



Hill Mead Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131340
Local Authority Lambeth
Inspection number 282200
Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Milton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moorland Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3–11		SW9 8UE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02072749304
Number on roll (school)	457	Fax number	02072749304
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Kelly ben-Maimon
		Headteacher	Mr Richard West
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 1999		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hill Mead is twice as large as the average primary school. The pupils live in an area that experiences considerable deprivation. A very high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. A very large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with most from Black African and Caribbean backgrounds. Just under 10% of pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. There is a very high proportion of pupils whose first language is not English with just under 10% at an early stage of English language acquisition. Large numbers of pupils join or leave the schools at other than the normal times. After the last inspection in 1999, the school experienced a tragedy that was followed by many staff changes, and the local authority placed the school in its 'serious concerns' category in 2002.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hill Mead is a good and improving school that parents are very happy with. Since 2002, the headteacher, with the committed support of the staff, has turned the school around. The staff have very positive, high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are rising. Their knowledge and skills are very low on entry but, by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in English are broadly average and are below average in mathematics and science. However, their standards in mathematics and science are rising.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils achieve well, particularly in the Nursery. In the Reception class, recent improvements in what is taught and how children's progress is assessed, have not had time to have their full impact on their achievement.

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English, achieve well because teaching is good and lessons usually interest and enthuse pupils. Each year group of two classes has three teachers and a teaching assistant who are used effectively both for the teaching of whole classes and groups. As a result, all pupils learn well. Currently, teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their teaching. Although pupils learn the key skills of ICT, they do not make enough use of these in their learning of other subjects.

The pupils are proud of their school. They make an effective contribution to this very orderly community through the school council. Pupils are very well behaved and keen to learn. They particularly like the wide range of after-school clubs, which include booster groups for English and mathematics, and sports activities taken by specialist coaches. The sports provision and high quality meals, when adults and pupils eat together, help pupils to live healthy lives at school. Pupils feel safe at school. Their improving attendance rate is still below average despite the school's good efforts. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The high levels of care, especially for vulnerable pupils and their families, gives pupils the security and confidence to learn well. The school works successfully to involve parents and carers in their children's learning.

Leadership and management are good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses accurately, and plans effectively for improvements to its work and pupils' achievement. It has improved well since the last inspection, and has a good capacity for further improvement. The effective governing body brings valuable local knowledge to its work. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion through its effective work in helping all groups of pupils to learn well, its use of the local community as a teaching resource, and its strong support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The school makes good use of partnerships with other organisations to contribute to pupils' learning, such as the use of the health authority to provide education about the misuse of drugs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' achievement in mathematics and science so that standards at least match those for English
- Make sure the recent improvements in the everyday work of the Reception class are secure so that children's learning is consistently good
- Increase the use of ICT by pupils to improve their learning in other subjects and by teachers to improve their lessons

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to the school, pupils' knowledge and skills are very low compared to national expectations. During the Foundation Stage, children make good progress, particularly in the Nursery where assessment ensures that the varied interesting learning activities are well matched to their learning needs. At the start of Year 1, pupils' standards are well below average particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. During Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and their standards rise. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. During Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress particularly in English. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils' standards are broadly average in English. In mathematics and science, standards are below average but improving because teaching is now addressing identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding and skills. Pupils' progress in science has improved significantly since the start of term. This is due to more effective subject leadership and thorough lesson planning that includes scientific enquiry. Pupils' achievement is also good in some of their work for history, geography and art. The pupils have good quality handwriting.

All groups of pupils achieve well. Assessment is used effectively to make sure that work is well matched to pupils' needs. The teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' learning and personal needs. They have good levels of teaching expertise, for example, in helping pupils with English as an additional language. They work hard to involve pupils' families with the work of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and learning, and are particularly enthusiastic about the clubs and out-of-class activities. Attendance is lower than average, partly because of the high numbers of pupils who join or leave the school during the year.

