



Hillside Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 119298
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280520
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Egerton
School category	Community		Tanhouse
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Skelmersdale, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01695 724860
Number on roll	233	Fax number	01695 750795
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr William Fleetwood
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Pam Shipton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-size school situated in an area with high levels of social and economic deprivation. A very significant number of pupils take a free school meal. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and none have English as an additional language. Thirty two per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils enter school with attainment levels well below those usually seen and last year nearly a third joined or left at points other than usual starting and leaving dates. The school has had an influx of pupils into different classes as schools in the locality have closed. The school is a pilot for the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning as part of the national Primary Strategy. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are relatively newly appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is accurate in its view that it provides an acceptable education and gives satisfactory value for money. Pupils make satisfactory progress although standards are below average when they leave. Many enter school with limited skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, but they do not reach the expected level in reading, writing and the use of number. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. These include high expectations of behaviour and warm relationships. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and work hard. Teaching is not always challenging or exciting enough and this slows the rate of learning. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are not building on the skills developed in the Foundation Stage. Although the school makes clear to parents the importance of good attendance, it remains stubbornly below average. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. It chooses the right priorities for improvement but does not show how the proposed activities will raise standards. Following a time of changing intake and new leadership the school is stabilising and shows good capacity to improve.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

These actions are necessary in order to raise standards of attainment.

- Improve teaching by making lessons consistently challenging and exciting and by telling pupils how to improve.
- Make sure priorities for improvement are measurable goals and focus more on raising standards.
- Develop continuity of learning between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Develop new strategies to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement from a very low starting point is satisfactory. Although standards in Years 2 and 6 remain below average, an increasing number of pupils are working at the level expected for their age. New assessment procedures provide convincing evidence that most pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are affected by poor attendance and the significant number of pupils who join the school late on in their education. This unsettles all pupils, not only the newcomers. It also makes it difficult for the school to achieve its targets because the intake is constantly changing. Results in national tests last year for Year 6 dipped because 30% of the group had additional learning needs. Current predictions are higher because more attention is now given to teaching pupils how to explain ideas in science and how to write imaginatively. However, few pupils reach above average levels. Teachers do not challenge higher attaining pupils enough to enable them to make better progress. Children in the

Foundation Stage get off to a good start although they do not reach the level expected at the end of the reception class in literacy and the use of number. Pupils with additional learning needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make better progress because of the encouraging support they receive from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils work hard and behave well. They are very polite and courteous to visitors. Although a few pupils report bullying, most say they enjoy school because help is always close at hand. Pupils know it is important to keep healthy and show this by their energetic use of the excellent range of equipment available at lunchtime. The school promotes skills for life and pupils grow in self-confidence and independence. All of Year 6 have achieved a first aid certificate and are aware of keeping safe. Older pupils and the school council accept responsibility for small duties and care for others. They carry over this support to the community, working hard to improve their environment. Although in an area of high unemployment, the school raises considerable funds for others. This involves the '£10 challenge' where classes show considerable enterprise to raise money. These activities include calculating profits and losses. They contribute well to pupils' future economic well-being. Despite the school's considerable efforts, attendance is below average and not all parents fulfil their statutory duty to ensure their children attend school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A spiritual element is present in assembly as pupils come together as a community singing 'No worry, be happy.' Pupils set their own class rules and know what is acceptable and what is not.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. In the Foundation Stage teaching and learning are good and staff plan well to enable children to work with a teacher or to select for themselves. This develops their independence and improves their social skills. Inconsistency in the approaches to teaching writing between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are slowing learning. In Key Stage 2, teaching is often good because of the variety of approaches and brisk pace which sustains pupils' interest. The teaching is not always as good as this and a lack of interesting activities sometimes leads to pupils becoming restless and not giving their full attention. Pupils are not always encouraged to contribute their ideas and this slows progress, especially in science. The interactive white board is often used well and gains pupils' attention effectively. Throughout the school teachers have high expectations of behaviour and make effective use of the school's reward system. Lessons run smoothly. New assessment systems give teachers an accurate picture of pupils' ability. However,

they do not make enough use of this information to make tasks more challenging especially for the higher attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several strengths. Everyone is included and staff cater effectively for pupils with additional learning needs. Teachers strive to improve the curriculum and are starting to promote sensible links between subjects. Teachers use the information and communication technology suite successfully and develop the skills learnt there in other subjects. The rich curriculum in the Foundation Stage is effective in broadening children's limited experiences. The focus is clearly on enjoyment. Occasionally, however, too many options for children lead them to move too quickly between tasks rather than sustaining interest for a length of time. There is insufficient liaison between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this harms the continuity of pupils' learning. In the infant classes, the organisation of the curriculum leads to some lengthy afternoon lessons and some pupils find this tedious. The emphasis on personal development successfully promotes responsible attitudes and good teamwork. Pupils appreciate the good range of clubs and visitors and are especially looking forward to the residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Overall, care, guidance and support are good. All adults make great efforts to see that pupils work and play safely. This is a school which listens to its pupils and values their opinions. Risk assessment and child protection are managed well, and pupils say staff deal promptly and sensitively with any concerns. 'Things soon get sorted out.' Older pupils act as buddies to others and most play well together. Effective links with other agencies and the learning mentors make an important contribution to the support for vulnerable pupils. The 'sparkle room' is used effectively, both to stimulate and to soothe pupils with additional needs. The school is moving towards involving pupils in their own learning by telling them how they are doing and setting targets. This is at an early stage and staff do not always remind pupils of these targets in lessons and in marking their work. As a result, pupils are not always clear how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy make a strong team determined to raise standards. Newly introduced monitoring procedures are helping to spot underachievement earlier and to start intervention quickly. The changes are starting to improve standards although as yet to be seen in test results. Often factors beyond the school's control have lengthened the time taken to tackle the identified concerns. For example, the influx of pupils from other schools during recent local authority re-organisation made it difficult for the school to achieve its

targets. Nevertheless, the sharper focus on raising standards and a determined team of teachers have given the school a good capacity to improve.

The school is self-critical. It has an accurate picture what needs improving. Consultation is widespread so that priorities are owned and valued by staff. Subject leaders have improved and future plans include many useful improvements. As yet, these plans are not always linked clearly enough to raising standards. Monitoring of teaching takes place but not enough is done to extend the good practice seen across the school.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors support inclusion of all pupils and fund support staff in every class. Their role as critical friends is not fully developed because current school priorities are not always measurable and this makes it difficult for governors to question success.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

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Hillside Community Primary School

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Lancashire

WN8 6DE

9 February 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were very polite and helped us when we got lost. We appreciated your friendly smiles and the way you chatted to us about your school.

We liked these things most.

You said you enjoyed school and it was good to see that you work hard.

We think it is amazing how you support each other and raise so much money for others. Your £10 challenge is very interesting and we hope it goes well.

Although a few of you said you had been bullied, you were very clear staff sort this out. We think you have very caring staff who look after you well.

The school is managed well and runs smoothly.

We have asked the teachers to look at these things to make standards in your school and the progress you make even better.

Some lessons could be more interesting and tasks could be more challenging.

Staff in the infants and the Foundation Stage should meet to share their ideas about how children learn.

The managers of your school set targets to improve your school. We would like these to be more closely linked to raising standards.

Some of you are not attending regularly and this restricts your progress.

We are sure you will help your staff to make your school even better and wish you well for the future.

Best wishes

Mrs J E Platt and Mr K Oglesby (Additional inspectors)