

INSPECTION REPORT

HILLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Baddeley Green, Stoke-on-Trent

Inspection Number: 248529

Unique reference number: 124024

Headteacher: George Loizou

Reporting inspector: Brenda Iles
12000

Dates of inspection: 30th September to 2nd October, 2002

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Field Avenue Baddeley Green Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
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Telephone number:	01782 235350
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	D.P.Gray
Date of previous inspection:	12/1/1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

What kind of school is Hillside Primary?

It serves a mixed area of owner occupied and rented accommodation in the northeast area of Stoke-on-Trent. The school is about average in size and educates boys and girls aged from three to eleven. Three in ten pupils attend the school from beyond the reserved area. The oversubscribed nursery has been open for two years and offers 26 places for children from the age of three. Attainment on entry is average. Twenty-three pupils are identified as having special educational needs and a further five talented pupils are also supported. Almost all pupils are from white English-speaking families. The school takes pride in the learning partnerships it fosters within the community and aims to provide a caring and industrious atmosphere in which all pupils achieve their best.

How successful is Hillside Primary?

It is a good school that is well led and managed. Pupils reach very high standards in mathematics and science as a result of very good teaching. Standards in English are average but could be better. Teaching is good but sometimes over directed and pupils need more opportunities to make choices about aspects of their learning. Very good support is given to pupils with special needs and those who are more able. Provision in the nursery and reception class is very good. The school provides good value for money.

How good is the education offered by Hillside Primary?

The quality of education is good.

	Foundation Stage	Infants	Juniors
The effectiveness of teaching	Very good	Good	Good
How well pupils learn	Very good	Good	Good
Pupils' personal development	Very good	Good	Good

Guidance and support for pupils	Very good
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good
The effectiveness of the curriculum	Satisfactory
Inclusion of pupils with different needs	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Satisfactory
Quality of leadership	Good
Quality of management	Good
Capacity to improve	Good
Value for money	Good

Key strengths	The most important areas for further improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursery and reception class, where teaching is very good, provide a very good start to children's learning • Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able is very good • Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very positive • Pupils are well cared for • Leadership is good and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking skills, while average across all age groups, could be higher • Raising the average standards in reading and writing in Years 3-6 to the high levels seen in mathematics and science, particularly by the use of literacy skills across subjects • Opportunities for pupils to choose how to investigate and record their work • The quality of reports for parents • The sharing of specific targets to support learning with pupils and parents

What standards do pupils reach?

(1) Standards in national tests in 2001:

Compared to all schools and to schools with a similar intake In Year 2 and in Year 6

Year 2	All schools	Similar schools	Year 6	All schools	Similar schools	Key – A* The best 5% A – Well above average B – Above average C – Average D – Below average E – Well below average
Reading	A	A	English	C	D	
Writing	A	A*	Mathematics	A	A	
Mathematics	A	A	Science	A	A	

(2) Standards seen during the inspection:

Based on evidence drawn from observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' book and teachers' plans

Subjects	Infants	Juniors
English	Well above average	Average
Mathematics	Well above average	Well above average
Science	Well above average	Well above average
ICT	Average	Average
RE	Average	Average

Children make good progress and by the end of the reception year exceed the expectations for their ages in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, personal, social and emotional development. Physical and language development is appropriate but speech lacks clarity.

How well has Hillside performed since its previous inspection?

Since the school was last inspected in January 1998 good improvements have been made. The key issues of the last report have been addressed well. Teaching has improved and standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and in science and mathematics by Year 6. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good. Provision for the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes is also very good. The school is set to continue to succeed because leadership is good, staff and governors are committed, and there is a desire to involve the community and to act upon advice and guidance to develop the school further. Identified priorities reflect an accurate evaluation of the key strengths and areas for development.

What pleases parents and pupils most	Aspects parents and pupils would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils like school and make good progress Parents and pupils think teaching is good Parents think the school is well led and managed Pupils like the interesting range of activities the school provides for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small number of parents would like their children to have more homework Some older pupils would like behaviour to improve in the playground

PART B: COMMENTARY

1. HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

Pupils make good progress compared to their achievements when they start school.

Standards achieved by the end of the reception year.

Early assessments of children's learning when they start school show they are at a similar stage of development to most children of their age. Speech is often difficult to understand and is a weakness.

