

Arlies Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106190
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	324345
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	David Halford

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)	233
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	Mrs Sharon Walker
Headteacher	Ms Susan Collins
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Broadhill Road Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 1HQ
Telephone number	0161 338 4854
Fax number	0161 303 9648

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves an area on the outskirts of Stalybridge. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The vast majority are White British and have English as their first language, and the number entitled to free school meals is broadly average. A smaller than average number of pupils have additional learning needs and a very small number have statements of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Year. The two classes were re-housed in the spring term of this school year in newly built accommodation. The school has accreditation for Sportsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools together with EcoSchool Green Flag status. No Year 6 pupils were present in school during the inspection as they were visiting their new schools before taking up their places at the start of Year 7.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where the pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Central to its success is the good leadership and drive of the headteacher who, since the last inspection, has developed a new leadership team with a shared vision for raising standards. They communicate this vision well to their colleagues. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning and they enjoy school immensely. Most parents are equally positive with comments such as, 'My child really enjoys attending school. We have always found staff to be approachable, supportive and committed to the children.'

All pupils achieve well as they pass through the school. Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 and 2, a substantial number of whom entered the Nursery with below average standards particularly in communication skills, are making good progress. By the end of Year 2 standards are just above average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' standards in basic skills are on a steadily rising trend overall. Nevertheless, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as they should be, particularly amongst the higher attaining pupils, because they are not always given enough challenge to write at a higher level. Leaders and managers identify weaker aspects of learning and implement actions to bring about improvement.

Underachievement is swiftly identified and remedied because of the effective systems that monitor pupils' progress closely. These have improved significantly since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good and impacting well on pupils' learning. There are examples of very high quality marking of pupils' work which informs pupils how to improve, but the consistency of this good practice is not yet embedded throughout the school.

Pupils' personal development, their relationships with each other and their behaviour are excellent. Their enjoyment of school is enhanced by the way in which they are encouraged to become independent learners. Pupils told inspectors about how much they enjoyed role-play to improve their writing. This builds their self-confidence, makes their learning relevant and helps them work cooperatively. The curriculum is good and enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities. Frequent opportunities for physical education and nutritious food choices contribute well to pupils adopting outstandingly healthy lifestyles. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils make a very strong contribution to their school community and have many opportunities to take on responsibility. They have good opportunities to make a start on learning a range of foreign languages and they develop good literacy, numeracy and computing skills: these contribute well to their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Good overall progress has been made since the last inspection and can be seen especially the work being done to promote community cohesion. The impact of school leaders and governors in improving attendance, teaching and learning, and standards indicates that the school is providing good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children start school with skills which are generally below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress through the

Nursery and Reception Years and most, though not all, enter Year 1 with skills which are broadly typically for their age in all areas of learning. Teaching is good throughout the setting and leadership and management is also good. The overall welfare of the children is promoted excellently. Good induction procedures, fully involving parents, ensure that children settle happily into their new setting. They adapt well to school routines and quickly gain in independence, for example by self-registering on entry to their teaching areas. They are cared for very well in a secure learning environment and show good attitudes to their learning and behave very well. Planning systems are good. Children clearly enjoy the practical activities provided for them. Because the setting is only recently established, staff are still working on planning to ensure that they cater for the developing needs of the differing age groups now working together. Good use is made of the outside area which provides a good range of learning experiences throughout the day. Much enjoyment was seen during the inspection in outside activities, running under the parachute and caring for the guinea pigs. Assessment systems are good and track carefully the development of each child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking to ensure that pupils know what to do next to make their work better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils enter Year 1 with skills which are broadly typical for their age due to the good provision made for them in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 and standards in reading and mathematics are generally just above average by the end of Year 2, but not quite so advanced in writing. This good overall progress continues through Key Stage 2, where standards in English, mathematics and science have been on a generally rising trend and are now above average. The exception to this is writing, where standards have been rather lower than other subjects over time. Early indications of the 2008/09 results show that standards in each core subject are continuing their overall improvement. However, more attention is still required to improve standards in writing, especially for the higher attaining pupils. Overall, however, the school sets challenging targets and most pupils achieve them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is due to the positive manner in which teachers and teaching assistants modify lessons for them and monitor individual pupils' progress with precision and care.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual and moral development is outstanding because the school takes every opportunity to promote the pupils' self-esteem and assists them to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They learn, very effectively, how to show concern and respect for others and about social and cultural diversity through well-planned work in school and purposeful use of outside agencies. As a result their social development and understanding of other cultures is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm in the work; relationships are excellent and behaviour in and around school is exemplary. They make a very strong contribution to the school community with their positive attitudes and in the manner in which they discharge the responsibilities they undertake. Pupils are confident in school and they show considerable

