

Hill Avenue Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104326
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	355561
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Byrne
Headteacher	Suzanne Webster-Smith
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. A total of 13 lessons were observed and 11 teachers permanently employed at the school were seen. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body, and school partners. Inspectors received a total of 108 completed parental questionnaires and spent time talking to parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, teachers' assessments, policies and procedures, the curriculum and the school's improvement plans.

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

- How effective and accurate are the school's assessment and tracking systems at matching work to the needs of pupils throughout the school and what steps have been taken to stem the decline and improve the progress of all pupils in Key Stage 1?
- Does teaching address the needs of all groups of pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on School Action Plus and those with English as an additional language?
- How effective are leaders and managers at all levels in identifying and driving through priorities in order to improve the performance of all pupils?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school and pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and rising, as is the proportion in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A new headteacher was appointed in 2010. As part of the school's continuous commitment to improvement, it has secured awards for its work, including Healthy Schools status in 2009, and Sports Active Mark in 2008. The school has also received a local authority Quality Mark for its work in promoting information and communication technology in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is rapidly improving. Strong and trusting relationships have been developed with parents and carers. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that children enjoy school. Effective two-way communication results in good continuity of care for children as they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, the school gives the children a good start to their education. The particular attention the school pays to pupils' health and safety and their enjoyment in coming to school contribute significantly to the improving outcomes.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, because the quality of teaching is also satisfactory overall. The detailed assessment processes to inform pupils' learning are not yet consistently well implemented throughout the school and there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. Teachers plan skilfully, adapting and refining activities so that most pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons. In the most effective lessons, pupils show excitement and enjoyment of their learning and make good progress. For instance, in a Year 5 English lesson pupils were totally engrossed, using notes to plan a storyboard, and the plenary session was used well to review pupils' progress in the lesson.

Recent changes in the leadership of the school have resulted in significant improvements. The school is led well by the recently appointed headteacher, who is committed to driving through improvements in the school. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's weaknesses, though it modestly underestimates the progress of the school in key aspects of leadership, provision and outcomes. The governing body makes a strong contribution to the work of the school. It successfully ensures that school policies, systems and procedures are carefully checked for compliance. The monitoring and evaluation activities carried out by senior and middle leaders are rigorous and focused on securing improved outcomes for pupils. Actions taken to secure greater consistency in teaching and learning are having some success; lessons observed during the inspection showed most pupils made good progress in lessons. However, because pupils' learning experiences and curriculum activities in different classes are uneven, there is still some variation in the amount of progress pupils achieve each year. Similarly, some recent initiatives, such as a new marking policy have not yet been monitored and evaluated carefully enough to ensure they are having the desired impact on pupils' learning, and the teacher assessment systems are not yet firmly embedded.

Most pupils in Year 6 reach the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics. The school's increasingly accurate assessment and tracking systems are enabling teachers to monitor pupils' progress carefully, to give extra support to those in danger of falling behind. This focused approach, which is showing success at raising pupils' outcomes, demonstrates that the school's capacity to improve is good.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment and continue to accelerate progress throughout the school by:
 - setting challenging targets to raise pupils' achievement
 - improving the consistency and frequency of good teaching and learning by January 2012
 - ensuring that good quality marking is applied consistently and identifies clearly what pupils need to do next to improve their learning
 - providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own learning and contribute to their individual learning targets
 - ensuring that all pupils benefit from an imaginative curriculum that contributes to and supports good outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment is average overall. The effective arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children move on to Key Stage 1 well prepared for their next steps in learning. However, their progress slows in Key Stage 1. By the time pupils reach the end of school their achievement is satisfactory. Inspectors observed high levels of pupils' engagement, enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning where teaching was most effective. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils worked well discussing with their learning partners number sequencing using decimal points. Pupils made good progress in the lesson because of the effective use of different activities based on pupils' learning needs. There is no discernable difference in the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their peers. However, pupils with English as an additional language make better progress overall because of the good support they receive in lessons to develop their linguistic ability.

Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous; their behaviour is consistently good. The use of learning partners not only helps pupils in their learning but also supports the development of supportive and trusting relationships within the school. In school, pupils take on a number of roles, such as peer supporters, lunchtime helpers and becoming members of the school council. Pupils are proud of their school and their involvement in the community. Pupils take an active role in charity fundraising and take part in a range of fun days and events to raise money for good causes. Members of the choir regularly sing in events in the community. Residential visits are much enjoyed by pupils and are used to extend their learning and understanding of the wider world. Through the curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is supported by the increased take up of school lunches. They say they feel safe and that adults look after them. Pupils have good opportunities for reflection and their spiritual and cultural development is positively nurtured.

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There is an improving picture of pupils' attendance which is now average. The school engages positively with parents and carers to promote consistent attendance. This effort, along with working in partnership with the education welfare officer and the introduction of initiatives to promote pupils' attendance, is reaping benefit. School rewards for consistent high levels of attendance are cherished by the pupils and valued by their families.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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?

Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Leaders' clear and challenging expectations of teaching and learning are known and understood by all staff. Teachers have good subject knowledge and planning is consistently applied across the school. Pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language, receive well targeted support. Careful attention is paid to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the school monitors the effectiveness of additional support as well as pupils' progress. The learning environments are well organised and resourced. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) including interactive whiteboards to aid teaching. The provision of ICT, particularly opportunities for pupils to develop their computer skills, has increased their confidence in using and applying their skills across the curriculum.

A detailed assessment system has been in use at the school for only a short time. Where assessments are well managed they are used to inform planning for the pupils' next steps

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in learning and activities are flexible and provide sufficient challenge. However, the new assessment processes and improvements to teaching to support learning are not yet sufficiently embedded to secure good outcomes for most pupils. Progress targets set by teachers are not consistently challenging to ensure good achievement for pupils. The quality of marking in pupils' workbooks is variable throughout the school. The best quality marking includes specific guidance to the pupils on what they need to do next to progress in their learning but this is not evident in the majority of pupils' books.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and adequately matched to pupils' needs although some topics are more exciting than others. In consultation with pupils, extra-curricular activities have been extended and include football coaching with Wolverhampton Wanderers team members, and active sports with the local academy school. The extra-curricular provision is developing in an effort to ensure that the curriculum becomes even more imaginative and enriches pupils' experiences further.

The school is a caring and pupil-friendly environment that supports learning well. Partnerships with other agencies are very effective and result in good quality care and support for all pupils and their families, particularly those who are identified as needing additional support. Case studies show that pupils are accurately identified and assessed for additional support. Positive input by teachers and assistants and effective interagency partnerships ensure that all pupils who need additional help receive timely and appropriate support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Significant improvements have been made within the school under the effective strong leadership of the new headteacher and with the support of the committed senior leadership team. The governing body are actively involved in all aspects of the school's governance and hold the school to account well. They provide ongoing support and guidance, attend school regularly and take a keen interest in outcomes for pupils and their learning. Members of the governing body take the role of challenging and assessing the work of the school against the school's improvement plan to good effect. Leaders and managers at all levels share commitment, vision and ambition for the school. The headteacher and senior leadership team all share high expectations and work well together to secure the support of staff to drive through improvements. Most of the specified areas for improvement are realistic and challenging and have explicit expectations designed to improve outcomes for pupils.

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Leaders and managers take health and safety, risk assessments and safeguarding issues very seriously. Pupils who have a peer supporter's role receive briefing on child protection to support them and heighten their awareness of issues such as bullying. This innovative approach has helped to reduce incidents of bullying to a minimum. The single central record is extremely well maintained. Pupils, parents and carers agree and are confident that concerns raised will be taken seriously by the school and dealt with appropriately.

The school is fully inclusive and promotes equal opportunity well and positive steps are taken to address discrimination. Pupils are taught to develop respect for themselves, others, staff, the school and the wider community. Every child accesses the whole curriculum and early identification and extra help supports pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties. Community cohesion is a priority of the school. The leaders instil confidence that all pupils and their families are fully included within the school. Pupils' behaviour reflects the motto 'respect for all'. The school promotes an understanding of the local community and the wider world through assemblies, involvement in national charities, and the development of the school as a Fairtrade school. Pupils develop an understanding of disability through their links with a local charity for the blind.

'International week' provided pupils with a wide range of positive experiences to explore other cultures as well as their own and understand their place in the wider world. Activities involved music, drama, dance and art across the whole school. Effective partnerships and collaborations with partner agencies ensure that pupils from minority ethnic groups are well-integrated within the school community. Links with local schools and private childcare providers have continued but links with other schools nationally are limited.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start Nursery, their skills are below those expected for their age. They make good progress because staff have a good understanding of how young children develop and learn and plan exciting and challenging activities for the children. The Forest School is a welcome addition to the curriculum and provides exciting and challenging opportunities for children to extend their learning and have confidence in the outdoor environment. Teachers make good use of data and assessments to plan children's next steps in learning. The school has developed its tracking information to identify areas of learning where there is underachievement. Staff work closely together to ensure that the children make good progress. By the time they leave Reception, most are working securely within the early learning goals. Children behave consistently well and form good and trusting relationships with each other and with adults.

Teachers carefully observe and record children's achievements in individual learning journeys. They use this information to plan activities tailored to children's varying needs and abilities. Activities provided for children encourage them to develop their imagination, stimulate their curiosity and encourage experimentation. Children were engrossed in tree rubbing in the Forest School and tree bark painting and printing indoors as part of their explorations of the natural world. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and children's welfare is appropriately maintained.

Good leadership has led to significant improvement in provision during the past year. The school knows where further improvements can be made. Effective links are developed with parents and carers through good communication and regular meetings. Transition arrangements are sensitive to the needs of the children and are well-planned. Strong links with local childcare providers help children to move from playgroup or childminder into the Nursery and settle quickly.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school and hold the work of the headteacher and teachers in high regard. These views were confirmed by the parents and carers met during the inspection. A few parents and carers have made it known that they would appreciate more regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. This was discussed with the headteacher (while preserving anonymity) who has noted the requests.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hill Avenue Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 333 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	59	44	40	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	48	55	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	32	68	61	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	36	62	56	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	37	62	56	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	37	59	53	7	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	45	55	50	2	2	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)	32	29	58	52	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	31	64	58	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	23	75	68	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	29	75	68	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	48	52	47	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	50	52	47	1	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hill Avenue Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV4 6PY.

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors. We really enjoyed our two days at Hill Avenue Primary School. I particularly enjoyed the Early Years Foundation Stage activities, the development of the Forest School and the topic work children were doing based on the book 'The Gruffalo'. The children were having a lot of fun retelling the story through pictures, writing and drawing and were making good use of laptops and electronic learning tools to record their work. We also thoroughly enjoyed your singing in assemblies which one inspector described as 'beautiful'. We were impressed with your behaviour throughout the school. Thank you all for being so kind, friendly and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

After watching all of you learning in lessons, looking at your work and talking to staff, we decided that you are receiving a satisfactory education.

The good things about your school are that you feel safe and the emphasis on 'respect for all' is evident throughout the school and helps you to make good friendships with each other. Your school is well-maintained and welcoming. The Nursery and Reception classes provide good quality care and learning and help children to be well prepared for school.

We have asked the school to make sure that every one of you makes good progress and learns as much as you can.

We have asked the senior leaders to ensure that:

- teachers help you to make consistently good progress across all year groups by making sure that teaching is consistently good and that teachers explain clearly to you your next steps in learning
- you are supported in your progress by challenging targets which you are involved in agreeing
- the activities and topics included in the curriculum are consistently exciting and challenging and provide you with good opportunities to develop your learning and lead to good progress.

Your headteacher, teachers and the governing body are working well to make the school even better. You can help too by working hard in every lesson and by taking great pride in all of your work. I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Udakis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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