



Hill View Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108770
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288183
Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007
Reporting inspector Keith Oglesby

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Queen Alexandra Road
School category	Community		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	7–11		SR2 9HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536031
Number on roll (school)	414	Fax number	0191 5536030
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Shreyhane
		Headteacher	Mrs Tricia Bevan
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007	Inspection number 288183
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average junior school. It serves an established area of mixed housing close to the centre of Sunderland. Most pupils are of White British heritage; their social circumstances are broadly average. No pupils are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free meals is lower than average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school is over-subscribed in some year groups. It holds the Activemark award. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hill View Junior is a good school. "Always welcoming and helpful, a lovely school with a very friendly atmosphere." This comment reflects parents' high regard for the school. They appreciate the high standards, outstanding personal development and the fact that their children are eager to go to school and enjoy learning. The pupils are just as proud. "It's a great school because the teachers listen to you." Relationships are excellent and the pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They feel secure, successful and well looked after. This is because every adult plays a part in the good arrangements for care and support. The school has a thorough programme to show pupils how to live healthy and safe lives.

Standards in writing, though above average, are not yet as impressive as those for reading, mathematics and science. Strategies to change this have produced some encouraging results, but need more time. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. The recent upgrading of a high quality computer suite is beginning to raise standards further but pupils do not yet have enough regular opportunities to use their technical skills in other subjects.

Teaching is good overall, but not consistently so. Pupils work hard and achieve well. They reach standards well above the national average. This success masks the fact that the rate of progress is inconsistent. The school's very reliable data shows that, in a small number of classes, pupils do not progress as fast as they do in most classes. Work seen during the inspection confirms this. In these classes, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are just as good, but the teaching is not as consistently challenging as the best. Consequently, some pupils have some catching up to do in Year 6. They manage this because teaching and learning in the final year are outstanding.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear direction for the school to improve further. They are well supported by informed governors and a hard working staff. Strong partnerships with parents and other schools enhance learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and self-critical; in fact, the inspection team found some of the school's judgements to be too modest. This reflects the school's determination not to stand still but to provide the best for all its pupils in high academic standards and in their personal development. Pupils leave Hill View very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future.

All the strengths seen at the last inspection have been maintained and the weaknesses put right. The school is well placed to continue to improve. It serves its community well and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best so that pupils' progress is consistently good in all classes.
- Raise standards further in ICT and make more use of technical skills to enhance learning in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in writing and well above average in reading, mathematics and science. This is consistent with the high standards that have been maintained year-on-year in national tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well overall by the end of Year 6, but, for some, progress is inconsistent. In a few classes, progress is not as good as it is in other classes. Pupils make up for lost ground in Year 6, where the teaching is inspiring and pupils show a mature determination to succeed. As a result, they meet the challenging targets set by the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. This is because of the good support they receive from adults and classmates. The more able pupils also achieve well, although in some lessons they could do even better if teachers demanded more of them. In some year groups, girls perform better than boys, particularly in writing, but the school is succeeding in gradually closing the gap. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and make the most of all that it offers. This is clearly reflected in the above average attendance. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons because: "Teachers make learning fun and there is always someone to listen and help". Pupils show respect and consideration for adults and each other. "We work as a team here."

Pupils know how to make their lives safe and healthy. Regular visitors add to their understanding, such as the local Healthy Eating Team and community police. There are lots of opportunities to enjoy physical exercise and sport; for example, through the many popular clubs and the 'active playground' scheme.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school has a well planned programme for personal education. In these lessons, and many others, pupils learn to reflect on their own experiences and express their feelings and emotions. Some pupils in Year 6 thought that: "Talking about things really helps us."

Pupils respond well to all the opportunities to take responsibility in school and in the wider community. The impressive school council takes its role very seriously and gets results; for example, in creation of a quiet garden outside. Younger pupils appreciate the help they get from the playground buddies and zone rangers; for example, in sorting out disagreements. Pupils regularly suggest and organise successful fundraising events for causes that interest them.

Pupils leave this school with exceptional social skills and positive attitudes. They are confident learners, eager to try new things and to apply their literacy, numerical and technical skills to unfamiliar circumstances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Although there are some inconsistencies, teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in Year 6 is outstanding. In all classes, pupils respect their teachers and try hard to do their best. They are confident that they will get extra help if they are puzzled. Pupils like having their own targets and appreciate the 'tips to improve' that teachers write in their books. They know that high standards of behaviour are expected. Consequently, most lessons are busy and purposeful so pupils make good progress. A strong team of teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because teachers provide good support that is well matched to their needs.

