlighted and the school intervenes quickly and effectively to tackle them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. There is an increasingly effective balance between the learning of basic skills and opportunities for pupils to work creatively. Pupils now thrive on the many opportunities they have to make choices and decisions on their work: the arts week, science week and very popular 'technochallenge' came about from discussions with pupils, who were in favour of an increasing focus on creativity. Innovative elements of the curriculum, French for example, are brought alive by the twinning arrangements with a school in St Quentin. Excellence and enjoyment are promoted well and teachers make sure that topics are covered in the ways which best suit pupils' needs and interests. Sport looms large and the strong links with local schools and colleges have a positive effect on pupils' abilities to work cooperatively. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom and for pupils' personal research is underdeveloped.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, support and guidance are outstanding and better even than the school judges them to be. Pupils welcome visitors, enjoy talking to them and are proud to support their classmates to make sure that everyone is happy in school. There is a strong commitment to the highest levels of care: child protection procedures are in place and are clearly understood by all staff. Vulnerable pupils are safeguarded and supported with skill and sensitivity. There is an excellent partnership between the school and outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The thorough procedures to help, challenge and care for these pupils, including supporting their transition to secondary education, are a testament to the school's ethos and to its emphasis on pastoral care for each individual so that all can do their best.

The talented and industrious team of teaching assistants, some of whom hold the higher-level qualification, does much to help pupils gain independence and confidence in their learning. The guidance they receive when working towards their targets is

detailed and they can see just what they have achieved when they refer to their 'Red Books'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher who has a clear vision of what is required to improve the school further. She has high expectations both of staff and pupils and fosters a pride in achievement in all areas of school life. As a parent commented, 'The school promotes a good ethos where learning is fundamental.' This view is shared by the staff, one of whom added, 'We are a team. We never feel that we can't do something and we are consulted every step of the way.' Governors also share this strong sense of purpose. They are supportive, inquisitive and determined to ensure that the school provides the best possible deal for its pupils.

Decisions taken by the recently established senior leadership team are based on the views of all stakeholders and on a careful evaluation of performance. The school has moved forward since the previous inspection, particularly in assessment to inform curriculum planning, and knows itself well. It recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that standards in writing improve further, that more able pupils in Key Stage 1 reach the highest levels in this area and that computers are used more extensively and effectively to raise attainment. Aston Hall is a 'thinking school' in which progress is always under review.

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## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Aston Hall is a good school and we know you are very proud of it.

Here are some of the really good things about your school

- Your behaviour is outstanding and you get on very well with each other.
- You make good progress in your lessons and you do well in all your subjects.
- Your teachers teach you well and you really enjoy your lessons.
- You feel safe in school and your teachers and teaching assistants care for you really well.
- You enjoy your trips out and especially the annual visit to St Quentin.
- The school council represents your views well and tells your teachers what you think!
- Your headteacher and all your other teachers know how to make your school even better!

What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better

- Work with you to improve your standards in writing and make them as good as your skills in reading.
- Give you more opportunities to use computers in lessons and when you are looking things up for yourself.

Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly to us. We enjoyed watching you learn.