

Hillocks Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122563
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380492
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Jeremy Spencer 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	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Gillot
Headteacher	Louise Regan
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2008
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Alexander-Dutton

Additional Inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent over 11 hours observing teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of their work. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a broad range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' achievement and progress, the school's monitoring information and information relating to safeguarding children. Responses were scrutinised on questionnaires completed by 72 parents and carers, 28 pupils and 13 staff.

Information about the school

Hillocks Primary and Nursery School is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have statements of special educational needs. The level of pupil mobility is higher than that experienced by many other schools.

A breakfast club operates on the school site and is managed by the governing body. The Early Years Foundation Stage has Nursery and Reception classes. The school holds Artsmark Silver, Activemark and Eco-Schools Bronze awards. The school has recently worked in partnership with another local school recognised for its good practice.

Results for 2011 do not meet the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate. It is not satisfactory because pupils have not made sufficient progress from their starting points. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but until this year have not made enough progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 in developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. As a result, too many pupils are working at lower levels than they should be.
- Too much teaching in recent years has failed to meet pupils' needs and has led to inadequate achievement. Work in books and school assessments show that pupils are now making better progress and are making up for prior underachievement. This is because the quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving quickly. However, at times, teaching is not pitched at the right level for different groups of pupils.
- The school takes very good care of pupils and relationships between staff, pupils and parents are very good. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils demonstrate good behaviour and feel safe. Pupils who find it difficult to behave well make good progress in improving their behaviour because their needs are well understood and supported. Pupils' attendance is below average but improving steadily.
- Leaders and managers have shown they can make improvements. Teachers' performance is managed satisfactorily and leaders have been successful in eliminating inadequate teaching. The school has successfully improved the Early

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Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils and families are very good.

- The governing body works hard to challenge and support the school but recognises that their skills in interpreting data, to enable them to challenge school leaders more effectively about pupils' achievement, require improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that at least 75% is good or better in order to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2, by:
 - ensuring that teaching meets the needs of underachieving groups of pupils, particularly girls in mathematics in Key Stage 2
 - promoting consistency in teachers' expectations and methods in teaching mathematics, including by revising and improving the policy for teaching calculation
 - improving assessment in lessons to ensure that teachers consistently plan work that is accurately matched to pupils' abilities
 - improving the quality of marking and target setting so pupils understand the next steps of learning they need to take to improve.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by February 2013, by:
 - ensuring that there are more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop writing and mathematics skills in different subjects
 - improving governors' understanding of assessment data so they provide additional challenge to senior leaders regarding pupils' achievement
 - improving the rigour of leaders' monitoring of school improvement by ensuring that all action plans clearly state who will check each action, and how and when it will be done.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least average by July 2013, by continuing to work with other agencies and the parents and carers of those who have a high rate of absence.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Although pupils made at least satisfactory progress this year, their performance over time is inadequate. Consequently attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 is too low. All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children make good progress at school. Inspection evidence does not support this view.

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Most children begin the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those normally expected for their age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. During the inspection children were observed developing their social skills well, for example, in the Reception class where they worked together to re-order words to make a sentence. Children are very well cared for in the Early Years Foundation Stage and were seen enjoying learning in calm and safe indoor and outdoor learning environments. They leave the Reception class with skills slightly below those expected for their age. This constitutes good progress from their starting points.

Achievement at Key Stages 1 and 2 is inadequate. Although progress this year is satisfactory most pupils have not overcome the impact of previously slow progress on their attainment. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, including attainment in reading is well below expected levels. Pupils lack confidence on some occasions when reading aloud. However, they are developing better strategies to break down the sounds in words effectively. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been too low in recent years. Underachievement is still particularly notable for girls in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Many pupils' skills in working out calculations are weak, as staff have differing expectations of what pupils should be able to calculate, and how they should do it. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, older pupils struggled when adding fractions because arithmetical skills had not been securely taught at an earlier stage.

The entrenched trend of underachievement has been halted. The school's assessments and the latest unvalidated results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that attainment is improving. The school is expected to meet the government's floor standards in 2012. Accurate school data, observations of pupils' learning and scrutiny of their work indicate that progress in the current academic year is stronger across the school. Consequently, pupils are making up for their previous underachievement.

The achievement of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, fits a similar profile to that of all pupils in the school. The gaps in attainment between these groups of pupils and other pupils are closing. This is because the school tracks the progress of pupils in greater detail than previously and staff now efficiently identify and address the underperformance of different groups of pupils.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is clear that some teaching, until this year, has been inadequate. This was recognised by school leaders and addressed robustly. Improved teaching is now tackling prior underachievement. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes. Some teaching is not pitched accurately enough to meet the needs of different pupils. The

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teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teaching assistants work alongside teachers to meet the needs of these pupils to enable them to participate in learning and make satisfactory progress.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their child is well looked after and taught well. Inspectors found that teachers and other staff across the school take very good care of pupils and take time to get to know families well. As a result, relationships between teachers, pupils, and their parents and carers are warm and trusting. All parents and carers feel that the school helps them to support their child's learning.

