

# Allerton Grange School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108058
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309585
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patrick Geraghty HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1695
6th form	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Morris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Whittaker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Talbot Avenue Leeds West Yorkshire LS17 6SF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 3684200
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 3684201

---

<b>Age group</b>	11-18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 July 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	309585

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is a large 11-18 high school. It is both ethnically and socially diverse. A significant number of students have below average attainment on entry, with a smaller number of very able students providing an unusually wide range of ability; however, overall attainment on entry is broadly average. About 47% of students live in areas of social disadvantage and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of students for whom English is not the language spoken at home is high. The percentages of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs are at the national average. Special educational needs provision includes a hearing impaired unit, typically having around 18 students. A new headteacher has recently been appointed and took up post in April 2008. The school will move into new purpose built accommodation, on the present site, in September 2009.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The extended absence of the former headteacher and a subsequent period under an acting headteacher created a degree of uncertainty among staff. While the school was effectively managed, too low a priority was given to monitoring students' progress and the quality of teaching. The appointment of a new headteacher has had an immediate impact. The school self-evaluation has been sharpened to recognise accurately key areas requiring improvement.

Over the last three years standards have improved at both key stages. However, distinct groups of students continue to make less progress than they should; these include students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those of Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage. Strategies are now in place to tackle this but they have yet to have a substantive impact on student achievement.

Students make satisfactory progress in their personal development and enjoy school. Behaviour in lessons and around the site is satisfactory and improving. Attendance has improved from a low base and is currently at the national average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There were many examples of good and some outstanding teaching observed. However, too much teaching is satisfactory and fails to sufficiently challenge and motivate students and consequently some students make less progress than they should. There is a significant proportion of inadequate teaching in mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving but does not yet match the interests and needs of all students. Links have not been fully developed with post-16 providers to enrich student opportunities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The school has dealt effectively with a number of issues raised in the last inspection report. Self-evaluation has been sharpened. The new headteacher is laying firm foundations for the future and giving the school increased capacity to improve. New appointments have been made to strengthen senior management. The school does not use data to evaluate performance effectively and extract key messages to drive improvement. There remain inconsistencies in the application of quality assurance systems across the range of provision. The school has now a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The sixth form curriculum has become broader and now includes Level 2 and Applied GCE courses; however, it does not yet meet the needs of all students. Few partnerships have been established with other providers to offer a suitable range of curriculum options especially in vocational and work-based skills. Students achieve at the national average for GCE A level and above for GCE AS level. However, too many students fail to achieve their target grades. Guidance and induction procedures are satisfactory. Student progress is tracked with regular feedback on development. Students praise the good relationships they have with staff and the helpful support they receive. Sixth formers play a very positive mentoring role in the 11–16 school. Leadership and management in the sixth form are satisfactory. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is aware of where further improvements can be made.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress at Key Stage 3 and 4 particularly among lower attaining students and those from Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage.
- Improve the quality of a significant amount of satisfactory and some inadequate teaching that does not engage students, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve curriculum choice to match the aspirations and needs of all students.
- Improve the use of data to evaluate the quality of provision.
- Embed rigorous quality assurance systems across the school.

A small proportion of 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**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Attainment on entry is broadly average. In 2007, results for Year 9 students in national tests were below average in science and broadly average in mathematics and English. Students currently in Year 9 are expected to attain broadly average standards in the 2008 national tests. This shows satisfactory progress from starting points in Year 7 but represents some underachievement for some specific groups. In lessons visited in Years 7 to 9 inspectors judged that students made satisfactory progress and good standards of work were observed in English, history, modern foreign languages and media.

Standards have risen significantly over the last three years in terms of GCSE grades A\* to C, and in 2007 these were just below the national average. The percentage of students who achieved five A\* to C grades including mathematics and English has increased significantly from 27% in 2005 to 45% in 2007. Students did particularly well in history, religious education and art. Overall evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of current work, examination work already marked and moderated, and the school's tracking procedures indicate some improvement in progress in 2008. However, there was clear underachievement for some groups of students. Too many students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. Students from a Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage also underachieve. Recent intervention strategies and some improvements to the curriculum are beginning to reduce underachievement but the school recognises that the rate of progress for these groups needs to accelerate. There is underachievement across the school in mathematics because too many lessons in this subject lack challenge and students are not achieving the rate of progress that they should. Students attached to the hearing impaired unit make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Relationships in this large and culturally mixed community are harmonious and friendly and students say they feel safe in school. Students value the opportunity to mix with others of different faiths and cultures and are tolerant of each others' differences. In lessons and around the school behaviour of most students is satisfactory. Students say there are few instances of bullying and that, when they do occur,