trust in the adults with whom they work. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is promoted excellently through the provision of healthy food and wide range of physical activities provided. The school works very hard to promote good attendance. Pupils are developing their basic skills and are learning to be good citizens, which contributes well to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is promoting good learning. During the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory and there were examples of outstanding teaching. This overall pattern shows good improvement from when the school was last inspected, and is impacting well on pupils' improving standards and progress. In lessons, teachers make sure pupils know what they need to learn and set interesting tasks which pupils enjoy greatly. This was seen to good effect in a Year 2 class where pupils' understanding of simple number bonds was transferred excellently to an understanding of much larger numbers. Here were skills that promoted high quality enjoyment and effective learning. Teachers are readily aware of gaps in pupils' knowledge; needs are often identified well and provided for promptly. However, the level of challenge to pupils with regard to their writing is sometimes too low. Pupils with specific learning needs receive well-focused help from teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, learners of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Pupils' excellent relationships, attitudes to learning and ability to work independently and collaboratively make a positive contribution to their outstanding personal development and well-being. Within this good overall provision, teachers' marking of pupils' work, while frequent and regular is inconsistent in identifying ways for pupils to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a curriculum of good quality that fully meets statutory requirements. It meets the needs of all pupils well and enables them to make good progress in their learning. It is planned carefully to build on pupils' previous experience and promotes excellent enjoyment in learning. Pupils are encouraged to become active learners and this is seen well in their role-play which is used effectively to improve their writing. It builds their self-confidence and helps them to work cooperatively. There are numerous enrichment activities that help to promote good achievement, including visits to places of interest, a wide range of sporting opportunities and a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre for pupils in Year 6. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development exceptionally well. They learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. There is good provision for pupils to learn skills in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages and to apply those skills to their other subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities and education for health and well-being is excellent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers and other adults are strongly committed to promoting pupils' health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government guidelines and are regularly reviewed. The school provides a safe and warmly supportive

environment where all pupils have equal opportunity to learn. As a result, pupils are well informed about their challenging targets and most make good progress in reaching them. Pupils at risk of underachieving are identified early through thorough and accurate assessment. This information is used well to plan learning that meets their needs. The school works well with parents to keep them informed and aware of what pupils are learning and how well they are progressing. The marking of pupils' work is effective in acknowledging achievement and giving praise, but marking to show pupils the next steps and how they could improve their work is not delivered consistently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection there has been change in the senior leadership of the school. From the current school year the headteacher has established a team of senior leaders who are confident, capable and share a collective vision of purposeful improvement. This view is shared well by colleagues, many of whom have adapted successfully to change and development. As a result of these changes the school's self-evaluation is accurate, pupils' standards are rising and achievement is good. Monitoring systems to check on school improvement and pupils' progress have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. Governance is good. This is because governors are well-informed, knowledgeable about school improvement, know which areas of work are being developed and what needs to be developed further. As a result, they are well placed to hold the school to account. The school has very strong links with its local community and is promoting community cohesion well. Links with the wider community are being established, but there is more to do nationally and internationally. The school is successfully promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination effectively and this results in all groups of pupils making good progress.

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

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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	2
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 Arlies Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 1HQ

My colleague and I really enjoyed our recent inspection of your school. Thank you very much for your warm welcome, and for looking after us so well. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around the school. Particular thanks should go to everyone who spoke with us and who helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much.

Arlies Primary School is a good and improving school, with some really interesting work taking place. I think the way your school provides for your personal development and well-being is outstanding. The staff care for you all well and make sure you feel safe and secure. I think that the way your headteacher and her staff manage your school is good. I shall remember running under the parachute with the boys and girls in the Early Years Foundation Stage, my time spent with Year 2, trying to make numbers add up to a hundred, and reading some of Year 6's writing.

When I visit schools I also look for things that will help each school to get even better. At the moment, while I think the standards you attain in your work are good, I would like you to have more opportunities to develop your writing, especially for those boys and girls who find writing easy. I have also asked your teachers to try to be more consistent when they mark your work in giving you a clear picture of what you need to do to improve it.

Thank you once again for all your help on this visit to your school. My colleague and I send you all our very best wishes for the future, especially those boys and girls who are going to High School soon. We do hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do at the moment.