

Hillside Primary School

Rushey Way, Lower Earley, Reading, RG6 4HQ

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- Pupils achieve well. By the time they leave Year 6, the standards they reach are above average.
- Teachers explain new learning clearly and use questioning well to check that all pupils understand.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes thrive because of the high quality learning experiences they have.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding are given wide-ranging support for their academic, emotional and social needs.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils of all abilities.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and respectful at all times. They play well together, regardless of age.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They almost always concentrate well and give their best.
- Pupils feel very safe and they know that adults care about them.
- Pupils feel that they are important in school and that their opinions are valued. As a result, they take pride in their school because they feel it is 'theirs'.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, know the school very well because they make regular and accurate checks on how things are going. Their actions are effective and, as a result, the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always tell pupils precisely how to improve their work when they mark books. Pupils are sometimes not given the time to apply their teachers' advice.
- The school's plans for improvement do not include measurable targets. This makes it difficult for governors to check on how well the school is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and with parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 80 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as three letters received during the inspection and the views of parents and carers from informal discussions in school.
- Inspectors considered information about how school leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as information about pupils' progress. They also looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of the management of their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 35 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

John Bosley

Additional inspector

Heidi Boreham

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hillside Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and looked-after children) is lower than average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest group is Indian.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- Children in the Early Year Foundation Stage are grouped in classes comprising Nursery age children (Foundation 1) and Reception age children (Foundation 2).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have both been appointed to their current posts since the time of the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all teachers tell pupils precisely what they need to do to improve when they mark pupils' work and then give the pupils time to put this advice into practice.
- Enable governors to check the effectiveness of the school's actions to improve by including measurable targets with milestones in the school's improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. They make good progress during their time in school and, by the time they leave, the standards they reach are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- When they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills and understanding are broadly in line with those typically found for their age. They make rapid progress in both Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 because the planned activities meet their needs very precisely. Their language skills develop rapidly because the adults create many experiences which encourage the children to explore and find out, and staff are quick to step in to talk with the children about what they are thinking. By the time they leave, a higher than average proportion are at a good level of development.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and they generally use their skills well when they are reading and writing. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national phonics check at the end of Year 1 has been variable, but recent changes to the teaching of early reading skills mean that there is now a secure approach to support pupils' future success.
- Progress during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is never less than good and is sometimes rapid. Pupils do equally well in reading, writing and mathematics which means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. The younger pupils have 'buddies' from Year 6 who talk to them in their home languages and this builds their confidence and their understanding. There are multi-lingual notices all around the school and the school's website has a 'translate' feature which enables parents to understand what their children are learning and support them at home.
- The most able pupils achieve well. The proportion who reach the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school's work to improve the achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding is innovative and effective. All the pupils are known to every adult in the school. Adults make sure that every child is spoken to personally at least five times a day, which has raised their self-esteem. Three members of staff are 'Pupil Premium Champions' and they regularly meet to check that eligible pupils are doing as well as they can. The progress made by these pupils has improved and is now often better than that of other pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is helping them to catch up rapidly. In spite of this, they are still about a year behind other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6, though the gaps are narrower lower down the school. The numbers of pupils are very small so attainment can vary widely from year to year.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at least good and is often better than that of other pupils. Pupils receive a variety of effective help, both within the class and through special programmes of support with a teaching assistant or a teacher. As a result, they are catching up with their classmates and their attainment by the time they leave is about two terms ahead of similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. All members of staff, pupils and parents spoken to during the inspection are unanimous in their opinion that the quality of teaching has improved, particularly during this academic year. Teachers say that there are high levels of consistency because they all know what is expected and because they share each other's skills well.

- Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils. They use information about pupils' achievement to plan work which challenges pupils of all abilities, including the most able.
- Teachers explain new ideas very clearly. They use questioning very well to penetrate pupils' understanding and to move them on to a deeper level by making them justify their answers. Pupils regularly make suggestions to each other about the quality of their answers and no-one minds because they all want to help each other to improve.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities. They observe closely how pupils are doing and they step in quickly to provide extra support, through their skilled questioning, for any who need it.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are surrounded by writing and print. They regularly add their own contributions through activities such as writing labels, making lists and drawing plans, which helps them to practise and apply their skills. Children's understanding of mathematics is developed in practical ways. During the inspection, they used a timer to see how many times they could repeat different activities in a minute, which helped to develop their understanding well.
- In both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 information about pupils' progress and attainment is collected regularly. Teachers meet with leaders to check that no pupils are falling behind. If progress slows, teachers are very quick to respond and provide extra help so that the pupils can catch up. The achievement of each individual pupil is of paramount importance and this has contributed strongly to the more rapid progress all pupils are now making.
- Teachers have very secure subject knowledge. They make sure that the pupils understand and use the technical vocabulary for each subject, which means that the pupils can explain their thinking clearly.
- The pupils say that the targets they have in English and mathematics help them to know how well they are doing. They also value the advice they are given from the comments that teachers write when they mark books. However, the quality of this marking is not consistent. Sometimes the advice is not precise enough and pupils are not always given the time to put the advice into practice and improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Around the school they are polite and friendly to each other and to adults.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve well. They are keen to learn and to please their teachers and they are proud of the standards they reach. Pupils enjoy their learning, and teachers only occasionally need to intervene to remind them to get on with their work.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good and that any minor incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with fairly by all adults. They say that pupils who always behave well are recognised and rewarded, which encourages them to make good choices.
- There are very few incidents of a more serious nature. The school does everything possible to help pupils to improve their behaviour and exclusions are rare. The number of incidents has fallen over the past few years, which shows that the school's systems are effective.
- All adults and pupils get on very well together. Strong relationships, based on mutual trust, underpin the positive atmosphere in the classrooms and in the playground. Outside, pupils of all ages play well together and the older pupils willingly help the younger pupils with their games.
- Pupils are proud of their school and they look after it well. They know that their opinions are valued and they feel that they 'own' the future of the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that the school is a very safe place in which to learn, and parents and teachers all agree.
- Pupils know about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are confident that adults would respond very swiftly if they reported any incident of bullying. The school's records show that incidents are rare and pupils are helped to learn from their mistakes.
- Visits from the police and the fire service, as well as regular reminders about e-safety, enable

pupils to develop the skills they need to keep themselves and others safe in the situations they meet, both now and as they get older.

- Attendance is above average and there are very few pupils who have high levels of absence. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, including governors, all share a drive to ensure that Hillside Primary School is a very successful and enjoyable place in which to learn. They, and all other adults, model the school's motto of 'When you believe, you will achieve'. They have high expectations for the pupils and are being increasingly successful in realising their aims.
- The recently appointed headteacher provides strong leadership. She is well supported by other leaders, who all know what is going well and what needs to improve from the regular and accurate checks they make on all aspects of the school's work.
- The school's plans for improvement focus on the right things, but a lack of measurable targets and milestones means that governors cannot check on how well things are going as precisely and accurately as they would like.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection because teachers share their expertise willingly and they learn from each other's effective practice. They say that the training they have helps them to achieve the challenging targets they are set to improve their performance. There are secure links between teachers' pay awards and the progress made by their pupils.
- All parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the school. They say that they know what is going on and they think that the school is improving.
- The subjects pupils learn are very interesting and are enhanced by weekly enrichment afternoons where they take part in a wide variety of activities. Pupils enjoy the regular residential and day trips, as well as the interesting visitors that bring the learning alive.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Pupils show that they know the difference between right and wrong through the good choices they make about their behaviour. Their cultural understanding is strong, supported by the diversity in the school community, and reinforced by the display proclaiming, 'We may all be different, but at Hillside we swim together'.
- The school has used the additional funding for primary sport effectively to employ a coach to improve pupils' skills and to broaden the range of sports available. As a result, more pupils are involved and standards have improved. More pupils have represented the school in competitions and financial support is provided for pupils to take part in activities outside school.
- The school's systems for safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority knows the school well and has provided strong support during the appointment and induction of the new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of skills and they have allocated their roles to make sure that they use these skills effectively to support and challenge the school. They also attend training to improve their skills further. They know how well pupils are achieving in comparison with similar schools from the detailed reports they receive from leaders, from national data on achievement and from the regular visits they make to school. They are confident that the quality of teaching is improving and they make sure that successful teachers are appropriately rewarded by progression through the pay scales. They make sure that all funding is allocated to meet the needs of the school and they have precise knowledge about the range and the effectiveness of support provided for pupils who are eligible for additional funding.

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	109930
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	442440

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	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Arthur
Headteacher	Mrs Nicci Morris
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 December 2012
Telephone number	0118 9755881
Email address	admin@hillside.wokingham.sch.uk

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