

# Hillview Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111169
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	288880
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carol Machell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Dean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Abrahams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2001
<b>School address</b>	Beechwood Avenue Beechwood East Runcorn Cheshire WA7 3HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 714666
<b>Fax number</b>	01928 712304

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Hillview is a slightly smaller than average school. It serves an area that is broadly average in socio-economic terms with the largest group coming from the local private housing estate. Most pupils are White British but a very small number of pupils who come from a European background are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also above average.

Children come to school from a variety of pre-school groups and their attainment on entry to Reception is broadly in line with national expectations.

The school has been awarded Healthy School status and 'ArtsMark Silver Award'.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hillview Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents are full of praise for the very good work that is done to support the different needs of all children. Children achieve well both academically and personally and the school is very successful in the way that it includes children with various difficulties or barriers to learning. It welcomes all pupils, finds ways to support them and does this very well.

Academic achievement is good overall but only satisfactory in writing throughout the school. Standards in mathematics and science are above average. In English, standards are broadly average, although reading standards are above. In their first year of school children make good progress. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 this good progress continues in most areas and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall.

Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that pupils know their targets so that they can improve their learning. Staff are working hard to develop a more creative curriculum and as a result plan some really interesting and enjoyable lessons. A lot of effort is made to include children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and work is well matched to their needs. As a result these pupils make good progress. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and appreciative of the many opportunities given to them to experience learning at first hand through visits out and visitors to the school. Pupils also say they enjoy many subjects: they like problem solving and investigations in mathematics and science and the 'traffic light system' which helps them assess their own work. A minority of pupils, particularly boys, don't enjoy writing as much as some other subjects and therefore don't make as good progress in this subject as they might. The school is aware of this however and is putting initiatives in place to make writing more enjoyable and meaningful to the children.

There are particular strengths in the relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils say that the school listens to their ideas and suggestions and they particularly like the new toilets and the school dinners, which are healthy and attractively presented. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they take their roles as monitors and play-leaders very seriously. They are learning to understand and deal with their emotions very well because teachers plan lessons where pupils can discuss and explore their feelings and relationships with other people. As a result pupils work well together and listen attentively to their teachers and fellow pupils. Pupils enjoy learning about other countries but their knowledge and understanding of the diverse society in which we live in Britain could be improved.

The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to providing the best for their pupils and focused on raising standards and achievement for all children in their care. Good improvements have occurred since the previous inspection and the school monitors the achievements of its pupils well from Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2. It takes into account the views of parents and pupils and acts on them where possible. This is truly a school where 'Every Child Matters' and this philosophy underpins the work that the school does to improve standards in all aspects of learning for their pupils. It has good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school and particularly for boys.

- Ensure that the curriculum provision allows pupils to gain a good understanding of cultural diversity in Britain.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start school with broadly average standards and leave with above average standards overall. This represents good progress overall and good achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start although they do not do as well in communication, language and literacy as in other areas. Boys in particular do not do as well as girls in this area of learning.

Progress in Key Stage 1 is mostly good but varies between subjects, being good in reading and mathematics and satisfactory in writing. Here too there are some gender differences with boys not performing as well as girls in writing. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good in reading, mathematics and science. Progress in writing is satisfactory but beginning to accelerate because of recent strategies introduced. However, there is still a gap between boys and girls in this subject resulting in fewer pupils attaining the higher levels than in mathematics or science. Standards in writing could be higher throughout the school, particularly for boys.