Strengths	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By the end of the reception year most children exceed the expectations for their age in mathematics, creative, personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication, language and literacy and their physical development they meet the expectations• Progress made by children in the Foundation Stage is good in all the areas of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speech lacks clarity and structure

Year 2 - Standards attained in national tests and in the work seen.

Strengths	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achievements in reading and mathematics are well above average and those of similar schools• Achievements in writing are in the top five per cent of similar schools• Achievements in science are well above average.• Higher attainers achieve very well• Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speaking skills are average but there are weaknesses in the use of description and Standard English. This affects pupils' ability to write using a broad range of interesting, expressive language

Year 6 – Standards attained in national tests and in the work seen.

Strengths	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards are well above average in mathematics and science• Higher attainers achieve very well. The proportion reaching very high levels in mathematics, science and English has increased over the last two years. Half the pupils achieved the higher levels in mathematics, just over half in science and almost a third in English in the 2002 tests• Pupils make good use of technical skills in English, for example punctuation and recognise the purpose and function of words in sentences• Performance in science and mathematics, subjects that do not require pupils to use descriptive language in their recording, is higher than in English• Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well due to the early identification of individual needs, very good teaching and very good use of resources to support learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards in speaking, reading and writing are not as high as they could be• Test results in reading and writing are below similar schools• There has been an over emphasis on technical accuracy and not enough opportunities for pupils to share their ideas, read independently and to use their writing skills in other subjects

The school sets challenging targets in English, mathematics and science, which it meets.

Other aspects of attainment and achievement:

- Standards seen in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and in religious education (RE) they meet the requirements of the agreed local syllabus.
- Comparisons between the performance of boys and girls showed no significant difference during the inspection. The significant gender imbalances between cohorts make comparisons of performance in tests unreliable.
- Detailed analysis of test results shows that the small number of pupils who have joined the school at non-standard times often perform less well in Year 6, particularly in English.
- The school has taken steps to address the weaknesses described in English and standards are already improving.
- Trends over time are broadly in line with the national trend.

2. HOW WELL ARE PUPILS’ PERSONAL QUALITIES DEVELOPED?

This aspect of the school’s work is a strength. There is a good spirit of co-operation and respect between the staff and pupils which helps to create a purposeful and well-ordered school in which all are valued.

The pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good.

The contribution made by pupils.	How the staff promote success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils are keen and eager to come to school • Children in the reception and nursery classes show much enthusiasm and excitement about learning • Pupils participate in extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm • In most lessons the pupils’ do their best and take pride in their work. Pupils with special educational needs are very keen to please their teachers • They really enjoy practical activities such as experiments in science and physical education • Incidents of aggressive behaviour are rare. The pupils play together well and have coped maturely with the difficulties posed during building work. The pupils are polite and helpful to others looking after others and showing respect for the school’s resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff value individuals and know how to motivate them • Learning experiences in the nursery and reception class are interesting, challenging and exciting • Staff, parents and visitors share their time and expertise with the pupils and the activities are fun • Staff successfully focus on the needs of less confident and more able pupils making sure that the work is matched to their needs • Staff plan and prepare practical work well so that pupils learn effectively • Staff are consistent in praising pupils when they behave well and show kindness, and are swift and supportive in dealing with any problems. They encourage the pupils through rewards and by giving them responsibilities

Attendance is good.

The pupils love coming to school. They are punctual. Attendance is above the national average. The school has an effective system to monitor absences and promotes the importance of regular attendance well.

There are very good relationships between staff and pupils.

The contribution made by pupils.	How the staff promote success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The older pupils are very supportive of younger pupils, for example, helping to prepare the room for the reception children and resolving conflict in the playground • Boys and girls get on well together. • The pupils show a mature attitude when discussing personal and social issues. They express strong opinions about fairness and justice, and know that sexism and racism should not be tolerated • Children in the reception and nursery classes make very good progress in forming friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff provide good opportunities for the pupils to help around the school such as at dinnertime in tidying away and in helping to prepare resources for lessons • They train the pupils in how to listen to both sides of an argument • Boys and girls are encouraged to work together and to respect each other • In some lessons such as geography and history pupils discuss issues affecting their community. The staff actively discourage unhelpful and damaging comments about others • The staff are very successful in encouraging the children to become independent and to work together

The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactorily promotes spiritual and cultural development.

