

Hill Top Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107823
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	363730
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2011
Reporting inspector	David Matthews

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Frances Woolston
Headteacher	Mr Duncan Grant
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the school's tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning. Questionnaires received from 83 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The current level of attainment of Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of mathematics teaching.
- The level of challenge for the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics.
- The extent to which the mathematics curriculum supports pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of the strategies for the care, guidance and support of the more-able pupils.
- The expectations set by leadership and management for the more-able pupils.

Information about the school

The very large majority of pupils at this average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities are both below average.

Significant staff changes since the last inspection include a new headteacher, new deputy headteacher and a restructured leadership team. The school has Healthy School status, the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard and the Activemark.

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

This is a good school. Most children join the Nursery class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Good teaching and effective care, guidance and support, combined with a good curriculum, result in their good progress through the school and above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Pupils of differing abilities make good progress overall, and achieve well, although the progress of more-able pupils in lessons is not always consistently good. The school's effective senior leaders are keenly tackling any uneven progress in this inclusive school, and gaps between the attainment of different groups of pupils are closing quickly. As a result, more pupils are reaching the higher levels in mathematics and English and currently, standards in Year 6 in these subjects are above average. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It is very supportive, asks challenging questions and has been influential in restructuring the senior leadership team. It is less influential in some other aspects of the school's work.

Strong pastoral care enables the pupils to feel extremely safe. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a very positive contribution to their personal development so that they contribute fully to the school community, adopt healthy lifestyles and behave well. Positive links with parents and carers result in high rates of attendance and the school being generally well regarded by them. Effective partnerships with other organisations strongly support pupils' learning and well-being.

Self-evaluation is effective and the school's judgments about the quality of its work are accurate. Significant staff changes at senior leadership level since the last inspection have been sensitively managed. The headteacher has galvanised staff so that there is strong teamwork and a corporate desire to improve learning. The school has effectively addressed the issue concerning writing standards, raised at the last inspection. All of these elements, together with the implementation of a rigorous programme to develop the accuracy of assessment procedures and the developing impact of a relatively new, yet determined, governing body provide the school with good capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the progress of the more-able pupils in lessons is always consistently good by:
 - providing sufficient challenge for these pupils in all lessons
 - making sure all teachers have a high degree of confidence in accurately assessing the attainment of these pupils

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- making sure that school leaders give a sharper focus to the evaluation of the progress of more-able pupils when observing lessons and in pupil progress meetings.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - fully and systematically involving it in identifying the school's priorities for development
 - rigorously involving it in monitoring the use of information on pupils' progress to inform actions
 - fully engaging it in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, show good attitudes to their learning and achieve well. By listening carefully to adults and to their peers, they show that they want to learn. They respond politely to teachers' questions and generally enjoy learning. Variations in levels of enthusiasm reflect minor differences in the quality of teaching. Despite these variations in enthusiasm, pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good learning. Pupils' friendliness, respect and courtesy are key elements of their good, and sometimes outstanding, behaviour.

Throughout the school, pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. There are no significant variations in the performance of different groups over time and the school has improved the percentages of pupils attaining at the highest levels in mathematics and English at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Until recently, this has been a relative weaker element. The school is rightly aware of the need to monitor the progress of more-able pupils closely to sustain these improvements.

Pupils say they feel safe at school at all times, including the arrangements for responding to emergencies, such as fire, among their reasons for this strong feeling. Most pupils report that the school helps them to be healthy. They say they appreciate the school's guidance about health-related issues and some pupils encourage family members to take exercise. Pupils' involvement in the school council, their keenness to take on responsibilities within the school and their support for charities and schools abroad, enhance their good contribution to the school and global community. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills needed for their future economic well-being, with strengths in the high rates of attendance and pupils' effective social skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect others' needs, use a wide range of social skills to get on well with others, and have a heightened awareness of moral issues and choices. Their depth of understanding of cultural diversity is not as strong as the other elements.

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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	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	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?

Teachers engage pupils well by making lessons interesting, moving learning along at a brisk pace and through an increasingly confident use of new technology. Pupils enjoy using the learning logs that strongly support homework and their independent learning and research. Teachers generally have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They build good relationships with pupils and draw on a wide range of teaching styles and techniques to enhance learning. The more-able pupils are often challenged well, though there are inconsistencies across the school. Questions are often well directed to support the assessment of what pupils are learning. Most teachers have a high degree of confidence in accurately assessing pupils' individual levels of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. This good level of expertise, however, is not yet consistent across the school. The level of challenge for the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 is mainly good, as is the teaching of mathematics throughout the school.

The school's innovative approach to revising the curriculum includes a wide range of strategies to enhance the provision for mathematics, an identified area for development. There are effective intervention arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that enable them to make good progress. Strong partnerships with others, including local schools, effectively support provision in a range of subjects. Enrichment opportunities are varied, and extra-curricular activities are popular and well attended. The revised provision for information and communication technology is

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developing well and contributing positively to pupils' learning. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and enables them to make good progress in mathematics and English in particular.

