



Hillside First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109106
LEA North Somerset
Inspection number 278125
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Barter AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Church Road
School category	Community		Worle
Age range of pupils	4 to 8		Weston-super-Mare BS22 9EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01934 512200
Number on roll	150	Fax number	01934 512200
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Trish Clarke
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Christopher Hood

Age group 4 to 8	Inspection dates 29 June 2006 - 30 June 2006	Inspection number 278125
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending this small school are White British, with a small number from other ethnic backgrounds. All pupils speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average, as is the number entitled to claim free school meals. Attainment on entry is in line with that expected for children aged four. A pre-school provision is currently being built in the school grounds and will open in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. This confirms the school's view of its own effectiveness. The school's many strengths are also recognised by parents who describe it as 'warm and welcoming' and as having a 'real community feeling.'

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress from the time that they start school to when they leave at the end of Year 3. Provision for children in the Reception classes is good. The 'Welcome Club' helps them to settle quickly to school routines. They make good progress in all areas of learning and nearly all meet the goals expected of them. Good quality teaching enables all pupils to achieve well and to reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The Hillside Year of Reading is a notable example of the work done to help pupils achieve even greater success. Pupils say, 'I really love reading now.'

Pupils love school, behave exceptionally well and are very keen to learn. The care that they receive is outstanding and is a significant factor in helping pupils to feel safe and happy and to achieve well. Many aspects of the curriculum are strong and help pupils to greatly enjoy learning and to discover new experiences beyond the classroom.

The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to continuing school improvement and value highly the views of the whole school community in helping the school to move forward. School self-evaluation is developing well and has led to improved assessment and target setting processes in English and mathematics which have helped to raise standards. Subject leaders are now playing a greater role in whole school development although they do not yet have a clear enough view of how well pupils achieve in subjects other than English and mathematics. This restricts their ability to help teachers plan work that matches pupils' ability and to target areas for further improvement. The school has made good progress on the issues raised at the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- In subjects other than English and mathematics:
- Improve the assessment of pupils' progress to ensure that they are always given work that is matched to their ability.
- Strengthen the capacity of subject leaders to use information about pupils' progress to identify the most important areas for curriculum development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the most capable pupils, achieve well. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making. One commented, 'Teachers will always go the extra mile to make sure your child is doing well.' Children make a good start in the Reception classes, where staff ensure that children make the

most of the wide range of learning opportunities provided. By the end of the Reception Year, nearly all children reach the nationally expected standard, and a significant minority exceed this.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well. The school meets the challenging targets it sets for pupils' attainment in Year 2, as a result of effective teaching. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and broadly reflect the results of the statutory assessments in 2005, which were significantly better than in most schools. Well focused plans, tenaciously implemented, have led to notable improvements in standards in reading in Year 2 since 2004 and have helped to raise standards in mathematics in the current year. Pupils also make good progress in Year 3 where their overall standards are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The most striking features are their exemplary behaviour and outstanding enjoyment of learning. Pupils describe their school as 'brilliant' and find it hard to suggest improvements. They are exceedingly happy and have good relationships with adults and each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are thoughtful and caring, clearly understand right and wrong and enjoy taking responsibility and helping others. Their understanding of other cultures is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Many attend well but a handful of pupils are frequently absent. The school carefully monitors these pupils and dissuades parents from taking their children out of school for holidays.

Pupils know that it is important to eat a healthy and balanced diet. 'Too much fat is bad for your heart' said one pupil seriously. They are keenly aware of the danger of busy roads, move safely around school and appreciate the school's care which keeps them safe. Pupils are helpful members of the community. The Year 3 'buddies' do a good job at helping others to share toys and play together well. Pupils are developing into well rounded young people and with their good literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, are well prepared for life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. All pupils consequently make good progress in their learning. Teachers plan lessons well and know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Their explanations are clear so that pupils confidently tackle their work. Teachers' good skills in capturing pupils' interest are reflected in pupils' positive attitudes, excellent behaviour and sustained concentration. 'I wish we didn't have to stop,' commented one Year 3 pupil at the end of a mathematics lesson when ICT was used well to support learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers use probing questions

to challenge pupils' thinking. On a few occasions, pupils have to listen to teachers for too long and have limited time to complete their work. This slows the pace of their learning.

