



# Hillcroft Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 125123  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 293201  
**Inspection dates** 2–3 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter McGregor

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Chaldon Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Caterham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		CR3 5PG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 342606
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	262	<b>Fax number</b>	01883 330910
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roderick Stead
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Huggett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2002		

---

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	2–3 November 2006	293201

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is bigger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the number for whom English is an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Children's attainment on entry is slightly below average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The school has a mornings-only Nursery.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Hillcroft is an improving school. Its overall effectiveness is currently satisfactory and the headteacher is driving through substantial changes which are benefiting the pupils. Parents and pupils are happy with the developments that are taking place. Standards are rising. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards which are broadly average in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards remain below average in mathematics, as at the time of the last inspection and pupils do not make enough progress. In contrast, progress in the Foundation Stage has improved. Overall, pupils' achievement is now broadly satisfactory and standards are average.

Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is above average, reflecting their enjoyment. Children's social and emotional development is below that expected when they enter the Nursery. Progress in their personal development is good so that they mature into considerate and attentive individuals by Year 6. Pupils appreciate the importance of a safe and healthy lifestyle and how they should learn the skills to help them cope with their future. The quality of pastoral care is good. Rare incidents of bullying are dealt with by staff efficiently and effectively. Academic care of pupils is satisfactory. Teachers are not yet making full use of all the available assessment information to improve standards.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Not all lesson plans are detailed enough to help all pupils make the same level of progress and work does not always inspire and challenge. The curriculum has a reasonable balance of subjects and areas of learning, though planning for continuity in learning is not secure in all subjects, particularly mathematics. The mixed-age classes, which result from the different numbers in each year group, work well on the whole.

The very strong and successful leadership of the headteacher, supported by the staff and governors, is building on an agreed, clear vision for the school's future. A parent wrote, typical of several responses, 'We've seen so much improvement since the headteacher joined the school a year ago, and she is very committed to both the school and the children'. Improvements stem from the staff having a positive approach to the changes which the headteacher has introduced. Subject leaders understand their clearly defined roles and have made a good start on making improvements in their areas. Monitoring by senior managers is rigorous and is resulting in better teaching and learning. A Year 6 pupil pointed out a key message on the door of a classroom, 'We work in a positive zone where it's cool to be clever and thick not to try' and said 'That's what we are'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics.
- Increase the challenge and pace of work in some lessons, to meet the needs of all pupils.

- Make more effective use of information on individual pupils' performances so that they all achieve as well as they can.
- Improve curriculum planning so that pupils' learning is built on year by year.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Standards are rising because of improvements in teaching and the recently increased use of assessment information to help match work to all pupils' needs. An average proportion of children reach the expected goals at the end of the Reception year, following good progress across the Foundation Stage, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Progress is satisfactory in English and science where teaching focuses on the required skills and responds to pupils' differing needs. Mathematics standards are too low because some aspects of the subject are not well planned for or taught. Standards in ICT are average and improving. All groups of pupils progress similarly and are effectively included in tasks set. The school's test results, however, reflect the relatively high proportions of pupils with English as an additional language and those who join the school later than the usual admission time. These pupils often have low starting points of language and subject knowledge and take some time to catch up with their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are very happy to come to school and pleased to take responsibilities, particularly through membership of the school council. Pupils know that their views are taken seriously by staff. As a result of citizenship sessions, they understand the consequences of using drugs and alcohol and appreciate other important points about living safely and healthily. Pupils run a small shop which gives them a good understanding of running a business. They realise the need to articulate their ideas clearly, understand numbers and use computers competently. However, their number skills are not yet good enough. Their development in social, moral, spiritual and cultural areas is good. From entering the Nursery, pupils learn to be co-operative and considerate. Pupils develop an insight into different faiths and know the importance of tolerance and 'Understanding other people's vision of God'. Pupils are aware of other cultures, though this aspect of their development is not as strong as others. They give generously to charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Monitoring records indicate that the quality of teaching has improved substantially over the past year and this is seen in pupils' better progress and higher standards. In

lessons, behaviour management, relationships and the work of the teaching assistants are good. In the best lessons, work is demanding and fun. In a Year 1 small group setting, the rapid questioning of individuals and stimulating work in literacy and numeracy led to very effective progress. Teaching weaknesses, already identified through the school's own evaluations, are insufficient challenge and pace, and not using the prior attainment of individuals as the basis for what is taught in some sessions. Pupils' work is usually marked with helpful constructive criticism guiding improvement. Where undeserved praise is given or comments are not followed up, however, marking makes too little contribution to pupils' progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the past year, subject planning has been entered on computer to help with an ongoing audit of curriculum subjects. Where gaps are identified, changes are being made. The school has found that planning for data handling and problem solving is not well developed in mathematics, and that continuity from year to year is not clearly planned in all subjects. Weekly reviews of how well lessons have gone lead to an understanding of where teachers' planning could be better. This is contributing to the improved progress of pupils. Planning is satisfactory for the increasing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties now have effective individual education plans. Pupils benefit from clubs and visits, with good opportunities for sport and trips to museums and art galleries. The curriculum is enriched by visitors who discuss topical issues with pupils, including the work of charities in the developing world.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for but new systems for checking progress are only just beginning to affect what they can achieve. Staff know the pupils very well. The guidance of community support staff is very helpful in the early resolution of problems, for example concerning attendance and punctuality. Child protection procedures are secure and they are understood by staff. Pupils know they can approach an adult for help if they need to. The school has collected information on pupils' standards for several years but only recently have teachers started to use this to plan future work. The school is developing good links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Links with outside agencies benefit pupils, for example involvement of local authority support staff and the Salvation Army. Communication with parents about their children's achievements is good, through informal discussions and reports.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. She has tackled underachievement and complacency boldly, generating an ethos of high expectations and making significant staffing changes. All pupils are valued equally. Standards in English and science are higher than a year ago. Those in mathematics will take longer to rise as pupils have some way to go. The school evaluates strengths and weaknesses accurately and is taking the right steps to secure improvements. The school improvement plan is a useful document, guiding important changes. Governors acknowledge that in the past they did not challenge sufficiently. They now visit regularly and evaluate data and what is going on. They are very supportive of the headteacher and share the inspection view that the school is confidently moving in the right direction and has good capacity to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Resources are used efficiently. Parents are kept well informed of developments and are now welcome to attend assemblies and other activities.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### 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>	3
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

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

### 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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.

## 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**

Thank you for your help during our time at your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views and ideas. It was particularly good to see how happy you are to be at Hillcroft!

Your school is satisfactory and improving quickly. You are getting better in English and science, and in your knowledge of computers. You aren't doing as well in maths as you should be. So we have asked your teachers and support staff to give you more help to improve your maths skills. Your teachers are finding out what you do and do not understand in your subjects by using the results of your tests. They have started to use this information to help them to teach better and to give you the support you need and we have asked them to do more of this. Most of you attend school regularly and get there on time. You behave well and look after each other. You are learning to work and play healthily and safely. Staff care for you and you know you can turn to them for help if you need to. In a good number of your lessons the work meets your needs, but sometimes you work too slowly because the tasks you are given are too easy or hard. We have asked the school to improve some of its planning and to make sure you all work hard and are successful in lessons.

The headteacher is leading the school very well. She and all her staff are making big improvements in lots of areas. You and your parents tell us you like the changes that are happening.

Best wishes

Peter McGregor

(Lead inspector)