The standards of pupils in the current Year 6 are not as high as in other years. In science they are about average and in English and mathematics they are below average. However, these pupils have achieved well in relation to their earlier attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 because of the good intervention and support that they are receiving. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive from well-qualified and trained staff. The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English also make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and prepares them well for the next stages of their education. Hillview promotes a caring and family ethos that ensures pupils feel safe and confident in themselves as learners. Pupils enjoy school, particularly extra-curricular activities, which they report are 'really interesting'. Behaviour is excellent: pupils listen well to each other and play happily at break times. They report that there is little bullying and they know what to do if this should occur. They show a good understanding of right and wrong and the school provides them with many opportunities to explore feelings such as anger. As a result they show good manners and work well together. Pupils know a lot about different countries through, for example, the whole school 'Where in the World' topic. However, they are not secure in their understanding of the multicultural and diverse society in which we live. They have a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles and know that diet and exercise are key elements to staying healthy. They love the school dinners - 'they're well good!' said one pupil. They understand how to stay safe and can talk about road safety and safe uses of electricity. Pupils contribute well to the school, local and wider community. They enjoy their various roles as class helpers, play-leaders and school councillors and have been involved in a variety of fund-raising projects. Attendance is in line with national averages having dipped slightly this year because of increased illness.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This reflects the good support and monitoring that has been in evidence over the past few years. The best teaching is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge and lessons that are focussed clearly on learning outcomes shared with pupils. Different learning styles are catered for and pupils are challenged, engaged and eager to learn. Work is well matched to different abilities and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported particularly well with appropriate work and resources, including well qualified support staff and a range of intervention programmes. Relationships between teachers and learners are good with children being motivated to succeed. In mathematics and science there is a good focus on investigation and problem solving and in literacy skills are explicitly taught to help pupils move to the next level in their learning. Relationships between teachers and learners are good as shown for example in a lesson on emotions where pupils confidently and openly discussed ways to cope with their feelings of 'anger'. Occasionally, teaching is less successful when learners are not challenged or engaged sufficiently well. There is still some way to go to improve boys' attitudes to writing so that they can achieve their full potential in this subject.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that has a number of strengths. Provision for the Foundation Stage is particularly good with many opportunities for children to learn through exploration and play. Outdoor provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The relatively recent move towards a more creative curriculum is helping the school to make meaningful links between subjects and aims to raise pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning. For example, in a topic on Mexico, Year 3 pupils used computer skills to produce menus, make Aztec head-dresses and depict aspects of Aztec life through dance music and art. This approach however, is still in its early stages of development. For example, pupils know a lot about a range of countries but there is less emphasis on teaching children about life in multicultural Britain. Very good opportunities are being made to stimulate writing through the creative curriculum but the impact on academic and personal standards has yet to be fully realised. Information and communication technology is promoted well throughout the curriculum and in all year groups. The curriculum is enriched well through sports activities and clubs for art, computers and music. French has recently been introduced for pupils in Key Stage 2 and pupils particularly like the range of visits and visitors that they experience. This makes the curriculum more relevant, exciting and meaningful.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The pastoral element of care in particular is very strong. Teachers know their pupils well and pupils appreciate their friendliness and support. This helps them to develop well personally as well as academically. The excellent links with outside, specialist agencies mean that pupils with different needs, such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities, English as an additional language and vulnerable children, are supported very well. They make good progress academically and sometimes exceptional progress in their

personal lives, for example in managing their own behaviour and feelings. These pupils are keen and engaged and want to come to school because support is there for them and their strengths are appreciated and developed well. Good systems have been devised for tracking pupils' progress and very good guidance is given on their written work. This written guidance is related to learning targets and pupils are being increasingly involved in their own assessment. They know their targets well and how to improve. There is a good range of initiatives to promote good attendance and punctuality and government requirements for safeguarding pupils are in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good at all levels. There is significant strength in the leadership of the headteacher, who knows the school well and is successfully focused on raising standards. She has fostered teamwork and encouraged staff to develop their skills, talents and expertise. Leadership by the governors is good. They understand the school's strengths and areas for development and they provide both support and challenge. They visit the school regularly and are committed to the well-being and progress of the pupils. Leadership by other managers is good. They work together well as a team and they too share the vision to improve pupils' progress and develop the curriculum so it is exciting and meaningful for the learners. They are beginning to monitor and develop their different areas but the impact of this has not had time to embed fully.

The school's monitoring and self-evaluation is good, giving it an accurate view of its performance. Pupils' progress is tracked well and action taken where appropriate. Promoting the full range of learners' needs is at the heart of the school's work. The school takes account of the views of pupils and parents through a wide range of questionnaires and there are good relationships with parents, who hold the school in high regard.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

Inspection of Hillview Primary School, Runcorn, WA7 3HB

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when I visited your school with Mrs D'Arcy. We very much enjoyed our time at Hillview and would like to share with you what we found out. We think you have a lovely school and lots of things impressed us. We particularly liked:

- the way you behaved in school in lessons and on the playground - this was excellent!
- the way you treated each other with respect and listened to different points of view
- the good teaching that you get. You told us that your teachers help you, listen to your ideas and provide fun lessons and activities for you - we agree
- that all the staff at school look after you so well and give you good advice about improving your work and staying healthy and safe
- the way your headteacher never stops making sure that everyone of you develops your talents and becomes a good learner with kind, mature and sensible attitudes.

Before we left we asked your school to help you improve in two things:

- we think that you can do even better at writing than you do now. Particularly the boys have to try hard at this!
- we think that you could learn more about different cultures and customs in Britain so that you will become even more mature young citizens.

This is not just down to your headteacher and teachers. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can and being positive about your learning. Don't forget to attend school regularly - if you want to learn you have to be there!

Best wishes for the future,