

Asterdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112761
Local Authority	Derby City
Inspection number	338013
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Armitage
Headteacher	Mr Cliff Perry
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They spent the majority of their time observing learning in each of the eight classes, and visited 17 lessons. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including tracking of pupils' progress, samples of the monitoring of teaching and learning, school planning and minutes of recent meetings of the governors. Inspectors also closely scrutinised samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding. Questionnaires from 81 parents, 65 pupils and 22 staff were also scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether all groups of pupils, and particularly girls and those with additional needs, make consistently good progress, especially in English
- if the school is doing enough to support the pupils' personal development and well-being and to raise attendance
- whether assessment information is used well enough to provide consistently challenging work for all groups of pupils
- if the work of the school is monitored and evaluated rigorously enough to identify the right areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

In this average sized school the large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. There are slightly more pupils entitled to free school meals than is seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils have a range of additional needs including learning and behavioural difficulties. There are a small number of children in public care. There is provision for children from birth to three in the adjoining Children's Centre but this is not managed by the school and is inspected separately. The school holds Healthy Schools and Activemark status plus an International Award from the British Council.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. A strong sense of teamwork and mutual support amongst the staff means that the school continually seeks to move forward and has good capacity for further improvement. Parents generally appreciate what the school provides and pupils like attending. A particular strength is the excellent behaviour that enables pupils to get on well together and leads to a calm and purposeful working environment. Excellent links with a wide range of external agencies, including the Children's Centre, have a positive impact on learning.

Children enter the nursery with skills that are a little below expectations for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but this slows slightly in Key Stage 1. However, the rate of progress improves again in Key Stage 2 and overall pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards at the age of eleven are at least average in most subjects. Over several years pupils have done better in mathematics than in English. This is still the case, largely because the teaching of writing is not entirely effective and so relatively few pupils reach the higher levels in their writing or spell confidently.

Pupils' personal development is good. They become polite and well-behaved young people who are keen to do well, although a few do not join in discussions readily enough to develop their vocabulary so they can spell confidently. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is good overall but variable. It is best for the youngest and oldest pupils, all of whom learn well. However, in some other classes teaching is less effective because staff do not make good enough use of assessment information to set challenging tasks. The marking of pupils' work and the setting of targets are also of inconsistent quality, and so pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve. The curriculum is good and staff make effective use of visits and visitors to enrich learning. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good because staff know the pupils and their families well and try hard to meet their differing needs.

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team work closely together. Staff hugely value everyone's contribution and nurture individuals. Governance is good and governors are well led. However, the school does not always use data well enough to pinpoint trends, and the monitoring of teaching and learning is supportive rather than rigorously evaluative. School self-evaluation is therefore more positive than data, observations and the samples of pupils' work indicate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in writing by:
 - using assessment information to ensure writing activities develop skills in a sequential manner
 - teaching pupils how to spell with confidence
 - improving the marking of pupils' work to ensure they know their targets and recognise what they need to do to improve.
- Raise the quality of teaching so it is at least good in all year groups by:
 - ensuring that evaluations of the quality of planning, teaching and learning are always rigorous
 - using information from monitoring activities consistently well to identify and pursue areas for further improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The quality of learning observed during the inspection followed the pattern of teaching: good for all groups of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils at the top end of the school, but generally satisfactory in the middle years. Assessment information and inspection observations show that standards have varied from year to year and are not as high as at the previous inspection. Standards in English, whilst broadly average, are weaker than those in mathematics and science. To some extent this is because pupils do not discuss their ideas often enough and therefore do not develop a wide vocabulary or the skills to spell well. Data indicate that in some years girls have not done as well as boys and inspectors noted that some older girls in particular do not join in discussions with confidence. Pupils with additional needs make similar progress to their classmates. Overall pupils are prepared in a satisfactory manner for their future. Nevertheless, despite developing some good key skills, their literacy remains a relative weakness.

The excellent behaviour of most pupils has a positive impact on learning and reflects the school's warm and supportive ethos. The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community is good. Many are keen to take on roles and responsibilities and are often very proud of their school and the teams that they collect house points for. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is also good and pupils, staff and parents get pleasure from celebration assemblies where there is a strong emphasis on developing the skills of citizenship. While pupils understand how to adopt a healthy lifestyle this is not always reflected in healthy choices in some packed lunches and older pupils are concerned that currently they do not take part in regular enough physical education activities. The school works closely with the education welfare service to encourage regular attendance but several parents do not consider the impact on learning of taking holidays in term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching lie in the good relationships between staff and pupils. Staff make clear their expectations of good behaviour, which most pupils are keen to live up to. Where teaching is most effective, for instance in the nursery and Years 5 and 6, this is because staff use assessment information well to provide interesting and challenging activities well matched to the needs of all pupils. For example, in a successful Year 6 lesson the teacher ensured that pupils' lively analysis of story openings meant they were able to recognise the devices the author used to capture their interest. In other years the pace of learning is slower and staff are not as effective in capturing pupils' interests. Here the planning of activities is weaker, and staff do not always use tracking data well enough to extend skills or identify clearly what pupils are to learn. This is seen particularly in Key Stage 1, where sometimes there is a lack of clarity in how to teach the progressive development of writing and spelling skills.

