

Hillside Primary School

Dyke Drive, Orpington, Kent BR5 4LZ

Inspection dates

22–23 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching has improved since the school's last inspection, but still varies in quality between classes and subjects. Consequently, pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school.
- Not all teachers show they have high expectations of the pupils. This is reflected in work they set them being too easy.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils' handwriting is neat and in a joined style.
- The pupil premium is only slowly closing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school.
- Teaching in mathematics and science does not provide pupils with enough opportunity to explore ideas themselves. This means they do not develop skills needed for success at secondary school.
- Pupils' comprehension skills are not developed well enough at key stage 2. They sometimes misinterpret what questions ask of them.
- Attendance is rising but is still below average. Some parents do not ensure their children attend regularly. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also below average.

The school has the following strengths

- Many areas have improved under the headteacher's leadership and are now good. Others have a firm basis for future success.
- Teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) has improved across Reception and key stage 1. Pupils' attainment has risen sharply at the end of the Reception Year.
- Pupils' writing has improved considerably and is now creative, interesting with generally accurate spelling and grammar.
- Children in the early years make good progress across all areas of their learning as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils conduct themselves well and respond to their teachers quickly. They are confident, articulate and respectful of the views of others.
- Pupils enjoy school because they feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of the pupils and set work that challenges them
 - pupils are regularly given the opportunity to explore ideas in mathematics and science through investigations and practical activities
 - teachers systematically develop the pupils' handwriting as they move through the school
 - reading comprehension is given greater attention at key stage 2.
- Ensure that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is closed more quickly by evaluating closely the impact of action and identifying next steps to be taken.
- Raise levels of attendance further and reduce persistent absence, including for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - making clear to parents the importance of the regular attendance of their children
 - taking action with families where persistent absence is a regular feature.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's direction. He is much respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. Many areas have improved under his leadership and are now good, such as teaching and outcomes in phonics, the early years and writing. Although strong foundations are in place for other areas of the school's work, they have not have improved rapidly enough to reach a good level.
- Senior leaders monitor teachers' performance rigorously and use this to identify where further training is needed. This can include sharing expertise in school or seeking guidance from elsewhere. Teaching is improving rapidly in many areas, but some inconsistent practice remains. Leaders are quite aware where this is the case and are taking clear action for its elimination.
- Subject leaders evaluate performance carefully. This gives them an accurate view of performance in their areas of responsibility from which to plan action for improvement. They are aware of variations in teaching quality, the impact of what they have put in place and where more is needed.
- The school's partnership this year with a teaching school has strengthened pupils' learning and subject leadership skills. Other partnerships have provided challenge for leaders through regular external reviews of school performance. There have been some successes in partnership with the Priory Academy Trust but this is now being wound up.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a sharp focus on promoting literacy and numeracy. Links between other subjects are made where appropriate, but opportunities to develop writing across subjects are not always taken.
- Extra-curricular provision is strong, particularly in sport. Additional sports funding is used well to promote the aim that pupils should adopt a healthy lifestyle. Non-contact boxing is an innovative and much enjoyed addition to the pupils' experiences.
- The school's aims, including the motto 'great by choice' underpin its work to help pupils understand the key values of British society and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is supported by the school's action in moving to full recognition by UNICEF as a Rights Respecting School. Tolerance and respect for others are at the heart of this action and pupils embrace both.
- Training for staff in the 'special opportunities unit' has given them expertise to support well the individual pupils they work with. It is only very recently that a new system has been introduced for measuring the small steps in progress some pupils make. This has limited the ability of leaders and governors to evaluate accurately the unit's performance.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Changes to the way the governing body operates have improved the effectiveness with which it holds leaders to account for school performance. Governors have a secure understanding of the school and are able to direct their questioning of the headteacher sharply on to the impact of action taken on its performance.
 - They have reviewed the impact of the pupil premium on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils so that its allocation more closely meets individual need. They are aware that improvements are now taking place if not as rapidly as they would like.
 - Their understanding of assessment information and regular visits to school gives them a clear picture of the quality of teaching. They recognise the success of the headteacher's action to improve teaching but know that some variability still remains.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clear policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. Training for staff ensures they are vigilant in spotting concerns. The expertise of external organisations is called upon when needed. Close links with home mean the school is able to focus its attention on families who may be experiencing difficulties that make their children vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Tasks set do not consistently move their learning forward rapidly. Some activities are not sufficiently demanding of the pupils as they do not have to think hard in order to complete them. This limits learning for the most able pupils.
- Teaching does not provide enough opportunity for pupils to develop their problem-solving, practical and investigative skills in either mathematics or science.
- Pupils are expected to discuss ideas, provide answers in full sentences and explain their reasoning. Follow-up questions make them think deeply. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves by selecting harder questions once they have mastered a skill in mathematics. Groups in these lessons are flexible and teachers alter them in the light of the progress pupils are making.
- Across the school, behaviour routines are established well so learning can flourish without disturbance. Teaching assistants are effective because they are deployed well, ensure pupils think about their work and keep concentrating.
- Early reading skills are taught well, particularly when teachers take every opportunity to reinforce at other times what has been learned previously. Additional reading support is effective and shows pupils make swift progress in catching up with others.
- Writing is taught well. Pupils have access to a wide range of rich, high-quality texts to stimulate their ideas and broaden their vocabulary. The strong focus on spelling is paying dividends but insufficient attention is paid to improving the pupils' handwriting.
- Pupils receive clear written feedback. This supports their learning and helps them to improve their writing in particular. Targets for pupils are used well to recognise their achievements, show them what they need to do next and to match tasks to meet their learning needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **requires improvement**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that staff care for them and know they have their best interests at heart. Consequently, pupils show them great respect and mostly respond well to their feedback about how to improve their work.
- Pupils are proud of their school and say how it has improved recently. They wear their uniform with pride but do not consistently take the same care over the presentation of their work, which can be untidy at times.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and contribute considerably to the school. This includes by being part of the junior leadership team or as junior subject ambassadors. The 'Primary Pioneers Project' run in conjunction with former military personnel helps pupils develop resilience and leadership skills, boosts their confidence and fosters teamwork.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils, remains below average. Not all parents are fully behind the school's action to make them aware of their responsibility for their children's regular attendance. Leaders' action being taken is leading to rising attendance levels and a decline in persistent absence, but has not eliminated gaps with attendance levels nationally.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered, showing consideration towards others. This enables pair discussion and group work to be undertaken productively. School rules help pupils understand the reasons behind laws, the responsibilities this involves and the consequences if they are not upheld.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and recognise that any silly behaviour is often where pupils have specific needs. School behaviour documents show that the very few serious incidents of either racism or bullying are followed up and dealt with swiftly.
- Pupils are usually keen to answer their teacher's questions and take part in discussions. They try to do their best by working hard on activities in lessons and mostly concentrating well. On some occasions pupils can lose focus when activities do not capture their imaginations or are too easy for them.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils are not making consistently good progress across the school in each subject. The proportion of pupils who reached Level 4 or better in mathematics, reading and writing fell below government floor targets in 2015. This meant a significant number were not suitably prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils' outcomes are rising. Attainment is at a higher level in Year 6 than last year in reading, writing and mathematics. All but a very few pupils have made at least the progress expected of them. The progress of the most able is also improving, but varies across year groups and subjects.
- Attainment in phonics has risen substantially since the last inspection. Most Year 1 pupils have met the expected standard this year. All current Year 2 pupils who did not reach this standard in 2015 have now caught up.
- Reading skills are less secure across key stage 2. The pupils' comprehension skills require improvement and they do not easily take meaning from texts they read. One consequence is that some pupils do not understand what they should do when tackling word problems in mathematics.
- The pupils' basic number skills develop well. They learn to use formal methods of calculation and their mental recall of number facts is accurate. Their application of these skills to solving problems, undertaking practical work or investigating ideas is less secure. This means they do not consistently deepen their understanding of new ideas.
- Pupils develop sound scientific knowledge. However, their investigative and enquiry skills are less secure. This means they are not prepared sufficiently for science at secondary school.
- The pupils make good progress in writing. They show they have the stamina to write creatively, at length in a variety of styles using ambitious vocabulary. Their progress is not quicker because their handwriting is not always neat and in a joined style.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not consistently make the good progress needed to close attainment gaps with other pupils nationally by the time they leave Year 6. The gap in 2015 amounted to over a year in each subject. School assessment information shows gaps still exist but are closing as pupils' progress in general rises.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also do not make consistently good progress, including those in the special opportunities unit. Their progress is improving as new assessment systems mean adults in the unit know more clearly pupils' needs and how they are to be tackled. The identification of needs benefits through close liaison with outside agencies.