Pupils are confident, helpful and very well behaved. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' outstanding spiritual development is fundamental to the school's ethos. Pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on their ideas, actions and consequences. Pupils' very good social development is achieved through the buddy system, working in groups, the school council and the calm and

pleasant atmosphere when they eat lunch. Adults offer very good examples of tolerance and consideration. There is a high degree of racial harmony. Music and art are strong parts of the school's daily life and pupils learn about a very good range of cultures. Pupils' personal development benefits from the very good links with the community and the outstanding provision before and after school. Despite their lower numeracy skills, pupils' sound levels of basic literacy and ICT skills and their good personal development prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because precise lesson plans make reference to individual pupils' learning needs and how teachers and teaching assistants will help them. Also many teachers make the learning active and interesting. Class management is effective and relationships are very good. Pupils have many opportunities to learn well as they discuss their work in small and large groups.

Learning is strengthened as, from the Nursery onwards, teachers help pupils to acquire good work habits. Teachers mark work well, although pupils do not always respond to the teachers' written advice. Occasionally teaching is only satisfactory and the pace of learning flags because teachers do not always use the best possible resources.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum links different subjects imaginatively, reflects pupils' social and cultural backgrounds, and meets the learning needs of the different groups of pupils. The teams in each year group know the learning and personal needs of each pupil well, and assessment is used carefully to check their learning. Lesson planning shows how the adults are used to help each pupil to learn well. The curriculum is good in the Nursery, and improving in Reception. The links with an African school have resulted in an outstanding museum about Gambian life. Pupils' writing is developed well in many subjects, for example, writing house advertisements aimed at rich and poor people in Tudor times. Pupils' learning about healthy lifestyles is good. The physical education lessons, the very wide range of sports clubs and quality of school lunches help pupils to live healthily at school. There is an excellent range of popular after-school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support are outstanding. The support for the families of asylum seekers and refugees is extensive, and includes securing the help of external agencies. This helps their children to settle quickly into the school and to start learning well. Although the school has very good procedures for encouraging good attendance,

pupils' attendance rate remains below average. Clear behaviour procedures give pupils security and create a calm atmosphere in which pupils want to learn. Any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Parents are confident that their children are cared for well. All health and safety requirements are in place and there are very good procedures to meet pupils' medical and personal needs. There are clear and widely understood procedures for safeguarding pupils. The school regularly seeks pupils' views and these play a real part in the school's decision-making such as improvements to anti-bullying measures. The school uses its very good systems for tracking the progress of pupils to make sure that they all achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have resulted in a stable and well qualified staff committed to improving the school's provision and raising the achievement of all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and abilities. The senior management and year teaching teams work well together to contribute to the improving standards. The year group leaders ensure that assessment is used to check the progress of each pupil and that teaching resources are well targeted on individual pupils and groups of pupils that need particular support with their learning. The year teams provide pupils with continuity in the teaching that they experience.

The school involves pupils and parents in reviewing its effectiveness. It takes steps to secure improvement when any weaknesses in teaching are identified. Its concise improvement plans focus accurately on the key improvements that are needed, and these include raising pupils' achievement in mathematics and science. The school has good capacity to make further improvements because of the clarity of its improvement planning, the commitment of its staff and its track record of good improvement since the last inspection. Governors, who bring a wide range of expertise to their work, provide good support and challenge to the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Mrs Griffiths, Mrs Gillies and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. It was very good to meet you, Mr West, your teachers and the other staff. You all made us very welcome. It was interesting to hear from you that you like school so much, and especially all the clubs and after-school activities.

There are many really good things about your school. You behave very well and are usually keen to learn as much as possible in lessons. In assemblies, your behaviour is excellent and you listen very carefully. Your handwriting is good and you make some very interesting books. All of the staff take a very great deal of care for you. They want you to learn as much as possible, and make the work interesting and enjoyable for you.

You do particularly well with your reading, writing, speaking and listening because you are keen to learn, the teaching is good and you get a lot of help from your teachers and teaching assistants. In the last few terms, you have started to do well with mathematics and science too, but your standards in these subjects are not yet as good as in English. You have weekly lessons for information and communication technology (ICT) and are learning the key skills well. However, you do not have enough opportunity to use these skills as you learn other subjects such as mathematics and history.

Mr West and the staff know what the school needs to do to improve. The main things to do to make the school even better are to:

- Help you achieve as well in mathematics and science as you already do in English
- Make sure that the recent improvements in the Reception class continue, so that your learning is always good
- Give you many more opportunities to use ICT to help improve your learning in other subjects

Keep up the good work for the rest of the school year.

Mike Milton

Lead inspector