Pupils benefit from the school's committed pastoral approach that includes the learning mentor's well-focused specialist support of pupils needing additional emotional and/or behavioural support. The school is particularly successful in promoting attendance by promoting pupils' sense of pride in attending regularly, and in supporting families where necessary. Induction and transition arrangements are well organised and partnerships with health professionals are strong and effective, particularly regarding the well-being of potentially vulnerable pupils.

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 and senior leaders are successful in uniting staff through a strong sense of purpose and clear ambition to improve the school. Morale is high. There is a systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching, learning and progress which is largely effective and which leads to well-chosen plans for development. Senior leaders routinely observe and evaluate lessons, giving clear points for improvement. They hold regular meetings for analysing pupils' progress when teachers are held increasingly to account. While the school makes generally good use of these monitoring activities, it does not always rigorously link them with its identified priorities to achieve maximum impact. The learning and progress of the more-able pupils is not always evaluated rigorously enough during lesson observations and in meetings about pupils' progress.

Members of the governing body, several of whom are new, are supportive of the school and visible in the school community, some offering regular practical help in classrooms. The governing body asks challenging questions when necessary and has a satisfactory impact on the direction of the school overall. However, it is not fully and systematically involved in setting priorities for improvement, in using information about the progress of different groups to inform priorities or in rigorously monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

There are satisfactory procedures for safeguarding and all safeguarding duties are met. Site security is a high priority. However, not all documents and policies are rigorously checked to ensure that they are scrupulously up to date and contain all recommended details. The school promotes equality well, carefully identifying minor differences in the performance of different groups of pupils and taking action to close any gaps. The success of the school's strategies is seen, for example, in the greater percentages of pupils at the

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end of Key Stages 1 and 2 reaching the higher levels of attainment in English and mathematics. The effectiveness of the school's provision is reflected in the rarity of racial and bullying incidents. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school operates as an extremely cohesive community, where all groups of pupils get on very well together. There are effective links with schools locally and abroad.

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	3
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	3
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

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are well prepared and supported. They make good progress in their learning. 'Learning stories' vividly illustrate the strong focus on developing children's language skills and their personal development. Children demonstrate sustained effort, concentration and effective teamwork, as when creating fantastical dresses and veils for the Royal Wedding. They enjoy the wide range of visits and visitors. Following a visit to a bluebell wood, children programmed a robot with directions to a wood and developed their mathematical language while drawing maps.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and given good support. There is a good balance of activities that are led by adults and those from which children can choose. Strong emphasis on problem solving includes children measuring and comparing each other's heights in different ways. Good leadership ensures that effective observation and assessment procedures are in place. Links with parents and carers are strong and they appreciate the sharing of their child's assessments. Children quickly understand how to behave well, take an active role in keeping healthy, 'I must wash my hands before I make a sandwich,' and do more things for themselves. Outside resources for extended physical activities are limited and some equipment is worn. Nevertheless, staff make imaginative use of all available space, given the number of adults

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available for supervision. Good teamwork and planning together support the Early Years Foundation Stage staff in their efforts to move forward with confidence.

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

About a third of parents and carers completed questionnaires regarding their views of the school. Of these, the vast majority expressed happiness with their children's experience at Hill Top. There was no overall pattern in the few less positive comments from parents and carers, all of which were carefully scrutinised. These were followed up during the inspection and form part of the evidence base used to arrive at judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hill Top 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 249 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	70	24	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	69	26	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	42	41	49	4	5	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	48	34	41	5	6	3	4
The teaching is good at this school	46	55	28	34	3	4	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	49	34	41	4	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	48	40	48	3	4	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)	34	41	43	52	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	52	30	36	6	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	45	39	47	1	1	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	33	46	55	5	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	40	48	37	45	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	63	27	33	2	2	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



3 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hill Top Primary School, Wakefield, WF3 1HD

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We found that Hill Top is a good school where your headteacher and other staff take good care of you.

The inspectors found that you make good progress in your work because teaching and the curriculum are good and because you behave well. The headteacher and the senior leaders do a good job. The governing body want the very best for the school and they do a satisfactory job. You told us that you feel extremely safe, and that you like the help that the adults give you about how to be healthy. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and you are keen to do all you can to help the school to be the positive place it is. Your attendance is outstanding. Well done!

We believe that the things we have asked the adults to do will make the school even better. They are:

- to make sure those of you who learn quickly always do as well as you can; we have asked the adults to keep an even closer eye on your progress, especially when the headteacher and senior teachers monitor lessons and when they talk about your progress with your teacher
- for the governing body to become even more closely involved in working with the headteacher and others to improve the school.

You can help by continuing to do your best. The inspection team wish you well.

Yours sincerely

David Matthews
Lead inspector

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