Early years provision

is good

- Strong and effective leadership has been a key factor in the improvements to the early years since the last inspection. Issues are tackled robustly as and when they emerge. The focus is continually on seeking ways of improving teaching and outcomes for the children.
- Teachers make sure tasks and activities are matched well to the children's needs. Attainment is rising by the end of Reception and children are prepared well for learning at key stage 1.
- Children confidently discuss their learning. Language and communication are promoted well so that early reading skills and the children's understanding of new vocabulary develop well. This was seen when one child in a group looking at a slug said that, 'they have antennae so they can find out where to go'.
- Children feel safe. Trusting relationships with adults give them confidence and a sense of well-being. The atmosphere is calm and hardworking both inside and out. Children become absorbed in what they are doing, often for quite long time periods. They behave well and enjoy working with each other.
- Adults interact thoughtfully with individuals and groups of children to stimulate ideas, develop their language and check understanding. While many children explore resources using their own ideas to extend their learning, some are not routinely challenged to do so by adults.
- Teachers have taken successful action to close the gap in outcomes between boys and girls. The outside classroom and the school grounds stimulate the imaginations of boys, many of whom relish practical learning. They are also now more interested in writing such as when recounting the story of 'Jack and the beanstalk' or their visit to a local supermarket.

School details

Unique reference number	138574
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10011939

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Lockett
Headteacher	Tim Smith
Telephone number	01689 830383
Website	www.hillside.bromley.sch.uk
Email address	admin@hillside.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- This school is above average in size compared with other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school runs the special opportunities unit funded by the local authority for pupils with a variety of severe and complex learning needs. This unit currently has 20 pupils on its roll.
- The majority of pupils are supported by funding through the pupil premium. This figure is well above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding which supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the early years provision attend the two Reception classes full time.
- The school provides childcare before and after school.
- The school has been part of the Priory Academy Trust since September 2012. It also joined the Realise Academy Partnership Trust, which is an umbrella organisation with the aim of enhancing collaborative networks. These arrangements will change when the school joins the Harris Federation in September 2016.
- The school has received support from Pickhurst Infants School for the last 12 months. This is a teaching school and its headteacher is a national leader of education. This partnership has supported teacher training and with leadership development.
- The school met three of the four of the government's current floor standards in 2015. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's website meets requirements on the publication of specified information.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 27 lessons. School leaders accompanied inspectors to nine of these. They looked at work in pupils' books from the current academic year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, three members of the governing body and two representatives from the Priory Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and written contributions from 12 parents. They also took account of a survey of parents carried out by the school in October 2015.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire and 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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