

Hillcrest Primary School

Cemetery Road, Totterdown, Bristol BS4 3DE

Inspection dates	28–29 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school’s values of resilience, innovation, partnerships and excellence are evident in all its work. They are reflected in the way pupils behave, teachers plan learning and members of the school community relate to each other.
- The headteacher has driven school improvement with determination, sensitivity and high expectations. All members of staff universally support his leadership
- The governing body is highly committed to ensuring that the school is an excellent place where pupils feel happy and enjoy learning. Governors know the school well and communicate effectively with parents and teachers.
- Leaders’ knowledge of the school’s strengths and areas to develop further is accurate. Senior leaders are imaginative and creative in developing aspects of the school’s work, such as implementing an effective assessment system.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
- Teachers plan learning which provides pupils with tasks that challenge them and deepen their understanding, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils relish the wide range of opportunities to take part in high-quality enrichment activities.
- Effective training has improved the quality of teaching and successfully developed leaders’ skills.
- The school cares for its pupils very well and keeps them safe. Safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously.
- Pupils’ enthusiasm for learning is outstanding. They willingly tackle challenging tasks with determination and resilience.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Feedback and marking in topic subjects, particularly in terms of literacy, are not as effective as they are in mathematics and English. In topic work, many pupils are not clear about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Pupils’ writing in their topic books is not of the same high quality as it is in their literacy books.
- Some disadvantaged and summer-born pupils in the early years are not well placed to start Year 1.
- Some pupils in Year 2 do not always understand what they read.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - the quality of pupils' writing in their topic books is at the same high level as in their literacy books.
 - pupils consistently understand what they have done well in topics and what they need to do to improve their learning further.
 - key stage 1 pupils who struggle to understand what they read receive support to help them to improve rapidly so that they can comprehend reading.

- Accelerate pupils' progress in early years so that those who are disadvantaged or summer-born are ready to start learning in Year 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The innovative and inspirational leadership of the headteacher has established a professional learning community which is ambitious for the pupils' achievements and caring for their welfare. Staff overwhelmingly support school leaders.
- The school's vision is clear and seen in everything that happens. Pupils know what it means to be resilient and to work in partnership. Teaching staff are innovative in the way they plan learning and demand excellence from themselves and the pupils. When behaviour does not reach the standards that are expected, pupils reflect in what ways they have not been good against the four vision areas.
- Senior leaders work well together collectively and are imaginative in how they plan for improvement and solve problems. Their self-evaluation is accurate; they fully understand the school's strengths and areas to develop.
- Staff say they feel valued. The training they receive is effective and arranged well. It contributes to improving the quality of teaching and leadership because it precisely identifies the professional development staff need.
- Fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are strongly evident throughout the curriculum. For example, a group of local Muslims were asked what they felt they would like those of other faiths or none to know about their religion. This resulted in the Islamic group taking assemblies and pupils being able to explain what it is to be a Muslim. The pupils' rights-respecting ambassadors and the green team are active in influencing attitudes of leaders, teachers and pupils.
- The curriculum offers a good breadth and balance of subjects and activities so that pupils develop the range of knowledge and skills for the next phase in their learning. Subject specialists and teachers plan topics carefully so that topic work effectively covers the curriculum for each subject. However, gaps in pupils' learning are not identified quickly enough in topic work, resulting in some pupils not always being sure how to improve.
- Leaders effectively deploy and monitor the impact of the pupil premium and sports funding. As a result disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make good progress and pupils access sports coaching using new equipment.
- Governors and senior leaders have a well-developed communication strategy with parents. Parents have regular opportunities to talk to governors. The 'open door days' mean that parents can see what teaching of particular subjects is like across the new curriculum.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection. Members have used external reviews and self-evaluation well to develop their skills and structures.
 - The governing body accurately knows the school's strengths and areas for developments. Governors seek independent evidence to develop their own understanding and to effectively monitor improvements in the school. Their challenge and support for school leaders is effective.
 - The chair of governors has a clear strategy to strengthen the governing body and has recruited members carefully so they have a wide range of relevant and useful knowledge and skills. Each governor is clear about their respective roles and what they contribute to governing the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records are well maintained and recruitment procedures are rigorous. Senior leaders and governors monitor safeguarding arrangements effectively and leaders work very well with external agencies. Staff have been trained and know how to protect children from extreme views and radicalisation. Staff are regularly updated to know signs of maltreatment of children and how to keep them safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers plan effectively to build on pupils' learning. Teaching enables pupils to have the time to develop a depth of understanding and the opportunity to enjoy thinking.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge of English and mathematics to question pupils effectively. In mathematics, teachers are adept at helping pupils to learn different techniques to solve problems and for pupils to choose the method they find most efficient.

