

Alwoodley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107912
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324673
Inspection date	10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	499
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Burnup
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Langley
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cranmer Rise Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 5HX
Telephone number	0113 2686104
Fax number	0113 2662044

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards overall, but particularly in English at Key Stage 2. Evidence was gathered from national published data, the school's own assessment and evaluation records, observations of lessons, pupils' completed work and interviews with pupils, staff and two governors. The views of parents were also taken into account through the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but, on the whole, inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large school serving a suburb of Leeds. The pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. Nearly half the pupils come from different minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these speak English as an additional language. Although, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, a minority of pupils come from families that are disadvantaged. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) consists of a Nursery and Reception classes.

The school has achieved Investors in Pupils, Inclusion Charter Mark, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, Basic Skills, Healthy Schools Advanced Level, Artsmark Gold, Investors in People, the Stephen Lawrence Award, Activemark Gold and the International School Award. It is currently working towards Fair Trade, and Sustainable School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that enjoys an excellent reputation locally. Alwoodley provides an excellent all-round education', sums up the views of parents, who are delighted not only with the standards it achieves, but also with the exceptional level of care provided and the outstanding promotion of their children's personal development. They understandably enthuse about the excellent quality of leadership. This excellence is exemplified by the headteacher who leads by example, for instance, by learning Spanish alongside the pupils and joining in after-school activities. The school has a wonderful sense of community. Pupils share their parents' enthusiasm, eagerly talking about the exciting visits that underpin much of their learning; International Days that celebrate the different cultures found in school and around the world; the many clubs available to them, and not least, their lessons. They feel safe and secure and really appreciate that the school listens to their ideas and acts on their suggestions. Pupils are proud of the improvements to the outside areas that are resulting from their work with architecture students from a local university, the refurbished toilets, improved school dinners and the Sports Day they planned.

Although overall attendance is average because a few families take extended holidays to Asia, this conceals the fact that most pupils' attendance is very good. Behaviour is excellent and everyone gets on exceptionally well together. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way. They make healthy choices at lunchtime and are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to exercise both in lessons and the many clubs open to them. This reflects the Advanced Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold awards the school has achieved. Across the school, pupils take on responsibilities such as leading play activities, managing equipment or taking their turn on the school council, which manages its own budget and whose membership rotates throughout the year. They also have an excellent understanding of their place in wider communities, both locally and internationally. This is exemplified by their involvement in environmental projects and their leadership of a pupils' council for a local cluster of schools that is extending community services. International Days and the well established links with schools in India also enhance their global awareness. Pupils' outstanding personal development supports their learning extremely well. Together with well developed basic skills, including those in ICT, pupils are exceptionally well placed to face the future.

Overall, pupils make excellent progress from starting points that are below average when they enter the EYFS to standards that are high in science and above average in mathematics and English. This represents outstanding achievement, particularly when so many pupils enter school with weak skills in English. Standards in Year 6 have been significantly above average for several years. The dip in the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in English and mathematics indicated by provisional results for 2008 reflected the starting points of that particular cohort and the progress they made from Year 2 was good. More pupils than average in the current Year 6 are on course to attain the higher Level 5, reflecting the normal trend in the school. Rigorous assessments indicate progress is improving further across the school. This is because the recently improved tracking system is enabling teachers to plan learning more effectively for individual pupils. It has also made them more accountable for the progress made by each pupil in their class.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Consistent and very effective practice is found across the school. Teachers make very clear to pupils what they will be learning. They make sure that

activities are well matched to the needs of different groups and that each group understands what is expected of them. Resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are used skilfully to aid explanations and add challenge. Teaching assistants provide very effective support to those who need extra help or further challenge. Teachers make very helpful comments about pupils' work and set targets that are changed regularly and well matched to what pupils need to learn next. The school's outstanding curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Excellent links have been made between subjects that ensure, for example, that pupils write for real purposes in literacy lessons, develop excellent ICT skills and that time is used efficiently. A plethora of rich opportunities extend and enhance learning. These include specific provision for gifted and talented pupils, intervention programmes for those who need extra help and the extensive promotion of the Spanish language and culture from Nursery onwards. There are also absorbing International Days and good opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument. Excellent academic guidance, identification and support for vulnerable pupils, robust systems to ensure pupils' welfare and safety and the work of the learning mentor all ensure that care and guidance for pupils are outstanding.

The headteacher enjoys enormous respect from parents, shows boundless enthusiasm and a burning desire to achieve excellence. She leads from the front and is extremely well supported by very professional leaders and managers. The school's commitment to, and success in, promoting equality of opportunity is evidenced by its achievement of Investors in Pupils and Investors in People awards. The school has well established, robust and very effective systems to evaluate its own performance. Information from these is used to underpin school development plans that have ensured the continued good improvement since its last inspection. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very active in supporting developments. The vision and drive of leaders and the excellent strength in depth of leadership and management ensure that the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good. They enter Nursery with skills below those expected for their age, especially in language. Children make sustained good progress across both the Nursery and Reception classes to meet the goals expected for their age. However, their reading and writing skills remain slightly weaker, relative to the other areas.

Provision is good. Planned activities are well matched to the requirements for each of the areas of learning and to the development needs of different groups of children. There is a good balance between adult-led activities that are taught well and purposeful independent learning. Outdoor spaces are used well to promote learning in each of the areas. Care is taken to ensure there is consistency in the provision across Nursery and the Reception classes. However, the location of the classrooms prevents the EYFS provision from working as a fully integrated and flexible unit and this limits its overall effectiveness. It is not easy, for example, for the less mature children in Reception to access and benefit from the broader play-based approach found in the Nursery. The care, guidance and support of children meet the same excellent standards as the rest of the school. Leadership and management are good and have ensured that the EYFS requirements have been implemented effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable the EYFS to work as a fully integrated unit that is able to respond flexibly to the needs of all children.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

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

Inspection of Alwoodley Primary School, Leeds, LS17 5HX

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what makes your school outstanding. You told us about all the exciting things you do both in and out of class and about how helpful your teachers and all the adults in school are. We agree that your teachers and their assistants are extremely caring and that your lessons are really interesting, often because they are based on the exciting visits you make. Teaching is excellent because your teachers always ensure you understand what you are learning about and what is expected of you. They also make sure you get the help you need to succeed. You really appreciate the comments they make in your books and the targets they discuss with you. These clearly help you to improve what you do and to take the next steps in your learning. It is no surprise that your overall achievement is outstanding. I wish that I could speak and write Spanish as well as you can!

We were extremely impressed with how well you all get on together, help each other and the contribution you make to improve the school and the local area. You also have an excellent understanding of what you need to do to keep fit, healthy and out of harm's way.

At present, children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress. This is because provision is good, despite the difficulties caused by the location of the classrooms, which limits what the staff can do. I have asked the school to find ways of improving this.

A major reason why your school is outstanding is the excellent leadership by your headteacher and how much very good help she has from senior staff and teachers. Everyone in school, including the governors, works very hard and imaginatively to make this the best school they can. It comes as no surprise to us that your parents are delighted that you attend this excellent school.