

Hillview Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133668
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	316184
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

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

Type of school	Children's centre
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Lamaison (Acting)
Headteacher	Aran Forde (Centre Manager)
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2005
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of the time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors visited 20 learning activities and observed the work of all three teachers and also nursery practitioners. They also held meetings with governors and staff of the children's centre and had discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the Nursery and the children's centre's work, breakfast and after-school clubs, drop-in groups and toy library, early intervention group and adult learning. They looked at a range of documentation, including the Nursery improvement plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curricular planning and photographic evidence provided by the school. In addition, the responses of 39 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the rate of progress in learning for all groups of children
- progress in establishing assessment procedures
- how well adults use assessment to inform their planning for different groups of children
- the children's centre's impact on the children's learning and welfare.

Information about the school

Hillview Children's Centre provides a range of integrated services for children, families and the local community. The centre was awarded Early Excellence Status in 2002. It provides a toy library, intervention centre, after-school club, breakfast club, holiday play schemes, support and programmes for parents, counselling support, family learning and adult support. Children from the local primary school use the breakfast and after-school club, and 'walking bus.' There is part-time provision for children aged two to four in the three Nursery classes. Children generally spend three terms at the Nursery according to their age. The centre provides for children living in the south Harrow area. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language but very few are in the early stages of learning English. There are 28 different languages spoken. The proportion of children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. The majority of these children have a statement of special educational needs.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hillview provides a good education for its children. It plays a central part within the community and is valued by parents and carers who appreciate the excellent quality care and the many enjoyable learning experiences. Children enjoy the Nursery. One parent summed up the views of the vast majority, saying: 'Hillview is a fantastic facility. All the adults go above and beyond to provide a safe, happy, and healthy learning environment for all of the children. The staff are polite, helpful and always available to answer any questions; they are also open to suggestions.'

These are the key strengths of the centre:

- The welcome that children, parents and carers receive on a daily basis is warm and encouraging, and relationships are excellent.
- Good provision for children in the Nursery enables them to make good progress and build strong foundations for their future education.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding so children thrive in their personal development and are happy and interested learners.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. Because their welfare is exceptionally well provided for, they flourish in the very secure and safe environment.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They enjoy making cards for their Eid celebration, painting their hands and eating special celebration food.
- The centre's extended provision is excellent and supports children, parents and carers extremely well.
- There are high-quality partnerships with support services and also with parents and carers, who are unanimous in saying that they are happy with their children's experience at the Nursery.
- The centre is very well organised and managed.

There are two key areas for improvement:

- Adults do not always use assessment information to inform their planning and consequently more able children are not always challenged as much as they could be.
- Governors are supportive and involved in improvements but not all governors have developed the skills and knowledge necessary to challenge the school.

The centre manager and her deputy provide strong leadership and management and this contributes effectively to the success of the centre. The whole complex organisation runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There is accurate evaluation of all aspects of the centre's provision and performance. This leads to actions that are well considered

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and effective in bringing about improvements. There is strong teamwork from experienced staff. The centre's track record in maintaining good effectiveness since its last inspection demonstrates it has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010, use assessments more rigorously to ensure that planned activities and resources are more closely matched to the different needs of the children, especially the more able, in all areas of learning.
- By April 2011, ensure all governors have developed the skills and knowledge to rigorously challenge the centre.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

All children enjoy their learning and are developing confidence well because the sessions are effectively organised and excellent relationships contribute to a positive climate for learning. A younger child proudly showed her mask, explaining that it was a bird. She had enjoyed selecting and arranging feathers and coloured materials on the mask in her own way.

Children's speaking, listening and communication skills are well developed because staff encourage children to comment on what they see and how they feel. They are encouraged to use a diary to draw and record the events in the life cycle of a butterfly. Children feel secure, their self-esteem and confidence are growing and, as a result, they collaborate very well together in small groups and pairs, and this too aids their speaking and listening skills. In the garden centre role-play area, children negotiated roles. Some selected and bought flowers while others wrapped them. A child with special educational needs carefully used the till to take money for the flowers and to give change.

Children achieve well from starting points that are generally below expected levels. By the time they leave to join Reception classes, they are confident and independent learners, reaching the levels of attainment expected for their age. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because their needs are quickly identified, and carefully considered individual programmes are developed. These children's progress is boosted by the specialist practitioners who give closely tailored support, ensuring that their progress is as strong as it can be.