Typically, teachers include a range of activities to keep classes interested and help them to learn. Pupils thought that: "The time goes very quickly." For example, in a writing lesson in Year 6, the class was inspired by the teacher's expert presentation and so became involved in a lively whole class discussion. They then clarified their ideas in small groups before settling down to work on their own. This led to a period of silent, intense concentration with outstanding progress.

Progress was satisfactory rather than good in some of the lessons observed. In these, the teaching lacked the rigour and creativity described above. In some cases, this was because pupils spent too much time listening. They did not have enough time to make the most of their independent work. In a few lessons, even when pupils were grouped by ability, some were ready to move on faster and to tackle more demanding work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It offers pupils an interesting range of activities to match their needs and interests. Elements of it are good; for example, the good range of clubs, visits and visitors, which extend the pupils' experiences and contribute to their social development. These are appreciated by pupils and parents. They include a choir, dance, gardening club, computers, gym, French and a good choice of sporting activities. The good emphasis on literacy and numeracy is one of the reasons for the high standards that pupils achieve. Even so, the school is quick to make improvements when needed. For example, the recent focus on using writing skills across the range of subjects has increased pupils' enthusiasm and raised standards. Other promising developments, such as promoting more creativity in lessons, are too recent to judge how well they are working. The provision for ICT has been improved. Consequently,

pupils' skills and confidence are improving rapidly. However, they do not have enough opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

The school promotes healthy eating and exercise as part of the strong programme for personal education. For example, it provides a wide range of playground games for the break and lunchtime sessions. Older pupils work responsibly to demonstrate and supervise these activities. There is an annual residential visit, which helps to build confidence and self-esteem in a different environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe, valued and trusted. Parents appreciate this; one particularly liked the way: "The well-being of the whole child is fostered". Procedures for safeguarding children follow government guidelines and are implemented consistently by staff. Governors and teachers keep a close eye on health and safety issues. There is caring and imaginative support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. For example, young pupils love visiting the 'Rainbow Room'; a welcoming and attractive space where they can talk and learn in small groups. There are good systems to ensure that the changes of school at age 7 and 11 do not make pupils anxious or affect their learning.

The school has thorough systems to keep track of every pupil's progress. Teachers are increasingly sharing this information with pupils, giving them clear advice on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils like this and think it helps them. Many talk confidently about their targets or whether they have met the success criteria for a piece of work. In a few classes, this shared guidance is not yet part of daily routines. Hence, opportunities are missed to improve pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective team. They have accurately identified the strengths of the school and the areas where improvement is needed. This has been done through clear analysis of the data on how well pupils are learning, as well as through their high profile and encouraging presence around the school.

There are good systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders are quick to recognise the many successful features, but do not shrink from tackling weaknesses; for example, when progress is not good enough. The headteacher, in quite a short time, has been successful in developing leadership skills in others and promoting the professional development of staff. As a result, all staff are becoming involved in evaluating their own performance.

Governors have a thorough understanding of the strategic development of the school and carry out their duties effectively. They offer strong support as 'critical friends'.

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

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Hill View Junior School

Queen Alexandra Road

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR2 9HE

10 February 2007

Dear Pupils,

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to thank you for being so helpful, welcoming and polite. When I got home I missed all those smiling people opening doors for me. We enjoyed our visit, especially watching you and your teachers in action. Many of you told us you were proud of your school. We think you should be!

We admired lots of things; they won't all fit into this short letter. We especially liked:

- The way you enjoy lessons and get involved. You work hard and are determined to improve.
- Your excellent behaviour, and the respect and consideration you show to adults and each other.
- All the clubs, visitors and special events that we know you appreciate.
- The way all the adults go the extra mile to make sure you are safe, happy and confident in your learning.

We usually leave some suggestions for things that could be even better. In your case they are what your headteacher and staff are already working on. These are:

- We think your school could be even better if all the lessons were as busy and exciting as the best ones. Lots of lessons are good. Lessons are not just about teachers, you have to play your part too.
- There is no doubt that you are making progress with computers, especially since the computer suite was upgraded and every classroom now has an interactive whiteboard. We would like to see you using your skills a lot more; for example, in writing, mathematics, science and other subjects. We go to some schools where children use technology so often it's just like picking up a pencil for them.

Best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Keith Oglesby

Lead inspector