they are dealt with appropriately. In lessons where teaching engages and challenges them they clearly enjoy learning and succeeding, but in less interesting lessons students easily become distracted and behaviour deteriorates. A well-planned assembly programme and a strong religious education department contribute to students' ability to reflect on ideas beyond those of the everyday. Art and drama departments contribute to cultural development and there is some sharing of cultures within the school; students say they would like more. Exclusions for unacceptable behaviour have dropped significantly in the last year as a result of focused support for students with significant problems. Students respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities such as mentoring and supporting younger students. Students know about how to lead healthy lives and the school encourages them to do so. Attendance has been a concern in the past but has recently improved and is now average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are examples of good and even outstanding teaching. In these lessons, the pace is lively, teachers are enthusiastic and students are engaged in activities which challenge and motivate them. In one such lesson for example, students were captivated by teaching involving videos and graphics on the topic of slavery. As a result, all students achieved well and behaviour was exemplary. Similarly, there are examples of effective assessment, such as students assessing each others' compositions in music following a clear mark scheme set by the teacher. There are still, however, too many examples of satisfactory and some inadequate teaching. In these lessons, work is often not matched to the students' abilities and sessions are too teacher-led and dominated. As a result, students lose interest and behaviour becomes an issue. There is a high proportion of inadequate teaching in mathematics. In these lessons, teachers have low expectations of students who are not encouraged to develop independent skills and, as a result of poor classroom management, student behaviour deteriorates. Relatively few teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to enhance learning. Homework often lacks imagination or takes the form of repetitive or mundane tasks. Teaching assistants are sometimes used effectively, such as in food technology and in the hearing impaired unit; however, many assistants are not used flexibly enough by teachers to enable them to assist more students. Specialist teaching sessions in the hearing impaired unit are lively and interesting and students respond well in them.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school judges the curriculum to be satisfactory and the inspectors agree.

In Key Stage 3, students receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Additions, such as GCSE astronomy in Year 9, have helped to enhance opportunities for middle and higher achievers. The Key Stage 4 curriculum, whilst it has widened vocational choice and offers a suitable range of other subjects, does not yet provide clear enough routes for pupils of varying abilities. For example, there are limited links with local colleges and, consequently, relatively few opportunities for students to study work-related courses. A number of students benefit from off site provision,

such as that provided by Hunslet Boys' Club. However, for the less academic student there are relatively few choices and the school is aware it now needs to develop more appropriate curriculum choices for these students. Whilst the curriculum provides a satisfactory and improving experience in ICT, students get too little opportunity to use and develop their ICT skills in other lessons. Students benefit from a reasonable range of enrichment activities particularly in sports.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

### **Grade for sixth form: Insufficient Evidence**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has many different systems for supporting students in their personal and academic development. These are well thought out though a number are recently introduced. Some, such as the support for persistent absentees and initiatives for reducing exclusions, have already had a significant impact. Others, such as the project to raise the achievement of Black students are promising in the effect on behaviour and attitudes, but have yet to make a measurable impact on achievement. The school collects a wealth of data, but is not yet analysing it sufficiently to act on the detail of the information. Overall assessment information about students' progress is used to identify individuals needing additional guidance about their progress and provide support. However, there is a need to use it more widely, for example in making decisions about courses and choices. Parents are involved when the school has concerns about a student, but some parents feel insufficiently informed about routine information and some feel the school does not respond to their concerns. The school meets requirements for safeguarding students. Students attached to the hearing impaired unit are welcomed and fully integrated into activities because teachers and students are alert to how they can best be helped.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is making quick progress in a number of areas which had previously been neglected. This resulted from the extended absence of key staff and consequent acting roles for senior leaders. The school was effectively managed but monitoring students' progress and the quality of teaching were given too low a priority. Nonetheless standards have improved, and the school has successfully increased attendance and reduced exclusions. The appointment of a new headteacher has had an immediate impact. His energy, recognition of significant areas for improvement, clarity about the school's potential, and determination to see quick progress on issues has invigorated many staff. Good recent appointments and focused leadership portfolios have improved the capacity of the senior leadership team. However, like middle managers, their ability to track and analyse performance data, and then draw out the key messages to drive improvement, is too variable.

Improved systems for checking what goes on in the classroom are giving a clearer, but still over-optimistic, view of lesson quality. The recent introduction of a tracking system for students' progress in Key Stage 3 has potential but, as with other new initiatives, it is too early to measure its impact. The quality of school self-evaluation has been sharpened and is now satisfactory. School development planning has identified key priorities for improvement. These include a more appropriate curriculum, raising the achievement of some groups such as lower ability

students and Black Caribbean and Pakistani boys, better teaching, and more dynamic leadership at all levels. However, success criteria are too vague and rely too much on resources, training and improved systems rather than measurable steps against which to assess progress.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are aware that, whilst being supportive, they did not challenge the school sufficiently about raising achievement. An effective committee structure is now enabling governors to scrutinise performance with the necessary rigour. There is good financial management but underachievement by some students within the school means that value for money is only satisfactory.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
---	----------------	-------

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
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?	3	IE <sup>2</sup>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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?	3	IE <sup>2</sup>
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	IE <sup>2</sup>

<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.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
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	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

Thank you for your warm welcome to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days at your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to so many of you about your work and interests. We appreciated your improving behaviour.

Your school is now making satisfactory progress. Your new headteacher provides good leadership. The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard because they want you to do the very best you can.

Standards have been satisfactory but the progress of some students has been poor. We found on our visit that they were improving but the speed of that improvement needs to be quickened. You demonstrate enjoyment in your lessons, particularly when you know that you are improving and learning. We would encourage you to continue along this path of improvement. You can play an important part in this by working with your teachers and helping them to improve your work even further.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons you respond well to the teachers' expectations and you make good progress. However, in a number of lessons you are not being given work which actively engages you in learning.

Your curriculum options are satisfactory; however, they do not offer the breadth of opportunities necessary for all of you. You enjoy a satisfactory range of extra activities. The teachers and support staff care for you and give you satisfactory care and guidance.

Your school needs to:

- improve progress at Key Stage 3 and 4 particularly among lower attaining students and those from Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage
- ,improve the quality of a significant amount of satisfactory and some inadequate teaching that does not engage you particularly in mathematics
- improve curriculum choice to match the aspirations and needs of all students
- improve the use of data to evaluate in more detail your performance
- improve consistency of good practice across the school.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you well for your future education.