

Hillside Community First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113683
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357394
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Diment
Headteacher	Roger Withey
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and a small number of parents and carers bringing their children to school were also spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 113 parents and carers, 70 pupils and 18 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How good progress and attainment are in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of strategies for raising attendance levels.
- The governing body's and subject leaders' contribution to monitoring and development work.
- The effectiveness of community cohesion in raising pupils' awareness of diversity in the wider community.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with very few speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. These are mainly associated with speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards. A pre-school and before- and after-school clubs share the site. These are run by private providers and were not inspected.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hillside Community is a good school. It has improved well since its last inspection and continues to do so. Provision is good and pupils achieve well. By the time pupils leave, attainment is above the levels expected for their age, exceptionally so in English, and pupils are well prepared for the future. The provision for Reception children is outstanding and gives them an excellent start to their education.

Recent improvements are largely due to the headteacher's inspirational leadership and his exceptional management skills. The whole school community share his vision and commitment and they work effectively together to drive forward improvement, including members of the governing body and subject leaders. Very rigorous and comprehensive systems guide the school's work, most notably in the excellent arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils. Good self-evaluation ensures weaknesses are speedily identified and addressed. These strengths underpin the school's good capacity to improve further. Much has been done to improve English where pupils' progress is excellent. Addressing mathematics is now a major priority with improvements already evident, especially in basic numeracy. However, the lack of opportunities to use these skills in investigations, including in other subjects, limits attainment, especially of the more-able pupils.

Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum help pupils learn well. Pupils love coming to school and have excellent attitudes to learning. Regular and supportive monitoring of teaching ensures a consistent and effective approach to important features such as the setting of challenging learning objectives and behaviour management. A few outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection, but in a minority, the pace was rather slow and teachers did not regularly check on how well pupils were doing, which limited their progress. The very good use of pupils' personal targets inspires them to do well, but in mathematics and science marking rarely indicates how their work can be improved. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and vulnerable pupils receive very good support. As a result, these pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve as well as their peers. Enhanced procedures to promote good attendance have raised levels over the past year, although a few parents and carers still do not recognise the importance of regular attendance.

Pupils' personal development is a strength, resulting in excellent behaviour and outstanding awareness of how to live a healthy and safe lifestyle. Pupils feel very safe in school, being totally confident their concerns are dealt with speedily by staff. The school's commitment to community cohesion is evident in the very harmonious relationships within the school and local community, and pupils' secure understanding of global diversity. Pupils' knowledge of the different religious and cultural groups in this country is limited, but activities are in place to address this.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress in mathematics to match that seen in English through providing more opportunities for pupils to carry out mathematical investigations, including in other subjects.
- Increase the number of outstanding lessons to at least 30% by December 2011 through ensuring that:
 - a rigorous pace is maintained throughout all activities
 - adults question and probe pupils regularly to check their progress in order to readjust learning or set new challenges
 - when marking pupils' work, provide advice on how to improve, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Build on and extend the procedures in place to promote good attendance and ensure that all parents and carers recognise the importance of this.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils greatly enjoy school and work hard. Reception children get off to an excellent start as the result of the high-quality provision. Attainment on entry is average and children's outstanding progress ensures it is high by the end of the year. Progress across other year groups is good and is excellent in English. Pupils' knowledge of the sounds in words is outstanding and Year 2 pupils read at levels well above those normally seen for their age. Year 4 pupils quickly comprehend what they are reading and greatly enjoy stories. Writing skills are exceptionally good, with Year 2 pupils using especially good vocabulary to make their stories come alive. By Year 4, pupils write confidently in a range of different formats such as poetry or play scripts. Their newspaper reports, for example on 'The Evil Cat Groomer', use alliteration or similes very effectively. Their work is exceptionally well presented, with excellent handwriting and use of punctuation. Basic numeracy skills develop very well so that, by the end of Year 2, a majority of pupils confidently work with hundreds, tens and units and use standard measures accurately. By Year 4, pupils work accurately with negative numbers and measurements to the nearest thousandth. Lesson activities provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills well in problems set by their teachers. However, the lack of opportunities to use these in a wide range of investigations limits the number of pupils reaching high levels in this subject.

Pupils are courteous and helpful, behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school, and show a strong ability to reflect on important issues. They enjoy taking part in local arts and music activities and learning about other cultures, although their awareness of cultural diversity in this country is limited. Pupils' commitment to their own and others' healthy lifestyles is excellent, with a considerable number enthusiastically taking part in sports activities. Pupils' skills at maintaining their own safety and looking out for the safety of others are outstanding. Pupils willingly take on responsibility as school councillors or play leaders and recognise ways in which they can help improve the local area.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Staff have developed a well-organised and imaginative curriculum that provides effective opportunities for academic and personal development. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted especially well. Outstanding programmes for learning letter sounds and helping pupils develop a wide range of effective vocabulary support attainment in reading and writing exceptionally well. The very well designed programme of work and consistent approach to teaching numeracy skills have improved progress in mathematics. The considerable number of activities for writing in a range of subjects help encourage high attainment in English, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. A good range of clubs and themed weeks or special days, such as that when pupils became detectives to 'help solve a crime', support learning and enjoyment well. The programme for pupils' personal development is very good, especially for pupils in Reception and Year 1 where 'Let's Explore' helps pupils become independent learners. The school has yet to introduce the same strategies in other classes.

