



# Aston CofE (Aided) Junior and Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 106938  
**Local Authority** Rotherham  
**Inspection number** 287656  
**Inspection date** 4 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Joan McKenna

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>	Lodge Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Aston, Sheffield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11		South Yorkshire S26 2BL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2872100
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	225	<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2876573
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr T Drury
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Mellor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average size school serving a community that is more socio-economically advantaged than typically found. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained several awards for its work, including for Basic Skills and the Arts, and it gained the Advanced Healthy Schools Award in 2006.

## **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 outstanding features. Central to its success is its extremely caring ethos and the way in which all pupils and their families are valued members of the school community. The attention given to ensuring that pupils are safe, secure, kept healthy and well-cared for is outstanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and pupils feel able to talk to adults about any problems, knowing that they will receive strong support. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop personally and they respond with great maturity and enthusiasm, making a very strong contribution to school life. Pupils are happy, confident, positive, outgoing and their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is above average. Pupils' outstanding personal development is a reflection of the high quality provision to promote this.

Pupils achieve well academically. They start school in Reception with standards that are above national expectations, make good progress in their learning and by Year 6, reach well above average standards. This is because teaching is good and the curriculum is outstanding. As well as ensuring that pupils acquire good literacy and numeracy skills, the curriculum promotes rich and creative experiences. The arts have a high profile and pupils enthuse about the many visits they make. The learning environment is stimulating and vibrant. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, despite it being in a state of transition because of a change of staffing.

Good leadership and management contribute strongly to the school's success. The headteacher leads the school very well. She sets the tone of high expectations for pupils' personal and academic well-being and gives strong direction in a warm and caring way that has secured the full support of staff, governors and parents. Good monitoring means that the school's strengths and areas requiring development are well known, although its judgements of the quality of its pastoral areas and the curriculum are too modest. A strong feature of school management is the extent to which pupils' and parents' views are sought and taken into account when checking its effectiveness. However, although pupils' attainment is assessed and monitored thoroughly, the systems, although detailed, do not result in easily accessible, clear and comprehensive enough information about how pupils are progressing. As a result, the value of this information to help teachers guide and improve pupils' progress still further is diminished. Nevertheless, the school functions efficiently and effectively. It has improved well since its last inspection and provides good value for money. Its capacity to improve further is strong.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the systems for monitoring pupils' progress so these give clear and easily accessible information for teachers to provide pupils with more detailed accurate academic guidance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupil's achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage progress well because of the stimulating but secure environment provided for them. The large majority meet, and many exceed, the goals set for children of that age. Key Stage 1 standards are consistently above average, stronger over the past few years in writing than in reading and mathematics because of a particular focus on developing writing skills. Pupils acquire a good early grounding in literacy and numeracy. At Key Stage 2, standards are generally high, and in 2005 they were exceptionally so. Virtually all Year 6 pupils gained the expected levels and three-quarters gained a higher level. The drop in results at Key Stage 2 in 2006 was partly because this group of pupils had lower Key Stage 1 results than the group in 2005. However, some pupils did not achieve as expected because they performed less well in the tests than they had done in their previous classwork. Nevertheless, all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good gains in knowledge and understanding across the school and current standards are well above average. Pupils' high standards of literacy and numeracy also help them to make good progress in other subjects. Good achievement is also evident in creative subjects; work in art is of a very high standard.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Children love school. 'Fun, enjoyable, interesting, safe and loving', are just some of the words they use to describe it. They are stimulated and excited by the opportunities provided for them and respond with commitment and enthusiasm. They feel safe and secure and as a result are confident and friendly. They know that their views are valued. Even children in the Foundation Stage are asked for their views on important issues. Older children play a significant role in school life. Girls and boys in Year 6 answer the telephone at lunchtimes as well as caring for and entertaining younger pupils. The school council, run by the pupils themselves, is very effective. Members have interviewed firms competing to provide playground equipment, as well as prospective staff. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They can explain what constitutes a sensible diet very well. Pupils' very good attitudes and maturity and their good basic skills set them up well for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers are effective in their work. They have clear expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and these are understood by pupils. They plan interesting tasks and make

sure that pupils know what they should be learning from them. Their class management skills are good and pupils respond very well. They are keen, enthusiastic learners who work hard and take a pride in their achievements. In the most effective lessons, teachers take full account of the range of abilities in the class and so make sure all make good progress. In a few lessons, however, information about pupils' standards and progress is not used to set work that is at the right level for them, especially for higher attainers and this means that they do not consistently reach the standards they are capable of. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well supported both by teachers and teaching assistants. There are some good examples of teachers giving clear feedback to pupils on strengths and weaknesses in their work and pupils using this information to improve it.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum promotes the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology very effectively. It also promotes enjoyment of, and participation in, the arts exceptionally well. The high standard of art work on display helps to make the school a rich and vibrant learning environment. Music is a strong feature of school life with a good number of pupils learning to play instruments. Another strength of the curriculum is the way pupils' first hand experiences gained through visits form the basis of much of their learning. This increases interest and relevance. The curriculum also promotes pupils' personal development well. The school's award for the arts is a mark of recognition for its outstanding curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Excellent provision is made for the pastoral care of pupils. Adults, with their caring and supportive relationships, are good examples for pupils. The impact of this is seen in the extent to which pupils feel secure and well looked after and in the way older pupils care for younger ones. There is very good liaison with external agencies and with parents over matters of care. A very positive feature of the support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is the way they are involved in the reviews of their progress. Appropriate arrangements are in place to protect pupils and promote their health and safety. On the academic side, a lot of information is collected about the standards pupils are attaining and there is some tracking of the progress they are making, especially in writing and mathematics. However, the wealth of information is not organised in a way that gives clear, easily accessible information about progress to help senior leaders ensure that teachers provide accurate academic guidance for their pupils. This is why care, guidance and support are good overall, rather than outstanding.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher's very good leadership and management is a key factor in the school's success. Her strong commitment to the pupils and to providing a high quality of education for them is evident and forms the ethos of the school. She promotes a very harmonious school community. All concerned with the school think highly of it and the extent to which both parents' and pupils' views are sought is exceptional. The effectiveness of the school is monitored accurately in a variety of ways, especially by senior leaders. Action taken as result of this has had a positive impact, such as in improving aspects of information and communications technology teaching. However, school leaders have not ensured that systems for monitoring pupils' progress are effective enough. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and they monitor the work of the school, although they do not always focus sharply enough on measuring improvement through pupils' progress. Nevertheless, this good school, which provides well for its pupils, is continually seeking ways to improve further.

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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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### 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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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**

I would like to thank all of the children in your school for being so friendly and making me feel so welcome when I visited yesterday. I would be very grateful if you could tell the rest of the pupils what I have written about your school in this letter. I enjoyed talking to everyone and watching you learn very much. I think your school is good and there are many positive things about it.

What is best about your school.

- You get on very well together and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers and other adults in your school look after you very well so you feel safe and well cared for. The school has made sure that you know how to keep healthy.
- Your school makes sure that there are a lot of very interesting things for you to do, including in art. This means that you really enjoy coming to school.
- When you are given extra responsibilities you carry them out very well. The school council has done some very good work.
- The school listens very carefully to your views and those of your parents and others who look after you when thinking about how to make the school better.
- The headteacher is leading the school very well and is working hard with other staff to make sure the school improves even further.

There is one thing I have asked the school to do better.

- Make sure that there is clearer information about how all of you are progressing, for your teachers and your school leaders to use to make sure you are learning as well as possible.