

# Allerton Bywater Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107983
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309560
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sir Karl Curry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Martin Dove
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Leeds Road Allerton Bywater Castleford West Yorkshire WF10 2DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	1977 554275
<b>Fax number</b>	1977 554275

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of a similar size to other primary schools and mainly serves the local community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the average but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above average. All pupils speak English as their first language and very few are from minority ethnic groups. Temporary arrangements were made for the substantive headteacher to work part time in April 2008 while the deputy headteacher took over the day-to-day management of the school as an associate headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school is not effective and has failed to promote improvement since the last inspection. Although pupils' personal development is well catered for and pastoral care is very good, academic standards overall are too low. While children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in the last two years have started Year 1 with standards that were above national expectations, these good foundations have not been built upon. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have been drifting downwards in recent years. The school has been slow to take action to halt the decline and as a result standards at the end of both of these key stages are currently below average and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Writing skills are weak and this hampers pupils' progress in other subjects, particularly science. The progress of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also inadequate.

After a long period of turbulence, staffing is now more stable. Currently, there is a team of young enthusiastic teachers who contribute to an upbeat atmosphere that is recognised and valued by parents who say that staff are 'really helpful'. Although no examples of inadequate teaching were observed during the inspection, teaching over time has been inadequate and this is reflected in pupils' inadequate achievement. Currently in Key Stages 1 and 2, there is not enough good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and help them catch up. Activities are not always matched precisely enough to pupils' needs which results in insufficient challenge, especially for the more able pupils.

The school has a strong track record of success in promoting pupils' personal development. Their behaviour is good because staff promote firm but fair discipline and ensure that the school is open and friendly. Pupils say, 'We all get on really well here.' They like school and make a good contribution to the school community. They have access to a satisfactory curriculum, and the extra activities, including the breakfast club, are enjoyed by all. The good programme for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. Adults know the personal needs of their pupils well. The pupil welfare team works hard, successfully providing the best possible pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

However, despite the good work to promote personal development and care, leadership and management are inadequate overall because there has been insufficient concentration on standards and achievement. The school has not gathered enough information about the standards pupils reach and has not focused sufficiently on the progress they make in lessons and over time. The school's view of its effectiveness is too positive because it does not analyse clearly enough the links between the quality of what it is offering pupils and why their standards and achievement are faltering. They are unable to pinpoint with enough accuracy the groups of pupils making insufficient progress. The recent appointment of an associate headteacher has strengthened leadership and management. In the very short time she has been in post she has worked very hard to try to address the many issues facing the school. Although middle managers including subject leaders are keen and committed, they have not had the opportunity

to develop their management skills and are unable to provide the associate headteacher with much needed support. Consequently, she is trying to manage too many aspects of the school's work. The school is now starting to understand how to move forward and to plan for urgently needed improvements. However, these plans are in the early stage of development and there has not been time for them either to be fully implemented or to have a sustained positive effect on outcomes.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Children achieve well by the time they join Year 1. They usually reach standards that are above expectations, and in 2007 girls reached standards that were even higher. This is because teaching is good. Adult intervention is usually of good quality and develops children's thinking and their language skills. The provision for teaching communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world is planned well. This ensures that tasks are carefully matched to children's needs and children of all abilities are able to make good progress. However, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because some child-initiated tasks are not sufficiently exciting and challenging. Children are very well cared for in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Parents report that their children are extremely happy and typically talk about the 'friendly caring atmosphere'. At present, the associate headteacher manages the Foundation Stage and this contributes towards her unrealistically heavy load.

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

- Raise standards and accelerate achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 particularly in writing.
- Rigorously monitor pupils' progress in order to identify and eradicate underachievement.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment information more effectively to make sure that work is precisely matched to pupils' needs and provides effective challenge for all pupils including the most able.
- Ensure that management roles and responsibilities are more equitable and that middle managers are empowered to make a full contribution to leading and managing the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