How the staff promote success.	Areas for development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and teach the differences between right and wrong very well. • There are many and varied opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility for their own actions • Pupils are encouraged to resolve conflict and misunderstandings by considering the impact of their actions on others • Assemblies and special visitors make a positive contribution to school life • Social events and extra-curricular activities contribute much to the pupils' own development and awareness of others' needs • There are good opportunities at lunchtime for the pupils to engage in conversation with other pupils and adults and to learn about manners and social graces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more opportunities for pupils to study and discuss other beliefs and traditions • Extend opportunities for the pupils to explore feelings and emotions through literature and music • Prepare pupils more effectively in understanding the wide range of cultures that exist in Britain today

In most aspects, pupils are prepared well for later life.

Where the school is successful.	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and they work well in different sizes of groups • Pupils are successfully encouraged to take part in team games and to support school activities • The older pupils act maturely and enjoy their lunchtime responsibilities, guiding and supporting others well • The school's council members take their responsibilities seriously and show a good understanding of how to bring about change • Pupils take responsibility for helping around the school with jobs such as distributing fruit • The staff encourage volunteers and prepare pupils well for adult life by, for example, asking pupils to apply in writing for jobs around the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing more opportunities for the pupils to work independently • Increasing opportunities for the pupils to select resources, choose their own method of working and extend their skills in research

3. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The quality has improved since the last inspection.

Strengths of teaching:	Features of effective learning:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have very good knowledge of pupils and understand their individual needs • Staff have high expectations of pupils and expect them to work hard and achieve their best • Staff make good use of technical terms • Challenging tasks are planned for more able pupils and are particularly good in mathematics and science • Lessons are interesting and engage pupils • Praise is used appropriately and relationships are very good • The management of behaviour is effective • Good use is made of support staff • Effective questioning and organisation enables all pupils to be included in discussions and activities • Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' achievements and plan lessons based on prior achievements 	<p>Pupils -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • like school and are confident that staff will help them to succeed in lessons • are appropriately challenged and supported and do well in lessons • have a good understanding of subject specific vocabulary • who are more able achieve their potential in mathematics and science • are well motivated and want to learn • have good self esteem and look forward to lessons • respect the adults who help them • with special educational needs progress well because they are fully included in lessons • of all abilities have the same opportunities to take part in lessons • Work is well matched to different ability groups and extends skills and knowledge

There are some weaknesses in the teaching of literacy in Years 3 to 6 and in the use of assessment and time in Years 1 to 6.

Areas to develop	How this affects learning
Some lessons are too long.	Some pupils find it hard to sustain their interest and motivation.
Insufficient attention is given to developing speaking skills.	Pupils do not use Standard English well enough in their responses.
Marking is not consistent. It is insufficiently detailed to identify success and areas for improvements.	Pupils are unsure how to improve their work
Assessment information is not used to set personal targets with pupils.	Pupils do not know their precise learning targets or the timescales for their achievement.
Teachers' expertise in literacy is not as well developed as in mathematics and science. Too few links are made to teaching in other subjects.	Pupils in Years 3-6 do not achieve as highly enough in English. There are not enough opportunities for them to use their literacy skills and knowledge in other subjects.
There is not enough direct teaching of ICT and no ICT suite.	Pupils receive good support in groups but do not benefit from specific teaching time to enable them to progress at a faster rate.

4. HOW WELL DOES THE CURRICULUM MEET PUPILS' NEEDS?

The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a very good range of activities which support high achievement. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is satisfactory. The over-emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has resulted in a narrowing of the overall curriculum.

The strengths of the curriculum	What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum for the Foundation Stage • Provision for mathematics and science for all age groups. • Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented pupils • Children are well prepared for the National Curriculum at the beginning of the infants and for their transfer to the high school • There is a good range of extra-curricular activities • Personal, social and health education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not enough time for ICT • The planning for literacy across the curriculum, particularly debate, discussion and extended writing • Older pupils do not have enough opportunities to read for independent study, research or enjoyment • Opportunities for pupils to meet people from other cultures.

Other aspects of the curriculum

The school has an appropriate number of teachers and support staff to cover the curriculum. Links with Holden Lane High school are good. An external music teacher and dance teachers provide additional support. Pupils have access to the science laboratories in the high school and teachers borrow resources from Holden Lane to support art and design. The school meets the needs of gifted and talented pupils well. There are plans to liaise further with the high school to ensure that the curriculum challenges pupils without covering the work planned for the first year in their new school.

The equipment and resources are satisfactory overall but there are not enough books and the library is cramped. Pupils rarely have access for independent study or research. There is not enough planning for the use of ICT across the curriculum. While special visitors enhance the curriculum, there are few visits or visitors to support pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own

5. HOW WELL ARE PUPILS GUIDED AND SUPPORTED?

The school provides good guidance and support to ensure the care, safety and welfare of its pupils. Teachers monitor, assess and guide pupils' work well but do not share their information and plans for improvement well enough with pupils and parents.

Where the school is successful	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils feel secure and happy • Health and safety issues are promoted and monitored well, for example fire, security and risk assessments • Child protection procedures are good; staff handle issues in a sensitive but thorough manner • Pupils' achievements are monitored well enabling them to receive very good support, for example, those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve their work • Insufficient use is made of the pupils'

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' evaluations of their own work support good progress in mathematics and science • A very good induction programme ensures pupils settle very well and quickly into the nursery • Progress is tracked well from the reception class to Year 6 • Children moving to the school are supported well and soon settle into school routines • Good transfer arrangements ensure pupils are confident about their move to secondary school 	evaluations of their work
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6. HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES THE SCHOOL WORK WITH PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY?

The school has established good relationships with parents and the local community.

Where the school is successful	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents give good support to their children's learning • The active parents' and teachers' association is very successful and provides valuable resources. • Parents provide good help, especially with extra-curricular activities • Good information for parents encourages them to help their children, for example open evenings and very good nursery newsletters • Liaison with parents of pupils with special education needs is very strong • It regularly consults parents and pupils and uses the information well in its forward planning • Local groups make good use of the premises • Good liaison with a local college is helping to develop the parent and community partnership very effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of annual reports on pupils' progress. They do not contain sufficient information to indicate progress or areas for further development • Parents are unclear about their children's targets for improvement

7. HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The school is well led and effectively managed.

The headteacher provides good leadership. He is supported well by the deputy head and senior staff. Staff are committed to school improvement and there is a good overview of the schools strengths and areas for development. Governors give good support and fulfil their statutory duties. They have a good knowledge of the schools successes and areas that can be improved in the future. Monitoring arrangements are good but more can be done to improve systems of evaluation. Resources are managed well.

Strengths in leadership and management	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher and senior staff have a clear vision for school improvement • All staff are fully involved in decision making • The school plan accurately identifies key areas for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinators of foundation subjects have not had the opportunity to develop their personal expertise

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monitoring of literacy, numeracy and science and analysis of test results has been rigorous • There has been a strong emphasis on high achievement and improving provision to challenge pupils fully • All subject leaders have time to review planning, teaching and learning regularly • Financial management and routine organisation is very effective • Procedures to ensure the best value underpin decision making • Performance management has been implemented successfully • Priorities reflect the school's intentions to raise standards in literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or to lead training for staff recently • There has not been enough evaluation of the balance of time given to subjects, timetabling arrangements and the impact of very long lessons on teaching and learning
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Governors carry out their duties effectively and fulfil all their statutory duties. They regularly take part in school activities and provide a good link with the local community. Local schools and colleges also make valuable contributions to school life and community learning. A programme of courses for parents has been a successful initiative. Grants are used appropriately. Buildings developments are currently under way to improve the quality of the accommodation which requires extensive refurbishment. There is a rolling programme for improvements supported by appropriate funding and planning.

8. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE?

- Raise standards in speaking in all age groups and in reading and writing in Years 3 to 6
- Review timetabling arrangements to ensure lessons are not too long and to provide more frequent and regular opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and independence in learning,
- Make better use of assessment information
 - to set personal targets with pupils and improve their self knowledge of their successes and areas for development, and
 - to provide better information for parents to help them to know their children's strengths and weaknesses and how they can help them to improve.

9. WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS?

Areas for learning for children in the Foundation Stage

The quality of provision is very good and a strength of the school.

Early assessments of children's learning when they start school show they are at a similar stage to most children in all the areas of learning although speaking skills are frequently a weakness. The new nursery gives children a very secure and successful start to learning.

The main reasons why provision has improved.