- Feedback to pupils about their writing and mathematics is clear, resulting in pupils' work improving. Feedback is not used as effectively in topic work, where pupils are not always sure how to progress well.
- As a result of teachers expecting pupils to take risks and have a go, most of them are able to learn while being given a high level of challenge. Pupils say that the 'school pushes you to do better'.
- Homework is set regularly and effective guidance is given to parents as to how to support their children. Pupils know what is expected of them when homework is set, which results in better learning in school.
- Teachers record pupils' progress through the English and mathematics new curriculum accurately. School leaders use this information effectively to assess and improve the rate of progress. Teachers and leaders use this information well for planning and explaining to pupils how to improve further. Parents are informed regularly about their child's progress.
- Specialist teachers deliver art and music lessons and the quality of their teaching is of a high standard.
- The teaching of pupils who are more able is effective in that they have opportunities to extend the depth of their learning in class and develop their talents in clubs and teams.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils say: 'Whoever you are, you always feel you fit in.' They know that teachers care for them and know them well. One parent particularly valued the way teachers' support had resulted in her daughter being 'back to her old self, happy and thriving'.
- Pupils' welfare is a high priority in the school. Leaders are relentless in making sure pupils' individual needs are met so that they flourish in the school. Leaders work well with other organisations for the benefit of its pupils, for example with those responsible for children in care.
- There is much evidence that concerns about pupils' welfare concerns are gathered very effectively to build a picture of what actions need to be taken. Consequently, well-informed decisions are made, including when to involve external agencies.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that 'there is always someone who you can talk to' as the school is full of friendly staff.
- Pupils are self-disciplined. They are polite and respectful to each other. For example, without staff prompts, they know when to modify noise so that it is at reasonable levels around the school.
- Pupils are thoughtful, caring citizens. The pupils' rights and responsibilities group debate what the rights of a child means for them and school leaders consult members of this group. Pupils help the local community, such as visiting a local home for older people every month. Another group of pupils started their own environmental group, known as the green team. Through assemblies and the golden plate and healthy lunch awards, they actively improve school life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent enthusiasm for their learning. They are enthusiastic participants in lessons and are willing to take time to investigate and think deeply about their learning. They work well with other pupils in lessons and are willing to support each other around the school.
- Parents and staff agree that pupils' behaviour is excellent and that bullying is rare.
- Pupils indicate that behaviour in the school is excellent. They know that rewards are well used and high standards of behaviour are always expected.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend equally well.
- Pupils are very respectful about all aspects of their learning. For example, in a lesson about sex education and relationships they showed very mature and sensible attitudes.
- Pupils take great pride in their work, ensuring that it is neatly presented.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes have improved in all key stages and pupils now make good progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is well above their peers nationally.
- Pupils do well by the end of Year 2. In reading, writing and mathematics most pupils do much better than the national average.
- Pupils confidently write using different styles and a wide range of vocabulary. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils imagined they were inside a well-known painting and considered contrasting feelings, which they then wrote written in well-constructed passages.
- Handwriting is good, and pupils write, through key stage 2, increasingly extended passages with accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Mathematical outcomes in key stage 2 are good. Pupils are taught to be able to confidently understand why mathematical techniques work and to correct errors themselves. Teachers have a well-developed understanding of what mastering mathematics means and plan lessons which deepen pupil understanding.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics through key stage 1 and key stage 2 is at least in line with that achieved nationally because pupils' progress is good in these subjects.
- The information collected about how well pupils are achieving is used carefully by teachers to identify any gaps in knowledge and understanding. This, especially, has had an impact on the lowest-attaining pupils, who make good progress by the end of Year 6.
- Whilst there is a small group of disadvantaged pupils in most year groups, progress for them is in line with that made by others. Interventions by teaching partners give disadvantaged pupils confidence to 'have a go' and respond as well as their peers.
- The most able pupils make good progress because they are given tasks which stretch them and deepen their understanding. Opportunities to use their skills outside of lessons are extensive, for example writing in a professionally produced school newspaper.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Targeted interventions, including the use of well-informed teaching partners, contribute to these pupils generally getting good outcomes.
- Pupils read widely, confidently and with good levels of comprehension. They use their phonics skills well to work out words they do not know. Reading is celebrated in the school and a group of pupils act as librarians. Sometimes books are too challenging for the less able pupils in key stage 1, as they do not always understand what they have read.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are well used across the curriculum. Writing in topics is not as good as in literacy lessons. School leaders and pupils know that the quality of writing, grammar and punctuation could be better in topics if required.
- Standards in computing, music and art are high. Pupils frequently enjoy learning while writing in a blog, developing coding skills, singing in a choir and drawing or designing.

The early years provision

is good

- Despite recent staff illness and a period of transition in the early years team, children make good progress. Senior leaders have worked hard to make sure assessment of children's starting points are accurate and used effectively to ensure that good progress is maintained.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and writing has resulted in good progress over time. A child enthusiastically read his story about an enormous turnip and corrected the one spelling mistake. Phonics results have improved since the last inspection and children's better progress in early years ensures that they are ready to build on their reading skills across key stage.
- Teaching is good. Staff model the use of language well and use questions effectively to extend children's thinking, language, communication and understanding.
- Children are keen to learn, because they are clear about the routines and the standards of behaviour that are expected of them and they behave well.
- The majority of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who are disadvantaged make good progress in line with other pupils. Senior leaders recognise, however, that a number of summer-born or disadvantaged pupils, despite making expected progress from the time they start, are not well placed to start in Year 1. Arrangements for transferring into the school have recently been adapted.

- The curriculum is good and offers a range of opportunities for children to learn through play and through sessions led by adults. Children enjoy their learning and development because activities are carefully matched to their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	131522
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10012437

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Francis Philippa
Headteacher	Tim Browse
Telephone number	01173772440
Website	www.hillcrest.bristol.sch.uk
Email address	school@hillcrest.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 January 2015

Information about this school

- Hillcrest Primary School is larger than most primary schools with, currently, two classes in all year groups. It is maintained by the local authority and works closely with nearby partner schools.
- The governing body has a full complement of 15 governors.
- The school draws pupils from and beyond a suburb of Bristol.
- There are slightly more girls than boys.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as are those identified as needing an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. This promotes the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, adopted from care or who are children looked after.
- In 2015 the school met the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements for publishing information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and looked at a wide selection of pupils' work. Many of the lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with pupils about their learning and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, a local authority officer and teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation and the school's website that related to pupils' progress and school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Inspectors took into account 128 responses on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors took into account 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mark Jenner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Wilson-Chalon	Ofsted Inspector

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