

Allerton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135210
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	329055
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
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 Turner
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Stott
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lingfield Approach Alwoodley Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 7HL
Telephone number	0113 293 0699
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school opened in September 2007 because of the merger of two schools. It has twice the national average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational need, is average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. There is a private nursery that shares the school site that did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Allerton Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving rapidly and has several good features. These include good quality care, guidance and support which pupils receive, and an exciting curriculum, which underpins pupils' good personal development. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with all aspects of the school. Parents praised the 'care and support, given in a positive multicultural environment, and in classrooms which are so vibrant'. Another parent commented, 'What a pity I'm too old to be a pupil at our school!'

In the first year of the school's existence there were early problems resulting from the amalgamation, and the high turnover of staff had a negative impact on pupils' progress. However, the recent firm action taken by the headteacher, strongly supported by the governors, has already resulted in raising standards and in pupils making satisfactory progress overall. Pupils reach standards which, overall, are below average by the end of Year 6. However, standards and progress fluctuate between different year groups and between subjects. For example, standards in mathematics are lower than in English and science at Key Stage 2.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils' improving attendance and punctuality are witness to their enjoyment of school. Pupils feel safe in school and are adamant that there is no bullying or racism. They have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures and show commitment to communities, both local and global. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a sensible diet and the need for exercise. Pupils make a good contribution to daily school life.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. More stringent monitoring is bringing about improvement. Some lessons are good and in these pupils make good progress because they are encouraged to learn by doing things for themselves. However, sometimes teachers talk for too long and this causes pupils to lose interest. As a result their progress slows.

The curriculum is good. Pupils' learning, their personal development and their enjoyment of school are all greatly enriched by an extensive range of additional activities. The school is an inclusive community which promotes equality of opportunity well. Community cohesion is promoted effectively. It has increasing importance on the school's agenda and is regarded as an essential part of the school's welcoming ethos.

The headteacher's good leadership, fully supported by good governance, gives the school clear, purposeful direction. However, the work of those who lead subjects has yet to develop well enough to meet the high expectations set by the headteacher and governors. These leaders are only just coming to terms with their responsibility to raise standards, improve achievements and to enhance pupils' learning. Nevertheless, the school is improving rapidly and actions already taken are having a definite impact, for example in improving standards in writing across the school. The pace of change and the effectiveness of its actions so far confirm the school's view that it has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Reception with skills below expectations overall for their age. Children make good progress because of the strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills and on encouraging social aspects. When they finish Reception, standards are broadly typical for children their age. Parents are happy with the arrangements to help children to settle in the Early Years Foundation

Stage. They like the way in which the school encourages them to participate in their children's learning. Children are well cared for and welfare requirements are fully met. Their social development is good and they form strong relationship with staff and with each other. They learn to share, take pride in their successes, and play happily together. They develop a good understanding of the wider world through the creative use of play, both in and outside the classroom.

Children's learning is tracked and assessed well so that adults can identify if there are areas of underachievement. Teamwork is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the provision is well led and managed by the recently appointed leader. The curriculum is adapted flexibly according to children's interests. It is continuously under review to make sure that it prioritises those activities that children initiate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school, particularly in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Increase the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good or better progress.
- Ensure that subject leaders contribute more effectively to raising standards and improving pupils' progress and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

2008 data shows that the standards pupils reached at the end of Years 2 and 6 were below national averages, although improving. Given their lower than average starting points, this represents satisfactory progress overall. Current pupils in Year 1 enter the school with standards that are broadly in line with the national average. Current progress is good in Year 6 but still satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

Standards and progress are inconsistent between individual year groups and between different subjects. Standards in English, for example, are already close to the national average in Year 6, and are rapidly improving in Year 2, partly as a result of a recently introduced initiative to improve pupils' writing, but the school has correctly identified weaknesses in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are more vulnerable, or who join the school with little or no English make satisfactory progress because they are given effective support in class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are open and perceptive. They have a good understanding of why it is important to live healthily. They enjoy the responsibility of leading and participating in a 'Wake up and Shake up' five minute fitness routine first thing in the morning. Pupils say they feel safe in school, quoting 'If you have a problem at school or at home, there is always someone in school to help'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The empathy and respect shown by pupils of all ethnic groups is a strong element in their personal development, and makes a significant contribution to good community cohesion. Behaviour is good. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils engage well in a range of activities which will stand

