



Hill West Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134477
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 282585
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector David Biltcliffe AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clarence Road
School category	Community		Sutton Coldfield
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		B74 4LD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3085392
Number on roll	345	Fax number	0121 3085061
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Susan Longhorne
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Ms Kate Hayward

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 282585
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than the typical primary school and has slightly more girls than boys. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception covers a wide range, but is above average overall. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. About five per cent of pupils do not have English as their first language; none are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' social and economic backgrounds vary widely, but are socially and economically advantaged overall. Eighty-five per cent of pupils are of White British origin and about five per cent are of Indian heritage.

In September 2004, the school was reorganised into its present 4-11 age range from separate Junior and Infant schools on the same site. The substantive headteacher has been away from the school on the grounds of ill health since May 2005. The deputy headteacher has been Acting Headteacher since that time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hill West provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It is a friendly, calm, purposeful and improving school, with a number of strengths.

The school is satisfactory, because pupils make reasonable progress. The standard of work is above average. In the Reception, standards in literacy and mathematics have improved and are now a little above average; pupils achieve satisfactorily. The standard of work of other pupils is above average. Although older pupils' standards in English have not been as good as they should be, this weakness is being rapidly remedied.

Throughout the school, teaching is satisfactory overall: much is good, but a small minority is undemanding. Pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy school. The quality of care is good. All pupils are equally valued and supported. They are well behaved, pleasant and polite. The school has good links with the outside world.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with very good features. The School Management team's view of the school accords with that of inspectors. The acting headteacher has provided very good leadership during the uncertainties of the last year. Staff morale is high. The school has the capacity to improve, although the 'acting' nature of leadership gets in the way of confident forward planning. School tasks are undertaken effectively and the school runs smoothly.

Although they require more information about the full range of pupils' attainment and achievement, the school's leaders and managers have a sound view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring all teaching up to a good standard by ensuring sufficient depth, pace and rigour in all lessons.
- Carry further the recent improvement in the Reception and in English by fully implementing work plans, training and monitoring.
- Establish a comprehensive system for tracking and evaluating the school's academic performance across all subjects and year groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children in the Reception make satisfactory progress and achieve expected levels. Following recent underachievement, standards in language and literacy and in mathematical development have risen in the last year, owing to better planning and coordination and to more challenging teaching.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory, and often good, progress. Standards are above average in mathematics, science and all aspects of English.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. In mathematics and science, the Year 6 national test results in 2005 improved over those of the previous year, but results in English showed some underachievement. Better teaching, characterised by

thorough planning, has ensured that current achievement in English is satisfactory, but standards could be higher still. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make sound progress.

In 2005, the school did not quite reach the challenging targets it had set itself in the national tests. Overall, however, standards and achievement continue to rise, owing to the focused hard work of both staff and pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and thereby make a positive contribution to the school and the local community. The 'Senior Student' system, for example, encourages older pupils to take care of those who are younger than themselves, and School Council members help to take decisions to 'make the school a better place'. In both classwork and assemblies, pupils learn much about other cultures and reflect on many spiritual and moral issues.

Pupils' very positive attitudes towards school, their learning and one another are demonstrated by their above average attendance and very good behaviour. A number of effective reward schemes, such as 'star' cards and the 'child-of-the-week' tree, are highly valued by pupils, helping them to respond well to their teachers' high expectations.

Pupils have good awareness of safe and healthy practices. They readily take advantage of the opportunities the school provides for them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils report few instances of bullying or racism in school and are confident that when such incidents occur, they are dealt with promptly and appropriately by staff. Although the school lacks a coherent programme to promote pupils' future economic well-being, pupils respond with enthusiastic concentration to the encouragement they receive to work independently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and occasionally excellent. As a result, pupils make satisfactory, and quite often good, progress. Extensive monitoring and guidance by senior staff and local authority officers have resulted in significant improvements in teaching quality. Nevertheless, a small minority of teaching requires further improvement.

Strengths of the teaching include the very good range of stimulating activities that are regularly provided to keep pupils well motivated. Tasks and teachers' questions are often challenging, so significantly enhancing the progress that pupils make in lessons. Pupils are generally managed very well, with the result that relationships are positive at all levels. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well.

A pronounced feature of the best teaching is the way that teachers help pupils to think very deeply about issues and thus make substantial progress. In a few lessons, the pace of work is too slow and activities lack adequate depth and challenge. Where this happens, the pupils do not reach their full potential.

Assessment procedures have improved significantly in the last year and are now broadly satisfactory. There is, however, room for further improvement, particularly to ensure that teachers use assessment productively to set work that closely matches pupils' different capabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and suitably reflects national strategies and requirements. The school thoughtfully reviews and updates its planning systems. For example, its improved planning for children in the Reception and for older pupils' English has already helped to raise the standards that pupils achieve.

Several aspects of the curriculum are particularly stimulating and significantly deepen pupils' enjoyment of their work. For instance, all classes have regular opportunities to visit local places of interest, and pupils in Year 5 take part in an annual residential trip. Pupils also benefit from a satisfactory number of out-of-class activities in music and sport.

An especially successful feature is the use of specialist teachers to provide lessons in French, music and dance. Close links with a local secondary school that specialises in some of these areas provide further enhancement to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good systems for care, guidance and support provide a happy, safe and secure learning environment for pupils. Good risk assessment procedures have been introduced and pupils' health and safety are given a high priority. Comprehensive child protection procedures are in place and regular training on them is given to staff.

There are good induction procedures in place for pupils coming new to the school. Strong links with local secondary schools ensure that parents and pupils are well informed about the transition to secondary education. The regular target-setting system ensures that pupils are aware of what they need to do to make progress, and parents receive regular updates. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are carefully helped to achieve soundly. In the words of one parent, 'everybody is included in Hill West'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. She has a very clear, accurate appreciation of the school's needs and a strong vision for its further improvement. She is successfully translating this vision into effective action, with the result that standards are rising. This is an improving school where the morale of staff and pupils is high.

The recent half-termly rotation of the role of acting deputy headteacher has worked well and has nurtured the school's move forward. The school has the capacity to improve, although the uncertainty caused by the temporary nature of the senior management structure puts some constraints on it and is resulting in some parental discontent.

Leaders and managers have put into place several effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's work. These include consultations with both parents and pupils. The leadership's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses matches that of inspectors. However, the systems for evaluating the school's overall academic performance have gaps and the monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet fully remedied the weaknesses in some lessons.

The recently formed governing body has a clear view of the school's strengths and of the issues for improvement. It has begun, successfully, to establish procedures for fulfilling its role in strategic monitoring, but has more to do.

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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	3	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	2	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	2	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	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	2	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	2	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

Thank you for your welcome and help to us during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. You told us how much you like your school.

Here are some of the things we especially like about your school. We hope that you enjoy reading them:

• You work hard and want to do well. • You are polite and behave very well. • The school is a safe, friendly place. Teachers care about you very much. • Lessons are interesting and your teachers work hard to keep improving them. • You like coming to school and are proud to be pupils here.

There are also some things that need to be better: • Sometimes teachers do not ask you to think hard enough in lessons. • Some English work can be better. • Teachers need to have more information about how well you are doing.

We hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time in school.