- Funding has been used well to develop the quality of the learning environment
- The curriculum meets the needs of children well
- Teaching is very good
- Parents are given very good information to help them to know how to help their children.
- The stage of learning is well led and managed
- All staff are committed and enthusiastic
- The ethos for learning is very good
- There is a clear vision for future development

Children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning.

Standards in the areas of learning	Children's main achievements
<i>Communication, language and literacy:</i> Children make good progress and meet the goals expected	Children enjoy books, recognise words and write their names and simple sentences.
<i>Mathematical development:</i> Children make good progress and exceed the goals expected	Children have a good understanding of numbers and shapes.
<i>Personal, social and emotional development:</i> Children make good progress and exceed the goals expected	Children help each other. They play happily and take pride in their work. Relationships are very good.
<i>Physical development:</i> Children make appropriate progress and meet the goals expected	Children control wheeled toys, hold pencils correctly and use scissors appropriately
<i>Creative development:</i> Children make good progress and exceed the goals expected	Children recognise colours and show awareness of detail in their pictures.
<i>Knowledge and understanding of the world:</i> Children make good progress and exceed the goals expected	Good. Children understand how plants grow and talk about important people and places in their environment.

Areas for development: Speech often lacks clarity and structure

Children make rapid progress because teaching is very good and staff in the nursery and reception class plan activities which are challenging and exciting.

Strengths in teaching and learning.	Minor areas to develop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff have very good knowledge of the needs of the age range • Activities encourage children to share, cooperate and develop independence • Resources such as the outdoor play area are used effectively • Staff join in children's play which supports the development of language and thinking skills very well • Very good attention is given to develop reading, writing and number skills • The staff use questioning very effectively to assess learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for children in the nursery and reception classes to work together more often. • The accommodation in the reception class, to match the quality developed in the nursery

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff manage behaviour effectively through their consistent positive approaches to teaching right from wrong | |
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The induction to school is very good and involves parents fully; children settle happily and enjoy a broad range of activities which embrace play and the teaching of communication skills. These are built upon very well in the reception class and children learn to enjoy books, picking out their favourite characters, pictures and rhymes. They also recognise numbers to ten, count accurately and pick out shapes in their classroom. Particular strengths were seen in children's understanding of how plants grow and in their illustrations and paintings which accompany their earliest writing efforts.

<p>Other aspects of the provision for the Foundation Stage</p>

The Foundation Stage of learning is effectively led and managed. Regular planning meetings ensure that activities are planned which meet the needs of different ability and gender groups. Assessment information is used well to ensure children are challenged fully and reach their potential. Detailed records show the progress children make from the time they start school until the end of the stage of learning. These achievements are passed on to the next teacher and shared with parents through the annual reports. Evaluations of improvements are accurate. There is enthusiasm and excitement for the future, for example in the ideas staff have to develop further the children's garden. Support staff very effectively support children's learning. There is scope for the school to build on these successes and improve the physical environment in the reception class to the standard seen in the nursery.

ENGLISH

The overall quality of provision for English is satisfactory.

Standards in English are well above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained well above average standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are average but are not as high as reported previously. Standards at the end of Year 6 have declined since the previous inspection and are now average. Recent test results show that the school has halted this decline but standards, particularly in speaking and in using writing skills in other subjects, are not high enough when compared with the pupils' very good achievement in mathematics and science.

<p>The main reasons why standards have declined at the end of Year 6.</p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching concentrates on basic skills such as grammar, spelling and punctuation without extending opportunities for the pupils to use creative and imaginative ideas • Frequent changes of staff for the oldest pupils • Marking provides little guidance on how the pupils' might improve • There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to speak in public, take part in debate and be involved in drama |
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Progress is satisfactory overall but could be better.

Progress in reading is good in Years 1 and 2 but satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 where individual reading practice is not as consistent. Few older pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books. The pupils make good use of dictionaries to check their work but insufficient use of the library for research. The pupils make good progress in listening and are attentive in lessons but progress in speaking and writing is unsatisfactory. Boys and girls make similar progress. The gifted and talented pupils are challenged sufficiently and

make good progress, as do those with special educational needs as they benefit from effective additional support and guidance.

