

# Aston Fence Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106859
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	309247
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Cole

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	153
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Julie Mepham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Darren Clegg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Sheffield Road Woodhouse Mill Sheffield South Yorkshire S13 9ZD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 269 2688
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 269 6105

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, and the school's curriculum. Evidence was gathered from national published data, the school's own assessment and evaluation records, observations of lessons, pupils' completed work and interviews with senior members of staff, four governors and pupils. The views of parents were also taken into account through the parents' questionnaire and interviews with parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found the no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is a small school. It serves a village with mostly owner occupied housing located between Rotherham and Sheffield. The school is heavily oversubscribed and its building is currently being substantially extended. Almost all pupils are White British and none of the very few from other backgrounds speak English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that in most other schools. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school is a Lead Partner School within the local authority and has regularly been awarded Basic Skills Quality Marks. It is a Football Association Charter School and has achieved Advanced Healthy Schools, Activemark, and School Travel Plan awards.

## 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, which has earned an excellent reputation locally. Parents believe their children thrive because it is such a welcoming school that stimulates learning through the rich and varied experiences it provides. The pupils echo these sentiments, eagerly talking about the exciting visits and activities they enjoy in school. They feel that they are well cared for and appreciate that the school listens to what they have to say. They are proud of the improvements, such as the refurbished toilets, shaded play areas and 'buddy benches' that have resulted from their suggestions.

Everyone gets on exceptionally well together and pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils take seriously the many jobs and responsibilities they are given, for example as play leaders, road safety wardens and 'environmentalists'. The school's efforts to celebrate diversity have paid dividends reflected in the pupils' interest in and appreciation of cultures other than their own. Despite the school's current lack of indoor facilities pupils clearly enjoy the extensive range of opportunities they have for exercise and they have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep healthy. Pupils' outstanding personal development provides an excellent platform for their learning and together with their good basic skills ensures that they are well placed to face life's future challenges.

For several years standards have been noticeably above average and pupils have achieved better than the average for schools nationally, particularly in science. In the 2007 Year 6 tests, results dipped and the progress pupils made was weaker, most noticeably in English. Investigations of this have resulted in more focused teaching and an increased emphasis on writing. Current standards in Year 6 are once again above the expected levels for their age with strong improvements being shown in English. This represents good achievement.

Teaching is good overall and enables pupils to make good progress by Year 6 from starting points in Reception that are typical for the children's age. Teachers plan exciting activities and experiences that add hugely to pupils' enjoyment and stimulate their desire to learn. They all ensure that pupils are working purposefully by making clear to them what they are expected to achieve in each lesson. Skilful questioning challenges pupils to think and to clarify their ideas. Able teaching assistants are used efficiently in classes and this enables pupils who need extra help to make the same good progress as other pupils. However, teachers do not consistently plan for the needs of different groups in English and this contributes to standards and achievement usually being weaker in English than in mathematics or science. Pupils' work is marked regularly and well with clear points for development being made. However, pupils are not provided with other regular information, for example through targets, on what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning. Thus academic guidance is not quite as good as the care and support pupils receive.

The school provides a wealth of rich learning opportunities. These include the frequent, interesting and well planned visits that underpin learning across the curriculum, and results in much work of a very good standard, for example in some art observed. There are many opportunities to engage in physical activities and challenges, such as raft building and abseiling. Pupils from Key Stage 1 onwards enjoy a wide range of clubs covering not only sport, but also activities such as cookery and book making. The school teaches French and has enhanced its provision for music with impressive outcomes evident in instrumental work and musical performances. Pupils successfully participate in challenges, such as Young Engineer awards

and regularly undertake enterprise activities, for example making and selling products to support charities. The very good provision that is made for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development, often involving outside agencies, together with the school's robust and effective arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils, very successfully promotes pupils' personal development and well-being.

The headteacher provides very enthusiastic leadership and a very clear and consistent vision for the school; these underpin its distinctive ethos and rich environment for learning. Senior members of staff and teachers in their leadership roles ably support the headteacher. Moreover, the school has a governing body that has the skills and understanding to challenge the school to do even better. Leaders use self-evaluation effectively to plan and promote improvements in school and involve all staff in this process. The school works hard and successfully to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. As a result, good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity to improve in the future, as demonstrated by improved standards this year, and provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage embodies the same strengths as the rest of the school because it is well led and managed. Effective and well planned induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly and their different needs are identified early and used well to inform planning. Children enjoy purposeful, good quality play activities, both inside and in the impressive outdoor area. More formally taught sessions are led well and carefully matched to the needs of different groups. Children are regularly assessed and provision is fine-tuned accordingly. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum and particularly in their social skills and attitudes to learning. Girls make better progress than boys. The efforts being taken to help boys learn more effectively, by including more tasks designed to appeal to them, are beginning to bear fruit. They are now, for example, more eager to talk about their learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Match teaching in English lessons more closely to the learning needs of different groups of pupils.
- Enable pupils to understand more fully what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

### The quality of provision

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

## Annex A

**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 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 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



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

Inspection of Aston Fence Junior and Infant School, Sheffield, S13 9ZD

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to some of you about what makes it so good. You told me that you love coming every day because the teachers and their helpers are so friendly and because they make your learning so enjoyable. I was very impressed with the exciting range of visits you go on, the interesting people who come to talk to you and show you things and all the clubs you can join. Everyone looks after you very well and your lessons are well taught. As a result, you make good progress and produce some impressive work. Some of you do not do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science. To help you do better in English I have asked your teachers to make sure they give you work that is better matched to the different needs there are in each class.

You all behave excellently and you all get on very well with each other. I was impressed with your understanding of what you need to do to stay fit and healthy and out of harm's way. I am pleased that the school listens to what you have to say and that improvements have been made as a result, for example to the toilets and the building of the shaded area in the playground.

Your teachers, through their marking, are helping you make your work better. Many of you said how the 'arrow' comments that teachers make when they mark your work are helpful. They do not, however, explain regularly enough, in other ways, what you need to do to take the next steps in your learning. I have therefore asked them to find ways of making clear to you what these next steps are. You can then help yourself to make even faster progress.

One of reasons your school is good is because you have a very enthusiastic headteacher who is helped very well by the teachers and governors. Everyone in school is working hard to make this the best school it can be. I am not surprised that your parents are really pleased you come here.