The good start children make in the Foundation Stage is not sustained in Key Stage 1. Pupils are not reaching their full potential. For example, pupils who started Year 1 with standards above national expectations in communication, language and literacy are reaching standards at the end of Year 2 that are below average especially in reading and writing. Progress is a little better in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics but, overall, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are behind where they should be. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are low compared to national averages. The most able do not reach their full potential. Weaknesses in writing skills have a negative impact on standards in other subjects; they include poor spelling, inaccurate punctuation and a narrow vocabulary. For instance, pupils find it difficult to record accurately the results of practical activities in science.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and, from their smiles and comments, enjoy school. This helps explain the above average attendance, which the school works hard to promote through methods such as class and individual awards. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and stay healthy and look forward to 'Wake Up, Shake Up' sessions which provide them with daily exercise. They say that bullying is very rare but that, when it occurs, it is dealt with effectively. Playground buddies and the regular use of play equipment help to ensure that play times are purposeful, trouble free and promote healthy lifestyles and social interaction. Pupils like and understand the school's reward systems, which they feel are fair and acknowledge effort and achievement. Thoughtful and well led assemblies and discussions help ensure good spiritual, moral and social development. However, pupils' understanding of different cultures is less well developed. Enthusiastic school council members have helped to improve the decor, equipment, furniture and the lunchtime menu as well as lead initiatives for fundraising to support worthy causes. Although pupils do not develop their basic academic skills well enough, the strengths of other aspects of their personal development allow them to develop adequately in an 'all round' readiness for their future education and later lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Overall, it is not of sufficient quality to make up for previous underachievement. At times, teachers talk for too long in lessons, and pupils have insufficient time to practice their skills. This slows their progress and especially hampers those pupils who are able to grasp concepts quickly. Work is not always precisely matched to the needs of pupils and this can result in a lack of challenge, especially for the most able. The quality of help provided by learning support assistants is variable. Some provide limited support for lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the beginning of lessons and this holds back their progress. Nevertheless, teaching has improved from a low base and there are small pockets of good teaching, particularly in mathematics. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. Pupils' contributions are sought and valued and this boosts their confidence. Behaviour is managed effectively and pupils get lots of praise and encouragement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school's satisfactory curriculum provides enjoyment through a sound variety of learning opportunities. The works of famous artists provide inspiration for pupils' own art, which is well represented in displays. Visiting specialists add quality to pupils' experiences in physical education. Investigations, such as planning the building of a profitable theme park, create excitement and enjoyment and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. However, the linking of subjects to enliven learning more is not yet planned systematically. As a result, there are missed opportunities to teach the skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) through other subjects. Work is not always matched to pupils' precise needs to help them make progress. Enrichment activities, including philosophy and cooking, help broaden pupils' horizons. Popular clubs such as football and dance, visits, and

special events, provide opportunities for pupils to discover new talents and develop skills which support their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides high quality pastoral care for all pupils. This is firmly reflected in the school's positive ethos and pupils' good personal development. Parents overwhelmingly agree that school is safe and their children are well cared for. The school's policies and procedures for risk assessment and child protection are securely in place and the systems for vetting staff and visitors to the school meet with the latest national guidelines. However, systems for monitoring pupils' progress and tracking their academic achievement are at a very early stage of development. Pupils do not yet have personal targets to help steer their learning. Marking does not always help pupils move forward as well as celebrate what they have achieved. As a result, they have little ownership of what they need to do to improve and do not make enough progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

As a result of a limited analysis of achievement and standards and the failure to keep track of pupils' progress, managers were very slow to identify and respond to falling standards. Although the associate headteacher has considerable drive, the weight of responsibilities reduces her ability to implement strategies to raise achievement and standards quickly enough. Other staff have not had the opportunities to develop management skills and, although middle managers are keen and enthusiastic, their impact on achievement and standards has been minimal. The vast majority of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has been completed by the associate headteacher. This accurately identifies strengths and areas for development and is helping teachers to improve their practice but has yet to have sufficient impact. Governors are supportive but their challenges have not managed to stem the decline in standards. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Inspection of Allerton Bywater Primary School, Castleford, WF10 2DR

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when my colleague and I visited your school. We liked talking to you and particularly enjoyed our chat with the school council. We think you make a good contribution to the school community through your hard work with the school council, events council and the 'playground buddies'. We were impressed by your good behaviour and by the way you work hard in class. You clearly enjoy coming to school because it is such a friendly place. You told us that you feel very safe in school and that staff always try to help if you have any problems. It's good that you are trying hard to eat healthily and enjoy exercise. The 'Wake up, Shake up' activities look to be great fun. The children in the Nursery and Reception are provided for well.

However, there is a lot to do to make your school as good as it should be. In Key Stages 1 and 2, you are progressing at a slower rate than children in other schools and the standard of your work is lower, especially your writing. Your school has been judged to need 'special measures' which means it needs extra help to improve. Inspectors will visit your school regularly to see how things are improving. Teaching and the way the school has been managed have not been good enough. The teachers are trying hard to make things better. We would like teachers to look very carefully at how well you are doing and to check regularly to make sure that you do not fall behind with your work. We have asked them to try to make sure that the work you are set is at just the right level for each of you. We know that the school leaders are trying to make your school a better place but we have asked some of the teachers to develop their management skills so they can help school leaders more.

We are sure that you will do all you can to help your teachers when they are working hard to improve your school. We wish you all the best for the future.