The teaching of basic skills is good throughout the school. However, teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is not sufficiently focused on helping pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to their work in writing creatively and in other subjects and this is unsatisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning.	Areas to develop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff have good subject knowledge • There are good resources for and consistent use of the National Literacy Strategy • The staff's good use of questions • Pupils are taught to use reference books effectively • Lessons are planned and prepared well and good use is made of support staff • Pupils' behaviour is managed well • Pupils work hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some lessons are too long • Too little variation in the methods of teaching • Pupils lack confidence in writing in a way which commands the readers' attention • Marking is regularly undertaken but limited use is made of targets to challenge the pupils • The library has insufficient books

Other aspects of the school's provision for English

The school has identified the need to improve standards at the end of Year 6 but has met with limited success. Although there is regular monitoring by the subject leader and analysis of test results the school has not used the information to tackle the variation in performance between English and the high achievement by pupils in mathematics and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is very effective. Standards are well above the national average in Years 2 and 6.

There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Boys' achievements are higher than those of the girls in the juniors. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are very well challenged and many achieve standards that exceed the expectations for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress and achieve their best.

The main reasons for the improvement in standards throughout the school:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are good at teaching basic skills • Pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons • The teachers plan their lessons to ensure the needs of pupils of all abilities including gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs are met very well • Teachers expect their pupils to achieve their maximum potential • Teachers use test results well to track pupils' progress and to identify individual needs

The teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. The beginnings of the lessons where the class works together are particularly effective.

Strengths in teaching and learning.	Areas to develop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff have good subject knowledge • The numeracy strategy is well implemented • Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and expect them to work hard • Teachers explain learning clearly and maintain a good pace • Pupils are eager to answer questions and to learn new skills • There are very good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs, including those who are gifted and talented. • Pupils work hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some lessons are too long and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions in problem solving situations • The marking of pupils' does not consistently give information about how pupils can improve • The presentation of work could be neater

Other aspects of the school's provision for mathematics

The subject leader provides good leadership, monitors planning and ensures pupils' work is at appropriate levels. She supports her colleagues very well. Teachers and support staff are deployed very effectively, allowing all pupils to achieve well. However, the monitoring of pupils' work has not been rigorous enough to identify the inconsistencies in the marking and the organisation of the written work. The school now needs to build on its considerable successes and involve the pupils in their own learning to help them organise, explore and apply their skills more independently.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is very good.

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are well above average and pupils make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and achieve their best. Gifted and talented pupils are fully challenged and achieve standards which are well above those expected of the age range. Trends show sustained high standards over time and good improvement since the last inspection.

The main reasons for the improvement in standards throughout the school:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is mainly very good • Interest and enthusiasm are very good • Expectations of staff and individual pupils are high

Pupils' successes	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils have a very good understanding of fair testing procedures • Knowledge of living things and how the human body works are very good • Pupils use scientific words accurately • Research skills are well developed • They competently use the computers' tools to create, amend and improve their work • Pupils apply mathematical and technological skills to create spreadsheets and graphs to present their findings • They collaborate well and share ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to undertake personal research

Teaching and learning are good.

Strengths in teaching and learning	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers' subject knowledge• Support for pupils with special educational needs ensures their full inclusion• The use of ICT to develop research skills• More able pupils are challenged well• Expectations are very high• Good use of scientific vocabulary and questioning techniques support the assessment of learning• Pupils enjoy science and work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and knowledge independently in investigations and research• The use of the library for research• Marking does not consistently indicate how work can be improved• Lessons are often too long and some pupils find it hard to sustain their motivation

Other aspects of the school's provision for science

The subject leader provides very good leadership. Schemes of work support teaching and learning well and staff training and development has been effective. Good links are made to subjects such as history and mathematics and teachers draw attention to the excitement of discovery. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development. Monitoring arrangements have been effective and evaluative comments accurately identify future developments. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The school makes satisfactory provision for ICT.

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average and progress is consistent and satisfactory. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make satisfactory progress. Gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to share their skills with their classmates and they make satisfactory progress. All aspects of the subject are covered although there are shortages of software to challenge pupils and to move learning on at a good pace. Standards are not as high as those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' successes	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word processing; the pupils competently use the computers' tools to create, amend and improve their work• The juniors make good use of the Internet to find out information in mathematics and history• Pupils understand and use spreadsheets and graphs effectively in mathematics and science• They know how to control programmable toys and devises by accurately writing a sequence of instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using computers to present information in different ways that are appropriate for a variety of audiences

Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' subject knowledge following recent good training • Teaching basic skills and processes • Using the Internet to support pupils' in researching topics • Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to use computers • The more able help their less confident classmates • Pupils work hard and are keen to improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the use of computers in lessons in other subjects • Keeping a good record of pupils' skills to guide teachers when planning lessons • Improving the software

Other aspects of the school's provision for ICT.

The subject leader has a clear understanding of how to improve standards. There is a suitable scheme of work which supports planning, teaching and learning. The monitoring of how well the subject is taught and how pupils learn are at an early stage of development and result in some repetition in the teaching of skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school makes satisfactory provision for religious education and pupils achieve the standards expected for their age detailed in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection. Few lessons were observed and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and the teachers' planning.

Pupils' successes	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others • They listen attentively in discussions and to stories • Pupils understand the importance of festivals and celebrations • They recognise that places of worship and artefacts are important to prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to carry out independent research • Opportunities for discussion and debate

Teaching and learning are satisfactory

Strengths teaching and learning	What could be better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships between pupils and teachers so pupils are able to talk freely • Discussions are interesting and pupils listen very well • Good use is made of resources to help pupils reflect on their experiences and feelings • Pupils are taught to respect for the beliefs and feelings of others • The lessons develop pupils' moral and social skills well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lessons are too long to sustain motivation and interest • Debate and discussion are not used well enough to improve pupils' speaking skills • The provision for pupils to experience people and places of worship from the non-Christian faiths they study

Pupils make steady progress. The good relationships give pupils the security to discuss important issues such as sadness and their reaction to candlelight. Sometimes too much of the discussion comes from the teacher and not enough is done to encourage pupils to develop their communication skills. Discussion with the oldest pupils indicates that they do not remember what they have learnt about some religions such as Islam and Judaism. Although pupils remember a Jewish visitor well, there are too few opportunities for first

hand multi-cultural experiences, including people of other faiths and places of worship, to make an impact on pupils' learning. This is particularly relevant in Hillside because it is virtually a mono-cultural school.

Other aspects of the school's provision for RE

The subject leader has just completed a new scheme of work that will ensure that the pupils extend their knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. She is aware of the shortcomings in the pupils' first-hand experiences and has plans to improve the provision.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC AND PRACTICAL

The school makes satisfactory provision in the creative, aesthetic and practical aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall. The best progress seen is in art and design in Year 5 due to effective teaching and a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to develop skills and techniques consistently. Older pupils make good progress in games. No music was inspected.

Pupils' successes	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils use their knowledge of the work of famous artists to create imaginative and vibrant pictures. • Good observational drawing in Year 6 • Pattern work in the style of William Morris • Printing throughout the school, particularly the work done in Year 5 on Tudor houses • They follow instructions carefully when making card models • The pupils are proud of their sporting achievements, particularly in games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' skills in designing and evaluating their work in design and technology • Pupils are unsure how to use a range of tools and materials for modelling

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and more effective in art and physical education.

Strengths in teaching and learning	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' subject knowledge of famous artists • Teaching basic art skills and techniques • Developing pupils' physical skills • Using the Internet to support pupils' in researching famous artists • Pupils enjoy practical work and apply themselves well • The celebration of pupils' work through displays • Pupils work hard and are keen to improve • They are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities, particularly sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expecting more of pupils in designing their own work • Increasing opportunities for the pupils to use a variety of tools and materials • Improving assessment so that teachers are clear about what has already been learned in order to avoid repetition

Other aspects of the school's provision

The subject leaders satisfactorily monitor the pupils' work.

They advise and support their colleagues appropriately but there is a lack of rigour in ensuring that skills, knowledge and understanding are built upon consistently. The school has struggled to offer sufficient high quality training for teachers, particularly in design and technology. The school has a limited range and quantity of resources and this hampers pupils' progress.

HUMANITIES

The school's provision for history and geography is satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning historical facts and are aware of major events and personalities in British history. They also know much about maps and the features of their locality.

Pupils' successes	Areas for further development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their knowledge of Tudor times, the Victorians and ancient civilisations • Their understanding of how the closure of potteries affects their community and family life • They understand the differences between rural and semi-rural life • They are able to explain the reasons for some changes in society • They understand that some historical events are represented in different ways such as the Bayeux Tapestry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are unable to write at length about their studies • They find it difficult to debate and discuss complex issues

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and particularly good in geography in Year 4.

