

Allington Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118855
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326911
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Hodge

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	402
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Josphine Dolton
Headteacher	Mark Geadah
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hildenborough Crescent London Road Maidstone ME16 0PG
Telephone number	01622 757350
Fax number	01622 757350

Age group	4–11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

the quality of the curriculum the school provides

the quality of pupils' care and guidance.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work and school documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, the chair of governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but evidence gathered suggests that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are accurate in nearly all respects, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than average and the number of pupils attending has risen by a third since its last inspection. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in two Reception classes. When children enter the school, they have ability levels which are close to those typically found for their age. There are a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to healthy living and promoting environmental awareness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Allington is an outstanding school that has very successfully built on its strengths since the last inspection. Pupils and parents alike are very positive about their experiences of the school, often pointing to its ability to foster high academic standards within a friendly and supportive atmosphere. As one pupil aptly put it, 'The school makes us work hard but it's usually fun!'

The headteacher and governing body provide excellent leadership and management. The headteacher, supported by senior staff, has fostered high levels of team work, and it shows. The staff willingly take on new ideas and support each other so pupils gain maximum benefit from new initiatives. This approach has resulted in staff improving the way they assess pupils' progress so they spot any needing extra help more quickly. The governors support the school superbly. They regularly review their approach to supporting the school to keep their 'finger on the pulse' of activities. Their continued challenge has helped ensure the school meets or surpasses its academic targets. The improvements to the curriculum, the new computer suite, and upgrading of other facilities, such as the swimming pool, reflect the school's desire and excellent capacity for improvement. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire support the school's values and approach. Only a very small minority voice pointers for improvement. Typically, parents report that the school provides, 'pupils with an excellent academic grounding', 'excellent trips and clubs', and 'lots of support for pupils with special needs'.

It is the excellent quality of provision, from the EYFS to Year 6, that enables pupils to excel. The typically good and often excellent teaching is tailored well to the different ages and interests of pupils and ensures that pupils develop their individual potential and achieve brilliantly. Pupils are articulate, confident to express their views and like testing their own abilities by sometimes using electronic voting to decide on answers posed by the teacher. This approach gives pupils good feedback on their learning and later gives the teacher a clear idea about how individuals fared in the assessment. This high quality of teaching, found in many classes, combined with an inventive curriculum results in pupils being creative writers, avid readers and very confident mathematicians. They reach well above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well in the national tests taken in the summer. Some of the highest attaining pupils are looking forward to competing against other schools, having won through to the late stages of a local mathematics competition. Pupils also reach above average standards in their information and communication technology (ICT) work as they use internet, e-mail, word processing and spreadsheets effectively. Pupils also achieve really well in other subjects such as art, geography and history. The extensive range of sporting trophies awarded reflect their good ability levels in physical education. Perhaps this was why one parent commented, 'The school is in a league of its own!' Playtimes promote physical activities for pupils very well in addition to class activities. The 'sports leaders' are enthusiastic to set up activities and enjoy guiding fellow pupils to become involved in using them.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities they do, as the curriculum is excellent. Teachers report that pupils meeting in corridors often enthuse about the topics they are covering. The curriculum promotes an ability to work independently right from the EYFS to Year 6. Plenty of extra activities and after-school clubs help broaden pupils' experience, including two modern foreign languages. Pupils talk about all the healthy exercise, including sports, they like and using the on-site swimming pool. They know about, and many say they try to adopt, healthy eating, happily eating the fruit and vegetables that are served at morning playtimes or for lunch.

Nearly all aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, with the exception of some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of others in more distant developing countries. While pupils learn about 'different' people, their views and knowledge of life in distant countries are more factual or predictable than a realistic picture. The pupils are directly involved in shaping the school's development and play a key role, often led by the work of the school council. The good links developed within the local community mean that the school promotes community cohesion well. Pupils also enjoy helping disadvantaged children by filling up shoeboxes for a charity appeal as well as raising money for other charities such as Children in Need. As the pupils' moral and social development is promoted to a high standard, their behaviour and attitudes are excellent, both in class and around the school.

Very close individual checks on pupils' progress mean that teachers know exactly what the next steps in learning are for all. These checks often include assessing and then planning for the many pupils who join from other schools. This ensures that they too make as much progress as possible. Pupils have an excellent understanding of their targets, reflected in the comment of one pupil who said, 'We get them when we need them and the teachers often write them everywhere.' This awareness of what to aim for next gives pupils very secure guidance about how to improve. Very good links with local secondary schools make sure that pupils make the change with as little fuss as possible. Pupils say they feel very safe and the school ensures it is robust with child protection procedures. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are cared for exceptionally well so they make excellent progress. The school has forged excellent links with professionals beyond the school who give additional support to pupils and those coordinating this area of work. A strong team of teaching assistants also provide good levels of help within classes and around the school. Pupils speak highly of all staff and feel very well supported. Pupils report that they cannot recall the last time there was any bullying, but know that the school will respond quickly if it arises.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

This excellent provision ensures that children get off to a flying start and they make rapid progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception Year, they reach above average standards. Some are on track to achieve very well in their social, emotional and physical development. Before children start, the school visits all the feeder nurseries and makes detailed notes about each child. Good links with their parents, who visit for a one-to-one chat with staff, help to make sure that children's emotional and welfare needs are catered for brilliantly. The very lively and interesting activities in the classroom and outside areas help them develop their independence, while ensuring they start gaining the foundations of basic number, writing and reading skills. Children enjoy choosing activities and there is a good balance of activities chosen by the teacher and those chosen by the children. The outside areas are well designed. A variety of large and small apparatus, a garden, role-play areas and even artificial snow promote and aid their physical and creative development. They enable children to be active and creative, such as acting out the 'teddy bears picnic'. Their basic ICT skills are also fostered well; simple computer programs and programmable toys called 'bee bots' help them think logically and spatially. The provision is expertly managed, not least in the way that all members of staff feel part of the team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' understanding of the authentic lifestyles of others, particularly in more distant developing countries, to complement the factual knowledge gained in lessons or homework.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Allington Primary School, Maidstone, ME16 0PG

We liked visiting your school recently. Thank you for telling us what you thought. Yours is a brilliant school that still tries to be even better. Here are some of the things that we found to be particularly good.

-
- You make great progress in your work and reach higher than average standards by the time you leave in Year 6.
- You all really enjoy being at the school and really like the staff.
- The activities planned in lessons, along with extra help for those of you who need it, make sure you do not feel left behind.
- Children in the Reception classes have a happy start to school. They learn really well and make very good use of their outside area.
- You know that getting exercise, drinking water and eating certain foods are good for you. Your swimming pool and sporting achievements must help you keep fit!
- You behave really well in class and around the school.
- You said you feel extremely safe and all the adults know you well because they keep a very close eye on how well you are doing.
- Teaching is high quality and teachers make most lessons exciting. Your new ICT facilities will be really good and you do such great work in other subjects too.
- Your headteacher, governors and other staff lead the school extremely well and know what needs to be done to make it even better.
- There is just one thing we have asked the school to do to help improve it some more.
- Help you get to know children from schools much further away so you can learn more deeply about different peoples' lifestyles and customs.

You can help your teachers by continuing to be well behaved and nice to your friends, so that your school can be even better. Well done!

Yours faithfully

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector