

Hillside Primary School

Ridgeview Road, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 9HG

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils make good progress and learn well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy their reading and they read fluently and with understanding. Those who have fallen behind are given effective help to catch up.
- Since the last inspection, attainment in English and mathematics has improved significantly and is now in line with the national average.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and deliver lessons that capture pupils' interest and help them to learn well.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding; children make particularly good progress in communication, reading and personal and social development.
- Pupils enjoy being in school. They are safe, well looked after and have good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. They behave well, are keen to learn and are proud of their achievements.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body, provides very clear direction, focused on improving teaching and learning and based upon a rigorous and accurate analysis of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of more-able pupils making more than expected progress is not yet high enough.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to work independently of the teacher and to use their initiative.
- In some lessons, less-able pupils are not always given the resources they need to be able to complete tasks independently.
- Plenary discussions are not always used as effectively as they might be to extend pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with senior leaders. These included a number of short visits to lessons conducted by teachers and trained assistants.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including middle and senior managers.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to a parental questionnaire recently carried out by the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ian Wellens

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hillside is a smaller-than-average-size primary school.
- Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, although this varies from year-to-year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of awards including Healthy School status, Foundation International Award and Eco School Award.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress further by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently of the teacher to solve problems
 - ensuring that pupils, particularly the less able, have the resources they need to complete tasks independently
 - using whole-class plenaries more effectively to further extend pupils' learning, particularly that of the more able, and ensure all pupils are fully involved in discussions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, standards have risen year on year and continue to rise. The proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress from their starting points compares favourably with national figures.
- Although the less-able pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points, they do not always meet their full potential because the tasks they are set are sometimes too difficult and the resources provided do not always give them the support they need to complete tasks without extra help.
- Many children join the school with attainment that is well below that expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in developing their communication, reading and personal and social skills. They enter Year 1 confident and enthusiastic learners, ready to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is in line with the national average in writing, reading and mathematics. They read a variety of texts fluently and write accurately for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- The school's actions to raise standards and accelerate progress in reading and writing have proved successful. Pupils who have fallen behind or who have special educational needs or behavioural difficulties are helped through a variety of well-tailored intervention strategies and mentoring. As a result these pupils participate successfully in whole-class activities and also make good progress from their starting points.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good and leads to good progress.
- Teachers present new ideas clearly and activities are well chosen to engage pupils' interest. For instance, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were keen to explain how they had found a variety of ways of sorting counters and recording their findings.
- The teaching of reading is systematic and consistent across the school. Pupils are excited about reading and say how much they enjoy it. For instance, in the Reception (Foundation 2) class, children clearly enjoyed practising their reading and spelling skills using computer programs. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were keen to discuss the Roald Dahl stories they had been reading, referring directly to the text to explain what they had enjoyed the most, and in Year 6 pupils listened avidly to a story about life in Victorian Britain in order to reproduce it as a play.
- Pupils make the best progress when they are given the opportunity to work collaboratively with a partner or in small groups to explore ideas and solve problems. When this is the case, their confidence grows and they are keen to share their ideas with a wider audience. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to promote pupils' independence as learners in this way.
- Pupils sometimes lose interest and become restless when they are not directly involved in plenary discussions. Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' learning and further challenge the more able in these activities.
- Teachers check understanding regularly and adapt their lessons effectively to correct misapprehensions.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to plan and deliver lessons. They use questioning very effectively to support and extend pupils' thinking.
- On the whole, assessment information is used to good effect to match work and resources to pupils' needs, although in some lessons the less-able pupils are not always given the resources they need to be able to complete tasks without direct help from adults. As a result, the pace of their learning slows.
- Marking is thorough and usually gives pupils good guidance about how to improve their work in

English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well. They are kind and considerate to each other and play well together. They take responsibility seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school through, for example, the school council, the ECO Group and as playground leaders.
- They have good relationships with adults, feel safe and are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying that can take place and know how to deal with it, some acting as Anti Bullying Ambassadors for their peers. They know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They speak with enthusiasm about their success in growing their own vegetables. Extracurricular activities, including sport, are very popular.
- Children with behavioural and emotional difficulties benefit from programmes tailored to their needs and this has had a positive impact upon their learning and their personal development.
- The school has worked well with outside agencies and with parents to improve punctuality and attendance. Attendance rates have risen to average and persistent absence has decreased.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has acted rapidly and decisively to improve teaching and learning, raise standards and to accelerate progress across the school. He provides very clear direction, based on an accurate evaluation of the school's work.
- He is strongly supported by the senior leadership team and subject leaders who have an accurate view of the school's performance and how to improve further through the monitoring of teaching and learning. This, and the robust analysis of pupils' progress, triggers appropriate interventions for pupils and training for staff.
- As a result of the actions taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the focus on improving attainment in reading and writing, standards have risen year on year and progress has accelerated.
- Issues identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. Teachers work well as a team and regularly share good practice. This results in a good degree of consistency across the school. The school has a good capacity to improve further.
- Safeguarding meets government requirements. The school does all it can to keep its pupils safe.
- There are good links with the local high school as well as with the children's centre and the local network of schools.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils well and pupils talk enthusiastically about the topics they are studying. It is effectively adapted for pupils with special educational needs and those with behavioural difficulties. It is enriched by a variety of themed days, a wide range of clubs and sporting activities, visits and visitors. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in music and Mandarin.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect and appreciate their own skills and the skills of others, for example, through weekly assemblies and themed days. This is successful in increasing pupils' confidence and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Since the last inspection, the local authority has worked effectively with the school to improve the teaching of literacy. It now provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and areas which need to be improved in the school. Governors are very supportive and well equipped to

hold school leaders to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131587
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	402483

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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie King
Headteacher	Jason Hollywood
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2010
Telephone number	0151 677 9960
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