Strengths in teaching	Areas to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm for history • Some teachers inspire the pupils through using precious resources such as antique maps of the area • Using the Internet to support pupils' in researching historical events and characters • Pupils are keen to learn about the potteries, the city and their neighbourhood • Pupils show much respect when handling historical objects • Good use of visitors to enrich the pupils' understanding and experiences of Tudor life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are too often over-directed by the teachers and therefore pupils do not learn to take the initiative in lessons • Providing more opportunities for the pupils to use their initiative, select resources and find out information for themselves • Using history and geography to enrich the pupils' use of skills learned in literacy and numeracy

Other aspects of the school's provision

The subject leaders satisfactorily monitor the pupils' work.

The way the timetable is organised means that lessons are often too long and the pupils' interest and concentration wanes. The staff have not had recent training to extend their subject knowledge and broaden their approaches to teaching. Resources, particularly books, are in short supply.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

(The school's chosen aspect for in depth inspection)

The provision is very good and pupils make very good progress.

This shows very good improvement since the last inspection when the provision was unsatisfactory and pupils did not make enough progress.

The strengths of the provision	The impact on pupils' learning
The analysis of pupils' achievements and the tracking of the rates of progress they make	Pupils' needs are identified and prompt action is taken
Individual education plans reflect the needs of the pupils, including those with physical and social difficulties	The teachers plan work that matches these plans so pupils achieve their targets
The special educational needs coordinator, teachers and teaching assistants support the pupils well	Pupils are generally confident and succeed in their tasks
There are very good links with parents	Parents know what their children need to learn and support them well
Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life	Peers respect and support each other and everyone is valued
Gifted and talented pupils are identified and appropriate action is taken	These pupils achieve very well and standards in mathematics and science are high

Other aspects of the school's provision

The coordinator for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The new code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is well established and the monthly meeting between the parents and the officer from the Parent Partnership Service cements links between the parents, the school and the High school. This enables pupils to receive consistent support. The result is that their progress is very good and many achieve average standards in the national tests for mathematics and science. Progress in English is not so rapid.

What could be improved further?

- Teachers need to encourage pupils to improve their speech. Too many teachers accept one word answers or poor articulation and pupils are rarely corrected
- Pupils' knowledge of their own targets. Although teachers and parents know what steps are needed for pupils to achieve the targets in their individual education plans, the pupils do not. This prevents them taking responsibility for their own learning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA, INDICATORS AND APPENDICES

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Percentage	0	54	29	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	220

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

STANDARDS

Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Tests

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A*	A*	A	A*	
Mathematics	A*	A*	A	A	

Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	A	B	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A*	B	A	A	
science	A	A	A	A	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	31.1

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

APPENDIX 1. GOVERNORS' AUDIT OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The governing body has checked all the areas below to see whether the laws on education that apply to the school are being followed. Inspectors confirm all statutory requirements are met in full.

Are statutory requirements in place?	Fully in place	Partly in place	Not in place
Every pupil receives the full curriculum that the school must provide.	*		
The school provides teaching of religious education for all pupils and has told parents of the right to withdraw their children.	*		
The school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and has told parents of the right to withdraw their children.	*		
The school has decided whether or not to provide sex and relationships education to pupils of primary age and, if doing so, has told parents about the content and organisation of the programme and their right to withdraw their children.	*		
The school does not discriminate against pupils, job applicants or staff on the grounds of sex, race, disability or marital status.	*		
The school has a written policy on race equality and has told parents how it is working and what impact it has had.		*	
The school meets general and specific duties in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice.	*		
The school follows the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice when meeting pupils' special educational needs and makes its policy known to parents.	*		
The school follows the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. It has told parents about its SEN policy and arrangements and reports annually on the success of its SEN policy and the progress made in improving accessibility.	*		
The school meets all relevant health and safety legislation.	*		
The school follows the procedures for child protection set out by the local Area Child Protection Committee.	*		
The responsibilities of the governing body, its committees, the headteacher and staff in respect of finances are clearly defined and limits of delegated authority are clearly set out.	*		
The school has a performance management policy and ensures that all teachers, including the head teacher, are appraised.	*		
The school has set up and operates all relevant complaints and appeals procedures.	*		