

Inspection of Hillbrook School

Hillbrook Road, Tooting, London SW17 8SG

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 10 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school sits at the heart of the local community. Despite its considerable size, every pupil is known and valued here. Pupils said that there was a family feel at the school. Staff keep pupils safe, and they enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Typical comments included, 'We love how it embraces the diversity of those in the school and builds community.'

The school is very effective in ensuring that pupils feel welcome and included. Pupils are polite and articulate. They move around the school and playground respectfully. Bullying is rare and pupils agree that teachers deal with it quickly whenever it does happen.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities that help to develop their talents and interests. For example, football, film club and yoga are highly valued and well attended. Trips and visits that enhance the curriculum are frequent, such as performing musically at theatres. These experiences help build confidence in pupils and prepare them very well for their next stage of education. The school provides parents with plenty of useful news and information about school life.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have been redesigning the curriculum in recent years. This has made the school's curriculum intent more ambitious. Leaders have focused explicitly on developing pupils' reading and writing skills. This includes through additional sessions to support pupils who struggle with their reading, writing and mathematics. The school has made sure that subject leadership has been strengthened, particularly to develop pupils' literacy skills. As a result, pupils' writing has developed well so that they write more fluently, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In art, pupils produce work to a high standard. They speak confidently about their learning of media, styles, and different artists.

Curriculum changes have not had sufficient time to impact on the outcomes of previous cohorts and, hence, the published outcomes for 2023 do not reflect how well-prepared younger pupils currently are. In some subjects, curriculum changes are recent and have not been fully embedded. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and skills in these subjects. In the early years, staff develop children's communication and language through a carefully planned curriculum. Adults plan activities that stimulate children's interests and provide meaningful opportunities to learn.

Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding and revisit prior learning. As a result, most pupils remember well what they have been taught across different subjects. In some subjects, the school does not use pupils' assessment information to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge closely. This means that teaching moves on to new content before pupils are fully ready.

The school has introduced a new phonics programme in the last three years. This has resulted in a robust and successful approach to the teaching of early reading. The school's work in this area is making a significant difference to pupils' reading fluency and confidence. Staff use pupils' phonics knowledge to support them with early writing effectively. The teaching of phonics begins in the Nursery. The school ensures that staff are very well trained. Reading books are matched closely to the sounds that pupils know. Pupils develop a love of books and are encouraged to read a wide range of interesting and diverse texts. They read regularly. Any pupils that need further opportunities to practise reading receive tailored additional support.

The school is ambitious for the significant number of pupils attending that have an education, health, and care plan. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified at an early stage, including those in the early years specially resourced provision. Skilled adult support means that pupils with SEND are well supported in class. Staff across the school have received training in how to support pupils with SEND, for example training from the specially resourced provision on how to understand and respond to pupils with autism.

Clear routines and consistent approaches ensure that pupils behave well. There are very strong, positive working relationships between pupils and staff. In early years, children are polite, independent, and curious learners. Leaders have recently trained staff in how to understand the causes of different kinds of behaviours. As a result of these recent changes, there are now a range of strategies in place to support pupils who struggle to behave appropriately.

The school's curriculum extends beyond the academic. Pupils enjoy a range of leadership opportunities such as those of eco warriors and school councillors. The school is championing work on equality and diversity and has ambitious plans in this area.

Governors carry out a range of activities to assure themselves that the school's systems are working well. They offer robust support and challenge with full understanding of their statutory responsibilities. When making decisions, leaders consider the impact on staff carefully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Revisions and refinements to the curriculum have not embedded fully in some subjects. This means sometimes the depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding of subject content is not secure. The school should continue to

embed its ambitious curriculum to ensure that all pupils consistently achieve as well as they can.

- In some foundation subjects, the school's systems for assessment are not fully developed. This means that, on occasions, teaching does not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding precisely. The school needs to further develop its approach to assessment across the curriculum so that staff deepen pupils' understanding so they are fully ready for new content.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	101057
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10327635
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	696
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Craig Rajgopaul
Headteacher	Deborah Hart
Website	www.hillbrookschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 February 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school has Nursery classes.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties; speech, language, and communication needs; autism; social, emotional, and mental health difficulties; and moderate learning difficulties.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior teacher and a range of staff. They held meetings with senior staff, the special educational needs coordinators, curriculum leaders, staff, and governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View online survey. They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.

Inspection team

Sam Johnson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Farrow	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Ridding	Ofsted Inspector
Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy	Ofsted Inspector
David Hatchett	Ofsted Inspector

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