them in good stead for their future economic well-being, such as working cooperatively in teams. However, their mathematical skills are lacking. The school is aware that this aspect of pupils' basic skills requires improvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning in lessons varies from satisfactory to good. In the good lessons, pupils' learning is strengthened by them having challenging tasks that make them think and which require them to do things for themselves. For example, in one Year 6 lesson, pupils looked at a short animated film and had to decide for themselves what they thought had been the main events which led up to the actions shown on the screen. It demanded much thought and imagination. They learnt a lot from the experience and the process absorbed them. In some lessons, however, teachers talk for too long. Pupils lose concentration, their interest wanes and they do not make the progress they should. The quality of marking varies. It is best when it helps pupils know what to do to improve their work. However, this is not yet uniformly the case. Pupils are beginning to check their own work to reinforce their knowledge and understanding. However, this is not evident in all classes where it is appropriate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum. The recent initiative to improve pupils' literacy has got off to a good start and is boosting writing skills. Teachers are now making learning more meaningful by requiring pupils to practise their skills and to link ideas across a range of subjects. The imaginative focus on the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the school adds considerably to community harmony, the elimination of discrimination and to pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths, values and traditions. Curricular enrichment, and the contribution it makes to the wider range of subject skills, is outstanding. For example, the appointment of teachers with expertise in the visual arts and in dance is testimony to the school's successful determination to enhance pupils' cultural development. Parents and pupils also confirm a significant increase in the opportunities to foster and develop particular skills and interests through sports and other activities, including residential visits. There are appropriate programmes to raise pupils' awareness of the potential dangers of drugs and other substances.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care of pupils is a strength of the school. The support for vulnerable pupils is very good. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and individual education plans are well thought out. Teaching assistants play a major part in ensuring that these pupils' individual needs are satisfactorily met. Safeguarding fully meets current government requirements. Typical of parents' comments is that, 'The care, support and kindness given to my children and myself have been outstanding from all the staff.' However, a small minority of parents expressed concerns regarding the management of behaviour. The inspection finds that overall behaviour is managed well and that pupils' behaviour is good. The school checks the progress of individual and groups of pupils rigorously and uses this information increasingly

effectively to identify underachievement and give support, especially to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning to speak English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully united two schools with different characteristics and has given the new school a clear direction for improvement. She is well supported by a knowledgeable, committed and challenging governing body. The efficient management of the budget together with pupils' current standards and achievement indicate satisfactory value for money.

The school promotes equal opportunities well and takes a strong stand on any forms of discrimination. It has a good community cohesion policy, which has a wider community emphasis. This is already making the school an integral part of the local and wider community, for example through developing links with the local church and a cluster of schools.

The school's accurate self-evaluation has enabled senior leaders to address some weaknesses in the school's provision, for example in pupils' writing. Recent appointments and the internal redeployment of staff are beginning to promote improvement. However, these changes are at an early stage and middle leaders are yet to show sufficient impact on raising standards and achievement.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	3
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

On behalf of the inspection team I want to thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to spend some time talking with you and looking at your work because you were always so polite and well mannered. You behave well and you take really good care of each other. Well done for improving your attendance, which is now about average. You must be extremely healthy, but that's hardly surprising given all that jumping up and down in the 'Wake up, Shake up' sessions at the beginning of the day! All of those things are very important, so do keep them up.

Although your school has some good features, overall it is satisfactory. You make satisfactory progress and the standards you reach are getting closer to those attained by pupils in most schools. The grown-ups in your school take really good care of you and do their best to help you enjoy your learning and do as well as you can.

Your parents, school governors, teachers and everyone who works in the school want it to be even better. I know that you would like that too, so I have asked your headteacher and other adults to improve three things.

- I have asked them to help all of you to reach higher standards in all your work, but especially in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- I have asked that your teachers try to make all your lessons really interesting and as good as the very best.
- I have asked if the teachers who are responsible for subjects to do more to help you improve your learning.

Of course, you have a part to play too. You must come to school every day, continue to be as well behaved as you can and enjoy and do your work to the best of your ability.