A very positive learning ethos and excellent relationships with staff help teachers ensure that pupils are consistently motivated and engaged. However, occasionally, pupils sit too long listening to the teacher, limiting opportunities for group or independent work. Well-planned lessons provide challenging activities that consistently meet individual pupils' needs. Well-focused support from teaching assistants ensures pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, help enhance learning. Detailed feedback at the end of lessons ensures pupils recognise how well they are progressing towards their targets, although a small minority of staff miss opportunities to check on progress throughout lessons. Work is very well marked in English, although less so in other subjects.

The attention to pupils' safety and welfare is excellent and pupils are well cared for. Very focused support is provided for the most vulnerable pupils which has had a positive effect on their learning and attitudes to school. Admission and transfer arrangements are very good. Strengthened procedures have improved attendance, although, at average levels, they do not reflect pupils' great enjoyment of school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully instituted devolved leadership where all staff and the governing body contribute effectively to monitoring and development work. Strong support from the two assistant headteachers means important responsibilities are shared. Very thorough systems for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of provision have helped improve the quality of teaching and provided comprehensive information to ensure accurate self-evaluation and good development planning. There is a clear understanding of where weaker aspects remain, with effective plans already in place to address them. These strengths put the school in a good position to improve further.

The governing body is influential in steering the school's work. Individual governors provide very good support in important areas such as the care of vulnerable pupils. Consultation with parents and carers is very good. They benefit from a highly positive relationship with the school, are kept well informed about their children's progress and receive good support to help with homework. A range of effective partnerships with local schools and organisations support pupils' education and welfare. In particular, liaison with the local pre-school and East Dorset Schools Partnership is especially effective.

Safeguarding is a significant strength. Systems and procedures are clearly established and rigorously adhered to. Senior staff are extremely vigilant, fulfilling their roles in this respect exceptionally well and receiving excellent support from the governing body. The school's commitment to individual pupils is evident in the fact that any discrimination is tackled effectively and that provision ensures equality of opportunity is met well. The audit and analysis of community cohesion indicates that within the school and local community this is good. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom is underdeveloped and this is a priority in current development planning.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children benefit greatly from the highly stimulating environment and the support of very skilled practitioners who have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Outstanding liaison with the local pre-school helps ensure induction is very effective so that children settle quickly, thoroughly enjoying school and making outstanding progress across all areas of learning. A great deal of thought has been put in to providing resources and setting up activities that engage children's interest and help them to learn easily. For example, children are encouraged to make up a story about the toy farm and animals, explain this to an adult, then plan and write a story about it. This is one reason why writing skills are high throughout the school. Children learn to count numbers and compare quantities in imaginative ways, for example through playing with teddies or investigating why they have two eyes and ears, but one nose and ten fingers and toes. As a result, they develop numeracy skills very quickly. Their personal and social development is outstanding, helping to ensure behaviour is excellent and that children can work equally well independently or in a group. Their listening skills and powers of concentration are exceptionally good, preparing them very well for Year 1.

All adults who work in Reception have excellent skills of monitoring what children are doing, making very thorough assessments of their achievements and using the information exceptionally well to plan new activities. Adult-led tasks are always exciting and very challenging, with a rigorous pace allowing children to cover a lot of ground. The monitoring of independent learning is excellent, with an adult always on hand to make some observation or ask an important question that quickly moves children on to the next stage of learning.

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The provision benefits from excellent leadership and management, the commitment of all Reception staff and senior leaders helping to ensure that its high quality remains during the absence of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the school. Those who wrote in or spoke to inspectors were impressed by the improvements made since the last inspection, praising the headteacher and commitment of staff. Almost all parents and carers feel the school is well led and managed. They are totally confident that their children are kept safe and learn to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. They feel very well informed about their children's progress, are confident that their needs are met and that children are well prepared for the future. Inspection evidence supports these views. A very small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Inspection evidence shows that very robust procedures are in place to deal with this, ensuring that behaviour is excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	79	23	20	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	81	23	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	67	59	47	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	81	72	31	27	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	81	72	30	27	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	83	73	29	26	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	74	30	27	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	75	66	36	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	64	39	35	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	48	51	45	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	53	48	42	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	89	79	22	19	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	77	24	21	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillside Community First School, Verwood BH31 7HE

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their time to talk to us. We think yours is a good school and are delighted that you and your parents and carers think so too.

Here are some of the things we found out were especially good about the school.

- You achieve well and attainment is above that seen in most schools. The levels you attain in English are high. We are very impressed by the quality of reading and writing we saw.
- Children in Reception get off to an excellent start and make outstanding progress.
- You enjoy school very much, behave exceptionally well and have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle.
- Adults take exceptionally good care of you and you feel very safe in school.
- Staff plan interesting activities that help you to do well and teaching is good.
- We agree with you and your parents and carers that you have an especially good headteacher. Together with staff and members of the governing body, he has helped your school to improve well, and they are working hard to help it improve further.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English by giving you more opportunities to do investigations where you can use your mathematical skills. You can help by continuing to work hard at this.
- Make sure that teachers keep a check on your progress throughout lessons and, when marking your work in mathematics, show you how to improve.
- Help attendance levels to keep on rising. All of you can help by making sure you always come to school unless there is a very good reason not to.

Yours sincerely

Di Wilkinson

Lead inspector

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