Children enjoy opportunities to tackle challenging tasks. In one good session, a practitioner was supporting children who were helping to build a volcano using sand, red paint, vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. The children were eager to help pour the bicarbonate of soda carefully into the plastic bottle, followed by the vinegar. They quickly realised that they needed to pour more vinegar into the bottle to achieve a volcanic-type reaction. Good interventions from the practitioner, in which she carefully included the language to be learned, resulted in the children using words such as 'smooth', 'soft', and 'sticky'. In addition, children were challenged to consider how to pour the bicarbonate of soda into the narrow bottle. They suggested using a funnel. Children were engaged, concentrated for long periods, talked through their observations

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with adults and other children, and helped and shared together. On another occasion, using a range of different seeds to make a picture, children became aware of their different shapes and smells.

Other key features of children's outcomes are given below.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of sessions observed in the Nursery were good, and intervention and support sessions observed in the centre were outstanding. Children make good gains in their learning because sessions are well organised and adults successfully use a range of methods to involve children in their own learning and ensure lessons are fun. Adults track each child's progress but daily planning does not always reflect this and does not always take account of children's individual needs in all areas of learning.

Learning opportunities are good and consequently all children show enjoyment in learning, both indoors and outdoors, in small group time, independent play and exploration, and when taking part in singing sessions. Children are challenged to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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experiment, collaborate and explore through a wide range of activities. This leads to extended discussions and problem solving, such as how to sink a boat using different objects. Adults are skilled at knowing when to intervene and when to stand back to enable the children to find things out for themselves, but occasionally there are missed opportunities to challenge the more able children. Adults assess children's development carefully with clear notes about what they are able to understand and do. These notes help to develop a detailed picture of the children's skills and development. They are complemented by a wide range of photographs. Staff have good knowledge of how young children learn and the next steps they need to take.

There is a good balance between adult-directed activities and opportunities to learn through play and exploration. There are attractive displays and high-quality resources, which together stimulate children's interest and encourage them to explore and investigate. Care, guidance and support for families, as well as for children, are excellent. The children's centre provides an excellent contribution to the Nursery provision. Specialist staff provide regular sessions for parents, such as in coping with very young children. This enables those who are most vulnerable to be supported and cared for well. In the after-school club and breakfast club, superb care is shown and excellent attention to safety is evident as older children are guided on the 'walking bus' to the local primary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels provide strong leadership and communicate ambition effectively through their clear vision. There is extremely close partnership with parents and carers, who are exceptionally positive in their comments about their children's enjoyment and learning. Teamwork is strong and the monitoring and evaluation procedures, involving all staff, successfully drive improvement. Staff are committed to giving their best to support the needs of children, parents and carers.

All children are welcomed and included. Staff are effective in tackling discrimination and ensuring equality for all. Links with a wide range of agencies are extremely strong and are enhanced through the children's centre provision. Child protection procedures are robust and all arrangements to ensure that children are safeguarded from harm are effective.

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The school promotes community cohesion well through its many partnerships with parents, extensive community links and through the activities with artists in residence. Many opportunities are taken to celebrate festivals of various ethnic communities such as Chinese New Year and Eid. The centre has yet to fully evaluate the impact of its actions, especially at national and global level.

Governance of the school is satisfactory. There is a clear vision of how to develop the Nursery and children's centre further. Many new parent governors are enthusiastic and they are led by an experienced chair. All statutory duties are met but opportunities to be involved in the strategic running of the centre are less well developed. Governors are supportive and involved in improvements, but not all governors have developed the skills and knowledge necessary to provide challenge to the centre's leaders.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those who spoke to inspectors are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A few wrote positive comments about how their children love attending, settle exceptionally quickly and flourish in both their personal and academic development. Parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were extremely positive and appreciative of the high quality of support and the progress their children make in a short time. Parents thoroughly appreciate the good standard of education provided by the committed and hardworking

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staff. Inspection findings wholeheartedly support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hillview Children's Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	77	9	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	79	8	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	69	11	28	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	69	11	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	67	11	28	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	59	13	33	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	59	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	69	10	26	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	64	12	31	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	64	14	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	85	6	15	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Hillview Children's Centre, Harrow HA2 0LW

Thank you very much for letting us visit your Nursery and Hillview Centre. We enjoyed watching you play and sing with your friends. We think your Nursery is good.

What we liked most about Hillview Centre:

- The way you enjoyed all the activities.
- You are all friendly and play together very well.
- All your teachers work hard to make every day enjoyable. We loved the sand volcano and the seed pictures!
- You behave very well and you know how to help each other, share and take turns.
- You really enjoy the healthy snacks and lunches.
- There are lots of really helpful activities for grown-ups too.
- The grown-ups look after you all very well.
- They work very well with your parents and those who care for you.

We have asked the centre to

- make sure all of the adults use their notes on how well you are doing to plan your next activities
- make sure all your governors learn to ask the centre more questions to help it to get even better.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace

Lead inspector

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