Assessment procedures are good for children in Reception and used well to benefit their learning. They are also good in Years 1 to 3 in English and mathematics and enable teachers to match work accurately to pupils' needs. In other subjects, assessment procedures are less rigorous or systematic. This means it is more difficult for teachers to judge pupils' standards and to ensure that they are always given work that matches their ability. As a result, pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy. The school recognises this weakness and is beginning to review its practice and plan for improvements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and stimulates pupils' interest in learning. Reception age children benefit from a good range of learning activities, including purposeful play. In Years 1 to 3, a strong and effective emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the promotion of their personal development. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the opportunities for pupils to use computers. ICT is now used well to support learning in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits and visitors. Although a good range of clubs is provided for Year 3, the school is currently considering making more of these available for younger pupils. The school recognises the need to now develop more links between subjects. Occasional 'focus days' are used well to extend pupils' learning, and there are plans to make these a more regular feature. Displays of pupils work following a geography day are evidence of how this successfully brought the subject to life for many pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding. Staff have a high level of care and concern for pupils' welfare. Procedures for ensuring child protection and pupils' health and safety are well established and effective. Pupils feel very safe and know adults will always sort out their problems. Pupils of all abilities receive all the help they need but are also encouraged to be independent and so gain confidence as a result. The early identification of learning difficulties and carefully targeted support mean that pupils make good progress and often do not need help in later years. Pupils are very positive about the guidance they receive. They say their literacy and numeracy targets help them to check their own learning and to make their work 'even better and better.' Pupils greatly appreciate teachers' help to improve their work. As one said, 'I was having trouble with fractions, but after the teacher helped me to see the pattern, I just zoomed off.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. All staff have an outstanding commitment to ensure that every pupil achieves as well as they can. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, staff work together with a sense of purpose to achieve this aim and to develop the school even further. Governors make a strong contribution to the school's success because they have a detailed understanding of its strengths and are sufficiently well informed to hold it to account for any areas of weakness. Parents support the school wholeheartedly and typically comment that 'children are always helped to improve their performance in every aspect of school life.'

The school evaluates its own effectiveness accurately. Parents' and pupils' views are taken fully into account through questionnaires and at regular meetings between teachers, parents and pupils. Strategies to bring about improvement are carefully targeted at raising pupils' performance and evaluated for their success. For example, the marked improvement brought about by the 'Hillside Year of Reading' is now being consolidated with further development of pupils' comprehension skills and guidance to help parents. Subject leaders have begun useful lesson observations to monitor the provision of their subjects and to offer colleagues advice. The school recognises that it now needs to systematically assess pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics and to use this information to target the key areas for future curriculum development. The school manages its finances well, which has enabled it to significantly improve its accommodation and ICT resources since the last inspection. It is now well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome to your school and for being so polite and friendly when we talked to you about your work. You told us that yours is a good school, and we agree. These are some of the things we found out:

You told us how much you really love coming to school. We could see that this was true by your happy faces and really excellent attitudes to your work.

You behave extremely well in lessons and in the playground. You are a credit to yourselves, your school and your parents.

Your school looks after you very well indeed and this helps you to feel safe and well cared for.

Your learning in reading, writing and mathematics is good because teachers know exactly what you need to learn and give you lots of interesting and challenging work.

You told us how your literacy and numeracy targets really help you to make your work 'better and better.' Your teachers give you very good advice to help you reach your targets.

You enjoy all the interesting activities that the school provides for you. For example, you are keen swimmers, good artists and you work very well on computers. Your singing of 'Puff The Magic Dragon' in assembly was fun!

All your teachers know what needs to be done to make the school even better than it is already. To help them a bit more, we have asked them to do this:

Check how well you are learning in all subjects, not just English and mathematics. Then use this information firstly, to plan the next steps for your work and secondly, to decide the most important things to be improved in the school.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Barter Lead Inspector