In the best examples of teaching, teachers ensure that there is a good pace of learning and, through good assessment, ensure that activities are well matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils. Teachers also ask thought-provoking questions to help develop pupils' learning. Pupils have frequent opportunities to speak with other learners, to consolidate understanding and develop thinking. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils discussed how to improve the quality of their writing by using different types of sentences. The teacher skilfully built in frequent opportunities for pupils to break from the main activity to share and discuss their ideas with a partner. Together with a lively and stimulating teaching style, this resulted in pupils making good progress. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children work in stimulating and well organised indoor and outdoor learning environments. Teachers take every opportunity to develop children's sensory awareness. For example, children enjoyed listening to the rain as it landed on the roof of their outdoor learning area, and then splashed in puddles together.

Teachers now have a better understanding about the needs of groups of pupils who are underachieving. Some good strategies have been implemented to target these pupils, particularly to develop their reading skills. Daily phonics (the sounds that letters make) lessons effectively support the development of pupils' reading skills, and a member of staff leads on a targeted reading intervention programme, which is making a positive impact. Little work has been done to raise the attainment of girls in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Plans are in place to begin next term to address the differences in the ways calculation skills are taught.

Teachers mark pupils' work frequently. However the quality and usefulness of their comments vary considerably. Some teachers provide clear, informative guidance to outline the next steps pupils need to take to improve. This helps to improve progress. However, other teachers tend to simply acknowledge what pupils have achieved, without outlining how improvements could be made. Many pupils are unaware of their learning targets, indicating that target setting systems are ineffective.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. They are better than satisfactory

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because pupils are consistently considerate, respectful and courteous to staff, each other and to school visitors. Positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to pupils' improved progress. The very good care, guidance and support provided by staff, both in school and at the breakfast club, and the organisation of frequent opportunities to work alongside parents and carers, enable pupils to grow in confidence. They learn to respect each other and develop strong moral values. Case studies show marked improvements in the behaviour of pupils with identified behavioural difficulties. Consequently, disruptive incidents rarely occur during lessons.

The views of parents and carers and pupils about behaviour are positive. Almost all parents and carers say that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils have a good understanding about the different types of bullying but report that bullying very rarely occurs. One pupil said, 'We sometimes have a bit of a fall out but we soon make friends again. People don't do things over and over again to bully people, because it could make people feel bad.' Pupils report that staff are approachable and feel confident that they would resolve any bullying swiftly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe and understand the importance of coming to school regularly. Attendance rates are below average but are showing sustained improvement over time. The school has successfully targeted groups of pupils with low attendance and, with the support of other agencies, brought about significant improvement.

Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is satisfactory. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have recognised the extent of pupils' previous underachievement. They have been proactive and determined in their response and are securing important improvements. Their successes in improving pupils' achievement, raising attendance, improving the Early Years Foundation Stage and in improving the quality of teaching indicate that they have the capacity to continue to improve the school.

Improvements to the quality of teaching have been well supported through partnership working with another local school and the local authority. Subject leaders speak enthusiastically about the new ideas they have been able to bring to the school, demonstrating that professional development has made a positive impact upon improving the quality of teaching and learning. Their action plans, however, do not always outline clear monitoring arrangements for planned actions. At times, they are too ambitious in the number of actions planned over the course of the year. Performance management systems are well established and are now more firmly linked to the impact made by staff upon raising pupils' achievement. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and effective systems are in place to track children's progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is generally broad and balanced and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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However, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects are not sufficiently frequent. The school promotes equality satisfactorily and tackles any discrimination.

The governing body is well organised and supports the monitoring of the school's actions. It provides challenge and support in equal measure for some aspects of the school's work. However, governors recognise that their skills in interpreting data about pupils' achievement are not adequate enough to enable them to challenge senior leaders about pupils' performance. The school's central record of suitability checks made on staff meets current government requirements and the school's safeguarding arrangements give no cause for concern.

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.

12 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Hillocks Primary and Nursery School, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 4ND

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. We would also like to thank your parents and carers for filling in a form that gave us their views about the school. We were impressed by your polite and courteous attitudes and pleased to see the sensible way you behave around the school, including at the school breakfast club. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing some of you read.

While there are some positive things, and there are many things that are improving, overall the progress that you make is inadequate and the school has been given a notice to improve. This means that an inspector will come back to check on how the school is improving.

We have asked the headteacher, teachers and the governing body to make some urgent improvements. Although your progress is improving we have asked the school to make sure that teaching always helps you to make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked the teachers to plan work that is just right for you and make sure they tell you exactly how to improve your work. School leaders, including the governing body, need to make sure that the plans for developing the school are always clear, and that they always use these, and information about your progress, to help them to show how things have improved. We want the teachers to agree the best way to teach you calculation skills, so that they all teach mathematics in a similar way. We were pleased to see that your attendance is improving, but it is still just below average overall. You can all help by coming to school as often as possible and making sure that you arrive on time. Finally, we would like the teachers to plan more opportunities for you to practice your writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

We found that you make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Your teachers and other staff take very good care of you all and get to know your families very well.

Thank you once again to you all for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer
Her Majesty's Inspector

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