

William Austin Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109560
Local Authority	LUTON LA
Inspection number	310024
Inspection dates	17–18 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stan Boelman
Headteacher	Mr Ian Ward
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2004
School address	Austin Road Luton Bedfordshire LU3 1UA
Telephone number	01582 572100
Fax number	01582 564275

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other junior schools. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage, although there are a significant number from Bangladeshi, Kashmiri, Black and White British backgrounds. A high percentage of pupils do not have English as their first language and the most common first languages spoken are Urdu and Bengali. Most pupils start at school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are below the average for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average.

The school has Investor in People status and been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Activemark and has National Healthy School status.

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. It has some outstanding features. The headteacher provides strong and sensitive leadership so that there is a clear vision for improvement. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share his focused approach to promoting extremely high standards of behaviour, real enjoyment in learning and exceptionally high levels of care. The school is over-subscribed and parents speak highly of it. One parent wrote, 'We are happy that our child attends this school. William Austin Junior is a very good school.'

Most pupils leave the school with at least average attainment, which represents good progress from their starting points. As the majority of pupils do not have English as their first language, the emphasis on literacy continues to be an essential focus in the school. The personal development of the pupils is outstanding mainly because of the very high quality of care and guidance provided. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and are very proud to be part of the school; consequently attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and develop into positive, confident and friendly individuals. A key strength of the school is the outstanding level of respect and tolerance for different cultures and religions. The school has developed very positive links with the ethnically diverse local community.

Good teaching ensures most pupils are actively involved in lessons and want to do well. The school acknowledges that the challenge is now to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons. Curriculum provision is good with a wide variety of enrichment experiences that engage the pupils leading to good progress. However, the school is not yet fully providing for the gifted and talented pupils. There is an excellent system in place to track pupils' progress in order to identify underachievement. Intervention provides very effective support for pupils who are not making sufficient progress.

The school runs very smoothly and calmly because leadership and management are effective. The school development plan is a very effective working document with clear priorities and action plans for improvement. Governors support the headteacher and senior management team well and are aware of the challenges for the school. However, they are not always fully involved in the planning and monitoring of whole-school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is aware of areas for development. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Recent building works are preparing the school well for an imminent expansion in pupil numbers. It has good capacity to improve even further as it moves towards the next stage of its development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons
- Develop the role of governors to involve them more in the planning and monitoring of whole-school improvement
- Extend the provision for the gifted and talented pupils so that they are always fully challenged.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time they leave the school pupils have made good progress to reach average standards. The school is successful in supporting pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as

an additional language. Consequently, the majority of pupils in Year 6 gain at least the expected level in English, mathematics and science and a significant number gain the higher levels. The emphasis on developing reading and writing skills is enabling pupils to make good progress in their work. Evidence from pupils' work shows most classes are making good progress.

The effective tracking system identifies underachieving pupils, who receive very good support through a range of high quality intervention strategies. Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils, who form the majority population in the school, make good progress. The school is providing additional support for Kashmiri pupils who are not progressing in line with the other pupils. The school is also targeting some underachievement by boys of middle ability in mathematics and science. In addition, extra support for pupils who find learning more difficult ensures that they also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils of all ages and ethnicities get along exceptionally well developing into socially aware and polite young people. Pupils behave extremely well and speak highly of their school. They are very keen to do everything they can to improve it further, making an outstanding contribution to life within the school and wider community. For example, they help to run the school shop, raise money for charity and invite senior citizens to their Christmas celebrations. Pupils are enthusiastic to assume responsibility, keenly applying to become prefects or class monitors in order to 'make a difference' in the school. School councillors and play leaders also help to supervise the playground and help pupils to resolve their differences if they fall out with their friends. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and are well aware of the importance of eating healthily. Many pupils participate in the wide range of additional sporting activities during the school day. Strong personal qualities and sound basic skills prepare the pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff have warm relationships with pupils and in most classes make good use of resources to create a productive climate for learning. As a result, pupils study conscientiously and with much interest. They eagerly respond to questions and opportunities to take part in practical and team activities. Lessons generally include activities that are closely matched to meet the needs of different pupils. The teachers choose and vary their methods skilfully to maintain pace and to build pupils' understanding and skills. Assessment is used extremely well to check pupils' progress and plan the next steps in learning. They also provide pupils with helpful advice, practical targets and encouragement to continue their learning out of school. Teaching assistants often give strong support for learning. Many lessons meet pupils' needs well but in some classes, the work does not fully engage all the pupils. Activities are not always varied to match the pupils' individual needs and fully promote independent learning. The school acknowledges the need to develop the overall quality of teaching and learning in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is balanced well to meet most pupils' needs. There is strong provision for literacy and numeracy as well as providing good support for pupils with additional learning needs. Information and communication technology skills are taught well and the school is increasingly using new equipment to promote learning in a wider range of subjects. An extremely effective programme of personal, social and health education steadily extends pupils' awareness and understanding of important topics including health, safety and relationships. The school makes good use of displays to create an informative and stimulating learning environment. Learning is further enriched by visits, visitors and brief periods devoted to special themes. The staff also provide a wide range of enjoyable sport and other club activities, though there is still scope for greater participation. The effective curriculum enables most of the pupils to achieve well, but the recently reviewed provision for the school's gifted or talented pupils has not yet had time to become sufficiently embedded or demonstrate its impact.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This popular school enjoys considerable support and confidence from the local community and the overwhelming majority of parents feel their children are very well looked after. Inspectors wholeheartedly support these positive views. A very high standard of care, support and guidance helps to put pupils in a positive frame of mind for learning and this underpins their good achievement and outstanding personal development. The school also attaches great importance to pupils' regular attendance and high standards of behaviour, which have improved significantly since the last inspection. Adults also provide very good support for pupils at the early stages of learning English. Health and safety, child protection and staff recruitment procedures all meet national requirements. Rigorous procedures for monitoring the standard of pupils' work and outstanding use of the assessment information helps to ensure that the majority of pupils achieve well. Pupils who are not making the expected progress are rapidly identified and provided with effective support. During lessons, teachers also provide short-term targets for improvement which clearly state what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The perceptive and thoughtful leadership of the headteacher enables all staff to work together in the interest of the pupils. The school is setting challenging targets to raise standards. The senior management team provide strong support for the continuing improvements across the school. Clear direction through the school development plan provides detailed action plans and monitoring arrangements. Subject leaders are increasingly effective in their planning, supporting and monitoring roles though their action plans have yet to include whole school priorities. An imaginative programme of professional development supports teachers well in their work and provides opportunities for sharing of good practice. Support staff are valued and well integrated into the school. Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for development. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. However, they are not involved enough in the monitoring or planning of whole-school improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of William Austin Junior School, Luton, LU3 1UA

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you working and playing together. Yours is a good school with some outstanding features. It is providing you with a very good standard of education.

Some of the positive things about your school are:

- you try hard and make good progress in your work to reach the expected standards
- you feel very safe and happy at school
- you behave extremely well and are very keen to learn
- you show outstanding respect for all the cultures and religions in your school
- you readily volunteer to take on responsibilities in and out of the school
- the teachers and staff provide excellent support and care for you
- teaching is good and makes you very interested in the work
- the school is tidy and your display work in classrooms is excellent
- you have a very good headteacher.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make the school better:

- encourage teachers to share their best ideas so that all teaching and learning are very good
- make sure that the governors are fully involved in planning improvements
- ensure that pupils who have particular talents in certain subjects are challenged to strive for excellence.

Inspectors would like you to work hard and continue to enjoy learning at William Austin Junior School. We wish you every success in your future education.

With very best wishes,

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector