

Hillside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124024
Local Authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	359564
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Derek Gray
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Baddeley
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons and saw eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff members, pupils, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's assessments, pupils' work, evidence of monitoring the school's progress and development, and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. One hundred and forty-six questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised as well as a sample of pupils' questionnaires and those returned by members of staff.

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

- Whether the school is promoting good progress especially in boys' writing.
- What the impact is of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' progress and achievement.
- Are new management structures firmly embedded and contributing to good improvement?

Information about the school

Almost all pupils in this average-sized primary school are White British. A very small minority are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has recently achieved Healthy Schools status and Activemark. It is also recognised as a 'Bike-it' school. The school provides a breakfast club on site for pupils. The headteacher was appointed in 2008, shortly after the previous inspection.

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

Leaders have built well on the good improvement seen at the previous inspection. Dedicated work by the governing body and staff members, with strong leadership from the headteacher, has brought about significant improvements in key areas. Consequently, Hillside has progressed from a satisfactory to a good school.

Children's learning and development get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points broadly typical for their age on entering Nursery. They make good progress and are prepared well for their following stages of learning. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 has improved significantly in the past two years and is consistently good. This is due to more effective systems for checking progress, and better use being made of assessment information. Pupils' attainment has also risen. Standards seen in pupils' current and previous English and mathematics work are above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Individual learning programmes, along with skilled and sensitive support from staff, ensure their good progress. Teaching and learning are consistently good as a result of rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation. There is some outstanding practice, but this is not shared effectively enough across all classes in order to raise the quality further. The curriculum is lively and varied. It gives pupils good opportunities to practise skills in a creative way and encourages their independence. Their enjoyment of learning and their good achievements in art, music and sports, for example, are a good reflection of the impact of teaching and the curriculum overall.

Pupils' good learning and progress are underpinned by their outstanding behaviour and attitudes. Attendance is high and pupils are punctual. Pupils are proud of their school and their willingness to take on responsibilities adds to its smooth running. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered. They are very mindful of one another and have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures.

The school has effective links with parents and carers as well as other partners who provide support for the curriculum. However, while parents and carers views are generally positive, the school recognises that a small minority have concerns, mostly about the quality of communications they have with the school over a range of issues.

The impact of the headteacher's leadership has been considerable, particularly in driving up levels of attainment and accelerating progress. Leaders have worked effectively to strengthen teaching and implement rigorous strategies to check the accuracy of their assessments. Senior and middle managers fulfil a crucial role in planning for improvement and evaluating the quality of the school's work. The curriculum has improved and good standards of care have been maintained. Staff, and members of the governing body, share

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an accurate view of the school's progress and amply demonstrate good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - sharing existing outstanding practice across the whole school and evaluating the impact
 - ensuring that the quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking in all subjects matches that seen in literacy.
- Strengthen communication with parents and carers so that all are fully informed about the work of the school, its intentions and its successes.¿

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' excellent behaviour and attentiveness in lessons make a major contribution to their good learning and rate of progress. They enjoy lessons, work hard and achieve well. Pupils are expected to show independence and initiative and usually rise to the occasion by working collaboratively to plan work or solve problems. They enjoy challenges and are quick to spot and explain, in mathematics for example, when something 'goes wrong'. Pupils use the range of resources available to them effectively and are especially keen to use laptops to help their learning.

Progress has gathered pace, quite rapidly, since 2008. The school's assessment data clearly indicate that there are no underachieving groups and that the good progress of all pupils is likely to be sustained. There is a rising trend in attainment at the end of Year 6. Above average standards were evident in 2010 by way of accurate school assessments and rigorous comparisons made with the work of pupils in other high achieving schools. Scrutiny of current work during the inspection supports this picture of above average attainment. The school has successfully eliminated the gap between girls' and boys' attainment in writing. This was done by adjusting the curriculum to include topics which stimulate boys' imagination and introducing more role-play opportunities into all classrooms. In the Year 6 classroom, for example, a model Tardis has been the focus of much attention and a springboard for good writing from both boys and girls.

Relationships between pupils are excellent. They respect one another and have the deepest respect for others' varying cultural backgrounds. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they are confident of the help and support of adults when they need it. Pupils contribute well to school life through their work on the school council and other leadership roles such as house captains, librarians or taking charge of displays of achievement awards. They have good awareness of what it means to eat sensibly and to maintain fitness. A successful project has resulted in the school's 'Bike-it' bronze award. A significant number of pupils cycle to school following their work with local residents, parents and carers as well as promoting their idea in a local radio broadcast. There are good opportunities for enterprise activities and these, combined with pupils' excellent attendance and personal behaviour leave them well placed as future members of a community.

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Lessons are planned well and made interesting for pupils by good choices of topics and resources to help learning. Teachers use various methods and approaches but there is scope for sharing the best skills across the whole school. In the best lessons, pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and teachers' skilful questioning clarifies pupils' understanding and paves the way for new learning. Independence and resourcefulness are expected and there is a quick pace to learning as pupils become absorbed in their work. All teachers' day-to-day assessment through marking is good in literacy books and provides good pointers for improvement. This quality is not always matched in other subjects, meaning that pupils do not clearly understand how well they perform across the whole curriculum. Effective use is made of electronic whiteboards and laptops. Relationships are strong and pupils feel that their contribution to lessons is valued. Consequently, they are attentive and willing to share ideas openly. Teachers maintain high expectations and there is a lively pace to learning. Teaching assistants are a valuable part of the teaching team. They use their skills and knowledge of pupils well to support learning in a wide range of contexts.

Pupils gain a good deal of enjoyment from the curriculum which enables them to achieve well. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across subjects. A notable feature of the ongoing curriculum development is the way in which pupils select a weekly

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homework topic from a range of tasks covering different subjects. They use all resources available to them such as ICT and photographs, as well as their own writing and drawings, to present their work neatly and imaginatively. This system of encouraging independent work has proved popular with pupils and parents. The curriculum is enriched well by visits and visitors to school and there is a high level of interest in the good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs.

Parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are well cared for in school. The support which the school provides for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable is exceptional. All staff are aware of pupils' particular needs and circumstances and every measure is taken to ensure that they are included and achieve alongside others. Arrangements for induction to the school are very supportive and the school is actively improving those for transferring pupils to Year 7. Pupils' personal development outcomes are a clear measure of the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. The well-attended breakfast club gives pupils a good start to the day and puts parents' and carers' minds at rest in the knowledge that their children are safe in 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 been a driving force in developing leadership and management skills at all levels since the previous inspection. The impact of this drive is now evident in the significantly improved teaching, attainment and pupils' progress. Astute appointments have strengthened senior leadership, and subject leaders routinely check on the quality and standards in their areas of responsibility. All staff members understand how they are accountable and work collectively to bring about further improvements. The governing body provides good support and challenge in equal measure. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are wholly committed to its future success. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. Systems are reviewed regularly and improvements made where they are seen to be needed. All staff and pupils are aware of the need to be vigilant and of their responsibilities. The school vigorously challenges all forms of discrimination and promotes community cohesion strongly so that pupils are well informed about the positive contribution that people from different cultural backgrounds make to their own and other communities. Leaders are equally ambitious for every pupil in the school and work hard to ensure that each one has the opportunities needed to achieve their personal best.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children's good learning and development. Children start Nursery class with variable skills, which overall, are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of Reception, almost all are working securely within their early learning goals in all areas of learning. There is a good balance in the curriculum between activities led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well and the good focus on teaching letters and sounds means that children attempt early reading and writing confidently. Nevertheless, the arrangement of teaching the whole class the same letters and sounds, especially for Reception age children, does not always recognise varying rates of progress and the different challenges needed within the class. Exciting independent activities engage children well. They particularly enjoy role play in the 'ambulance' and the sensation of dipping their hands into a tray full of shaving foam. Good use is made of the outdoor area, where children follow up classroom activities through exploration and play. Provision for children's welfare is good. Staff are very watchful over the well-being of those in their care and monitor their development carefully. Continuous observation informs teachers' assessments and provides a good basis for planning next steps in children's learning. Parents and carers are very supportive and appreciate the opportunities they have to work with staff and share in the process of their children's learning and development.

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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

A large majority of parents' and carers' questionnaires were returned. Overall, the views expressed were very supportive. Parents who attended a meeting with inspectors were entirely supportive of the school and some were particularly complimentary about the care shown to pupils who need additional help with their learning. A small minority raised concerns, largely linked to communications with the school about the strategies used for supporting pupils' academic and/or personal development and the outcomes achieved. These were noted by inspectors and discussed with school leaders during the inspection. The school agrees that communications can be improved further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hillside 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	97	66	47	32	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	79	28	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	83	57	59	40	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	62	49	34	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	99	68	44	30	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	64	48	33	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	59	55	38	4	3	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	51	60	41	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	85	58	57	39	3	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	75	51	64	44	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	68	47	69	47	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	95	65	48	33	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	68	41	28	3	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 Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 7AS

Thank you for making me and the other inspectors feel so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and all of the exciting things happening such as your dance and choir performances, as well as your recent successful performance of Jack and the Beanstalk. We were very impressed with your outstanding behaviour and attendance. Well done! They are very important and so do keep up those excellent achievements. We were also impressed by the quality of some of your homework.

Hillside is a good school. You make good progress and achieve well. The standards you reach in English and mathematic are above average. You also do well in art, music and sport. We agree with you that your lessons are fun and your teachers work hard to make them so. You have good opportunities to learn in an exciting way, and the grown-ups in school help you to do that by taking such good care of you.

Your teachers, parents and carers, and school governors are just as proud of your school as you are and, like you I am sure, would like it to be even better. To help that happen we have asked your teachers to work together to make more of your lessons outstanding and to mark all of your work as well as they do in your literacy books so you know how well you are doing in other subjects. We have also asked school leaders to make sure that all parents and carers are kept fully informed about the school's work, about how it intends to help pupils and what it does well.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead inspector

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