

Hilltop Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	133972
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381581
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Dunn

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Quirk
Headteacher	Kristina Hollingdale
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
School address	Ditchling Hill Southgate West Crawley RH11 8LQ
Telephone number	01293 534314
Fax number	01293 538366
Email address	office@hilltop.w-sussex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	4–5 July 2012
Inspection number	381581



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Dunn

Additional inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional inspector

David Wolfson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed parts of 30 lessons taught by 15 teachers, and sampled briefly a further 12 lessons while exploring particular themes, for example the wider curriculum. They held discussions with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's records and documents, teachers' planning, pupils' work, and questionnaires that were returned by pupils, staff and 116 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin but just over one in three is from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also broadly average. The school does not meet the current floor standard, by which the government sets minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has grown in size by over one third since the previous inspection and pupil numbers are continuing to increase. The size and backgrounds of each cohort to reach the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years have varied significantly. In an overall stable staff, the school has experienced a few longer-term staff absences in key roles.

The on-site playgroup is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school is satisfactory rather than good because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not consistently good over time. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Through turbulent times following the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 dropped, but the levels reached by the current Year 6 have arrested this trend. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 remains below average. Leaders are securing improvements, but do not always focus rigorously enough on the performance of different groups when evaluating teaching and learning first hand.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Elsewhere, though improving, progress is not yet consistently good enough to secure good achievement overall. Few pupils reach the higher levels at Key Stage 1. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. They do not always understand the skills they need to develop to gain a deeper understanding of texts they read.
- Teaching is satisfactory over time but much better teaching is now improving achievement. It promotes pupils' language effectively. Teachers mostly engage pupils well. However, tasks are not always challenging enough for the more able. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is often slower. The quality of marking is variable.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. Their positive attitudes to learning support their accelerating progress. Pupils collaborate effectively. Strong relationships at all levels make a significant contribution to the positive and purposeful learning atmosphere.
- Action taken by leaders, including refining systems to analyse the performance

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

of different groups, has eradicated previous underachievement at Key Stage 2. The school has successfully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection report. However, the management of performance and leadership of teaching have not yet secured consistently good quality overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good quality teaching and achievement over time across Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - consistently and precisely customising teaching and tasks to the needs of different groups, particularly the more able
 - making explicit the skills pupils are developing to gain a deeper understanding of texts they read
 - ensuring marking helps pupils move on in their learning by regularly showing them how to improve and giving them the opportunity to respond
 - making sure that the pace of lessons supports good learning and that pupils have enough time to work at their own level.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, especially at Key Stage 1, by:
 - embedding the use of data about the performance of different groups to eliminate remaining variations in performance
 - increasing the proportion of pupils that reach the higher levels at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure leaders at different levels focus rigorously on the achievement of different groups when evaluating the quality of teaching and learning first hand.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From starting points that are typically below the levels expected for their age, the gap has started to narrow by the beginning of Year 1. Children's language skills develop well from often particularly low starting points. They mix well and are mostly purposeful when selecting their own activities, for example developing their problem-solving skills while trying to build a 'den' using blankets on a windy day.

Across the rest of the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good because rates of progress are not consistently good enough. Consequently, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 remains significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, historically slow progress in mathematics led to the dip below floor standards in 2011. In spite of this dip, considering results over time, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is typically broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Parents and carers believe that their children make good progress. This is increasingly the case, and across the school, the picture of pupils' achievement is improving. The levels reached by the current Year 6 show a significant improvement. Levels pupils have reached in English are broadly in line with the school's best ever, and mathematics levels have risen to match those achieved in English for the first time in four years. Progress rates for all sizeable groups currently in the school are at least satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make at least the same progress as other groups, and sometimes better.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs sustain enough independence to achieve satisfactorily overall, in line with their peers. Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils are increasingly confident in using their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to tackle unfamiliar words. As their reading progresses, older pupils are able to interpret and understand the texts they read. However, they do not always understand clearly the skills they need to develop to gain a deeper understanding, for example inference (reading between the lines of what the author has actually written). Pupils enjoy exploring and manipulating numbers in mathematics. Year 6 pupils remained motivated and engaged by the challenge of calculating every number from one to 10 using only the digit three. However, learning for more-able pupils does not always deepen or move on as well as it could. When they are not fully challenged or motivated by the task, the pace of work for a few pupils occasionally slows.

Quality of teaching

Clear strengths in the quality of teaching contribute well to the improving picture of pupils' achievement. A strong focus on developing language and vocabulary supports all pupils' development well, including that of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Regular and interesting homework supports pupils' learning in school well. Much teaching is good, as recognised by parents and carers, but it is not yet consistent enough over time to have secured good achievement overall.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the thoughtful environment provides children with a breadth of experience. They quickly develop good habits during adult-led activities and are keen to share their learning from previous sessions. Well-structured phonics teaching, both here and in Key Stage 1, increasingly meets pupils' differing needs. A brisk pace and varied tasks provide good opportunities for pupils to learn and apply new skills and sounds. Consequently, pupils' levels in reading are starting to rise. The teaching of reading effectively promotes pupils' enjoyment and positive attitudes. Year 5 pupils readily made good links in their learning while sharing a text in a guided reading session. Pupils develop sound comprehension skills to interpret the texts they read, but teachers do not always make explicit in their planning and teaching which skills sessions are developing.

Teachers take account of pupils' varying needs but do not always tailor their teaching and tasks precisely enough. They typically have high expectations of pupils but do

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

not always challenge the most able sufficiently. Additional resources for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, combined with effective support from teaching assistants, ensure they are appropriately included. Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, this is often because teachers keep pupils all together for too long, delaying opportunities for them to work at their own level. Consequently, the pace of learning slows.

Marking is regular and encouraging, but its quality and impact are variable in terms of moving pupils on in their learning. Teachers' marking of writing most regularly identifies improvements, but pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to and use the advice. Marking less frequently shows pupils how to improve their mathematical skills.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, enabling pupils to make links between their learning and the real world. Pupils enjoy working collaboratively and respond positively to these opportunities, including the chance to reflect on their own and each other's work. This supports their learning well. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 4, pupils worked well in small groups supporting each other in role play to develop their ideas, in preparation for writing a witness statement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A calm, positive and industrious atmosphere permeates the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Their good levels of engagement support their improving achievement well. Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. The mostly positive views of pupils, parents and carers indicate that this is true over time. Occasionally, when the task is not sufficiently challenging or engaging, a few individuals lose concentration. The school successfully includes pupils with behavioural difficulties, so that disruption to learning is unusual. Attendance is improving well, with current figures rising to above average.

Most pupils, parents and carers are of the opinion that the school deals effectively with bullying. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns. Taking into account the full range of inspection evidence, overall the school has good systems for recording, tracking and tackling such incidents. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including verbal and physical and inappropriate use of homophobic language. They develop a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Parents and carers that returned a questionnaire were unanimous that their children feel safe at school.

Leadership and management

From the headteacher and through leaders at all levels, including the governing body, there is a strong focus in improving pupils' achievement. The school correctly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of its own performance. The governing body is increasingly rigorous in challenging leaders to demonstrate sustained

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

improvements in pupils' outcomes. Middle leaders play an important role, their impact demonstrated, for example, through the rise in current pupils' reading attainment in Key Stage 1. The school is demonstrating it has the capacity to improve. However, taking into account the overall pace of improvement since the previous inspection, the effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory rather than good.

Extensive and varied systems for monitoring have secured much good teaching. However, leaders do not always focus rigorously enough on the performance of different groups when evaluating teaching and learning first hand in lesson observations. Links between performance management, professional development and improvement priorities have had a positive impact in some key areas, for example phonics teaching and mathematics. Leaders have identified the need for further development with regard to teaching of the more advanced reading skills.

Most written comments made by parents and carers on questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the strong links the school forges with them. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school does not tolerate discrimination and demonstrates a clear commitment to improving outcomes for all individuals and groups. Refining systems for tracking pupils' progress has enhanced leaders' capacity to analyse the performance of different groups, showing that there is no consistent pattern to remaining variations. Staff at different levels are familiar with these data and use them increasingly well in their shared aim to secure good or better achievement for all.

The effective action taken by the school to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected across the school, from the cohesive learning atmosphere to the broad range of vibrant artwork on display. This is enhanced by the effective links between different subjects. Overall, a broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to develop average levels of basic skills by the time they leave.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hilltop Primary School, Crawley RH11 8QL

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you. Thank you especially to those of you who spoke with us, read to us or answered our questionnaire. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory. This means it has some significant strengths, but there are other things that those responsible for running your school are working hard to make better. Much teaching is good, but not all. This means that overall you achieve in line with what is expected of you, but this is improving. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Children in the Reception classes achieve well.

To help your school in its aim to be consistently at least good, we have asked everyone to work together to do some important things.

- Make teaching and learning always at least good. This will mean lessons and tasks always challenge you the right amount so that you learn at a good pace. Teachers' marking will regularly help you improve your skills. You will understand more clearly about the reading skills you are developing.
- Help you to reach higher levels, especially those of you in Key Stage 1.
- Check carefully how different groups of you are getting on when leaders watch your lessons.

You can all help by continuing to be so positive, working hard and always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**