Curricular planning is good overall and most effective in mathematics and science, where practical learning activities interest the pupils and this in turn leads to good learning. The school enriches the curriculum well and uses visits to places of interest, including residential activities, well to motivate pupils. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory although several parents would like the school to investigate the possibility of organising a wider range. The time available for teaching is broadly satisfactory and the school is wisely considering ways to ensure this is used to full effect to support the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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development of key skills.

The staff provide particularly strong pastoral care. They know and care for pupils and their families well. Pupils with additional needs are well supported and extra help is provided where necessary, although the recording of some inter-agency work is not sufficiently detailed. Occasionally staff do not pay enough attention to pupils' and parents' concerns to ensure they all feel content.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In the inspection questionnaire some staff noted that 'the school has a tightly knit professional team of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff. Everyone is mutually supportive'. All staff work conscientiously to carry out their delegated responsibilities in a caring manner. The senior leadership team is a good blend of experience and new ideas, and through the developing role of the assistant headteachers is becoming an increasingly effective vehicle to drive school improvement. School self-evaluation is extremely positive but the appraisal that the school still provides an outstanding quality of provision does not take sufficient account of recent data or the effectiveness of the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning. For instance, the monitoring of planning has not been regular or rigorous enough to identify and eradicate variability and some weaknesses. Similarly, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough to ensure the consistent development of writing skills. Governance is good and some governors are shrewd and well informed at first hand about the quality of provision.

The excellent links with a wide range of different agencies, and particularly the direct involvement of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator as leader of the adjoining Children's Centre, are very effective in developing provision. The school promotes equality of access and opportunity well, although it does not make full use of data to identify whether provision is consistently effective. The links with parents and carers are good, although several parents have a range of concerns. The safeguarding of the pupils is satisfactory. This results in a safe and caring environment. Governors wisely note that some of the systems should be linked together more carefully, and inspectors identified that information regarding checks of those who work in school, whilst appropriate, is not managed fully effectively. The school promotes community cohesion well and although there has been no audit of provision, links with the local, wider and

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international community are developing well. The school deploys its resources effectively and achieves good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with considerable potential to be even more effective as the new staff team become established. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Those who have attended the adjoining Children's Centre benefit from these experiences but whilst staff accurately note that on the whole children's skills on entry are no longer well below what is expected nationally for their age, they are still below the expectations. The greatest area of challenge for the staff is in developing the children's communication skills as speaking, listening and early reading and writing are the weakest areas. Children make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes. The planning of activities is good and staff make effective use of the indoor and outdoor areas to provide a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. This was illustrated well in effective phonics activities with the youngest children and when those in reception used a programmable toy. The generous number of adult staff and helpers in the nursery are very well led by the team leader, who has an excellent grasp of how to improve provision further. However, only seven weeks into the job she has not yet had the opportunity to ensure all procedures are consistent and embedded.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of education and support for their children. As one rightly notes 'Very friendly staff who are all open and honest. I feel totally 100% confident leaving my son here and safe in the knowledge that he is learning well in his time at school.' Most parents believe their children are safe and happy at Asterdale and that their different needs are well met. Nevertheless, quite a few parents have some concerns about provision. Several would like a better programme of physical education for pupils in Year 6 as this currently makes it difficult for them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Others believe there is not enough provision for after-school activities. Some would like more information about events and the progress their child makes. A small number have concerns about bullying although others think some staff are over-zealous in dealing with behaviour. Parents also believe the school has inconsistent provision for homework. Inspectors agreed with most of the points made by parents and also note some inconsistency in key areas, but judged behaviour to be generally excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Asterdale Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	51	39	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	63	30	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	42	39	48	8	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	47	40	49	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	51	39	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	46	39	48	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	44	37	46	8	10	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	42	41	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	43	42	52	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	46	35	43	8	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	37	44	54	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	49	37	46	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	53	36	44	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Asterdale Primary School, Derby, DE21 7PH

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited Asterdale recently. We enjoyed chatting to several of you, including members of the school council who were very good at explaining some of the things you like or don't like in school. We also enjoyed meeting several of you in lessons, at break and lunchtime and when we attended assemblies. These are some of the findings from our visit.

We think your school provides you with a good quality of care and education. We were pleased to see that your behaviour is usually excellent, both in school and at playtime. This makes sure that lessons are calm and that you can concentrate well. We found that the school has some excellent links with other organisations that are used to support your learning. We think the staff work closely together as a team and care for you well. You make good progress in mathematics and those of you in the nursery and Years 5 and 6 make lots of progress.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- help you improve your writing by teaching you how to write and spell a bit more confidently, and make sure the marking of your work and target setting are used well to help you know what to improve.
- look more carefully at the quality of planning, teaching and learning, so that everyone knows what needs to be improved further to be sure that you make good progress in all year groups.

You could also help your school by trying a bit harder to always take part in discussions and taking even more care with your writing. Could you also encourage your parents to help you eat healthy packed lunches and remind them that taking holidays in term time disrupts your learning?

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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