



Hilltop Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133972
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282408
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Graeme Bassett RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dichling Hill
School category	Community		Southgate West
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Crawley RH11 8LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 534 314
Number on roll	255	Fax number	01293 538 366
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jeni Francis
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Pauline Botting

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 7 November 2005 - 8 November 2005	Inspection number 282408
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school and serves mainly the Southgate West area of Crawley, West Sussex but many children come from further afield. Most children are White British but there are a few from ethnic minority backgrounds and some speak English as an additional language. The economic status of the local area is less advantaged than most and there are more pupils with learning difficulties than expected. The present school was established in September 2004 following the amalgamation of the Southgate West First and Middle schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and there is good capacity for improvement. Parents and pupils agree that it is a happy and supportive school. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The school's self-evaluation is reliable and clearly identifies areas for development.

The children join the Reception class with standards below expected levels. They enter Year 1 having achieved well in Reception with standards broadly average. Standards are broadly average for Years 1-6 and pupils make satisfactory progress. Recent school reorganisation disrupted pupils' learning. Their progress is now improving but the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels is still below average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language receive good support.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in some classes, especially in the Foundation Stage. Good lesson planning successfully matches work to the needs of most pupils but higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. The school has set up tracking records but as yet does not have enough information to create useable records that show each pupil's progress over time.

The curriculum is satisfactory and the development of themes is making work more meaningful to pupils. The headteacher, supported by an able deputy, is a good manager and provides good leadership. The delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders is developing well but their evaluations of pupils' work need more rigour. The governance of the school is good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- provide more challenge for the higher-attaining pupils in reading, writing and mathematics
- delegate more responsibility for subject development to the subject leaders
- complete and share the information already collected that tracks each pupil's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The children are fully confident about joining the Reception class. They enter school with standards below expected levels, especially in knowledge of the world and in speaking and listening. They settle quickly to routines to make good progress, with standards broadly average, by the time they enter Year 1. The pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress and their standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Progress has been severely affected by the reorganisation of the school but is now improving. However, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels of attainment in the national tests is still not sufficiently high. This diminishes the overall standards in each class. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily because of the good support in class and in small groups.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attitudes are good. The vast majority of pupils behave well both in class and around the school. Attendance is average and pupils enjoy school, with mathematics and physical education being high on their list of favourite subjects.

Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the necessity for a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils willingly take on responsibilities in the school. Pupils feel safe and are free from bullying or racism. Members of the school council work well together and are actively looking at ways of limiting litter around the school.

Pupils are developing satisfactory skills that contribute to the community and also to their economic well-being. They appreciate the needs of others and have a growing understanding of the diverse culture in which they live. In an assembly, Muslim children presented their experiences of Eid to which others responded with interest.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage where teachers and teaching assistants develop children's language skills well. They encourage independent decision-making and challenge higher-attaining children well. Teaching in the main school is more varied in quality but is good in some classes. Good lesson planning throughout meets the needs of most pupils. In a few classes, there is too little pace and challenge for higher attainers. Teachers assess and record attainment, but tracking records lack prior information and are too new to analyse progress over time. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), for example, adding considerable enjoyment in a Year 2 space topic activity when they sent emails to NASA. Teaching assistants work well with class teachers to support pupils with learning difficulties. Good links between home and school support learning well with relevant homework and good arrangements to involve parents in their children's education.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Following amalgamation, the school used the established curriculum plans from the two previous schools but is now successfully devising new plans that are based upon topics and themes. This is helping the pupils to make meaningful connections between subjects. The curriculum is based securely upon national guidelines in each subject and is extended as the school is also developing French effectively. The quality of learning is supported well by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Visits and visitors enhance learning and older pupils gain from the experience of residential visits.

Pupils' basic skills are developing satisfactorily because of improved quality of teachers' curriculum planning. The school provides full access to the curriculum for all pupils and this is also evident in the good provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of pupils, guiding and supporting them well. Pupils are well supervised at all times in school, and know who will help them if they have problems. They are encouraged to bring healthy lunches and have good opportunities for exercise and sport. Through the school council, they are empowered to state their views about aspects of school life. Parents are impressed by the pupils' mature role when they welcome guests to the school. Achievements are celebrated in newsletters, displays and assemblies. Pupils are given clear advice about how to improve in English and mathematics, but this needs to be made more specific in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported. Bullying and racism are rare, and incidents are dealt with quickly. Arrangements for child protection are in place, though more training is needed for all staff. Risk assessments are undertaken and health and safety requirements are met in full.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. With the full support of the deputy headteacher, she provides a clear direction to the development of the school. Over the past year, there have been extreme disruptions because of the amalgamation of two former schools. This has caused many difficulties and periods of uncertainty for the staff. This situation has been handled sensitively and conscientiously by the

headteacher. She has steadily rebuilt a new school team and is now effectively establishing the responsibilities of subject leaders. Already their lesson monitoring has improved but their roles for monitoring and evaluating pupils' work in books are still underdeveloped.

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The coordinator is devising thorough routines to establish the curriculum and to build upon the good teaching already established.

The headteacher and governors know the strengths and weaknesses well.

Self-evaluation, which recognises parents' views, is used well to plan for improvement. As a result, the school has laid down firm foundations for the future and is well placed to improve further. During the short time since the formation of the new school, major policies and routines have been agreed and the staff and governors are well aware of the priorities that still need attention.

The school recognises the good contribution made by the teaching assistants, who have completed training to support reading and in raising pupils' achievements.

The governance of the school is good and the governors meet all statutory requirements. The financial situation is still unclear following the final stages of reorganisation and consequently the headteacher and governors are prudent about the expenditure of the budget.

Grade: 3

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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	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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	2	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	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

Hilltop Primary School Ditchling Hill Southgate West Crawley West Sussex RH11 8QL

8th November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. The inspectors enjoyed their time with you, looking at your work and visiting lessons. We enjoyed chatting with many of you during lunch time. Thank you for telling us all about your school.

What we liked most about Hilltop Primary School:

Your headteacher leads the school well.

Your teachers care for you well.

Your behaviour is good and we like the way you all get on with each other.

You show that you know how to stay healthy.

You show that you enjoy coming to school.

What we have asked your headteacher and staff to do:

Help pupils reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Set up records that show what you know and use these to plan work that gives every one a challenge.

Give more responsibilities to teachers who lead subjects.

We hope that you continue to have enjoyment in your lessons and that you try hard to do your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector