



# Hill Top Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 133294  
**Local Authority** Doncaster  
**Inspection number** 294066  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Bill Keast

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 address</b>	Edlington Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Edlington, Doncaster
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		South Yorkshire DN12 1PL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 863273
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	302	<b>Fax number</b>	01709 863273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Cllr M Ward
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs B Nixon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2004		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This larger than average sized primary school, in a village on the outskirts of Doncaster, draws its pupils from an area of significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils with identified learning difficulties is well above average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has the Investor in People award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and an Artsmark gold award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school providing good value for money.

Children enter the Nursery with standards that are well below those expected for their age. Their language skills are particularly weak. The team of adults in the Foundation Unit work effectively to provide a stimulating and exciting learning experience which enables all children to make good progress. Building on this good start pupils achieve well so that by the end of Year 6 they have reached average standards, although attainment in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics. Teaching is good with teachers and support staff working well together. Senior leaders have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching and this improvement has contributed to the rise in standards and the increase in pupils' achievement. Some teachers use the school's new strategies more effectively than others so that there is variation in the quality of teaching.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they like their teachers and find their lessons are fun. Relationships are very good. Pupils feel safe and have someone to turn to if they are worried. They behave well and are keen to learn. The school works exceptionally well in partnership with others to promote their well-being. Strong pre-school and secondary school links ensure smooth transition between phases. The school works particularly closely with parents to keep them informed and to help them to support their children.

The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support for its pupils. Their individual needs are clearly identified and appropriate support provided to help them develop. Regular assessment of pupils' work is used to monitor their progress and to set targets. Those who are struggling are quickly identified and additional support given to help them make better progress. The way in which opportunities to learn and develop, in both the classroom and extra-curricular activities, are planned to complement each other makes the curriculum outstanding. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent. By the time they leave school pupils are articulate and self-confident with a good grounding in the skills that prepare them well for later life.

Improvement over the last four years has been rapid and sustained. The good leadership and management, driven by the excellent role model provided by the headteacher, are moving the school forward. All share a desire to provide the best possible education for their pupils. Careful monitoring and accurate self-evaluation has identified where improvements have been needed and effective action has been taken. However, the school has been too cautious in some of its judgements. Pupils' personal development and welfare, the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support, judged by the school to be good, are outstanding. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. This record of development and the rapidly developing leadership skills of middle leaders show the school has good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.

- Consistently implement strategies to ensure that the quality of all teaching is at least good.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery with attainment well below that expected for children of their age. Despite the good progress they make, they still move into Year 1 with standards below what is expected for their age, particularly in aspects of literacy. However, the impact of the school's new leadership in improving the quality of provision has led to a recent improvement in standards in the Foundation Stage. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average while those at the end of Year 6 were average. Standards in both key stages have been rising for the last two years due to the improving teaching and the more effective guidance and support given to pupils. Standards in writing have been the slowest to respond and, at the end of Year 2, vary widely from year to year. Current standards in Key Stage 1 are higher than previous years as the impact of teaching improvements continues to raise attainment. Standards in Year 6 are being sustained at the nationally expected levels. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are achieving equally well. In 2006 the school exceeded its targets, set two years previously, by a substantial margin. Those set for the future are suitably challenging.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. Around the school, examples of their high quality art and sculptures reflect a wide range of cultural inspirations. They understand their own feelings and recognise the impact these have on others. They develop their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are considerate to each other and to visitors. The behaviour of most pupils is exemplary. The small minority of pupils with behavioural problems are learning how to manage them through support offered by the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and enthusiastically involve themselves in the extra-curricular clubs and activities. They have good attitudes to learning and acknowledge the contribution of their teachers. Attendance is satisfactory and improving as parents respond to the school's effort to convince them of the benefits of regular attendance. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They feel safe at school and understand how to keep themselves safe, particularly within their community. They do not feel bullying is an issue and have someone they trust and would go to if they were worried. Pupils play a full part in the life of both their school and the wider community. The choir and the morris dancing team are in great demand. Charity fundraising activities are planned and carried out by the pupils. Older pupils support younger ones through mentoring, acting as playground leaders and organising and running lunchtime clubs. The strong

school council is ably run by its pupil officials. These activities, together with the good development of basic skills, prepare pupils well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers know their pupils well and value their contributions. The rigorous tracking system ensures that teachers have a clear understanding of each individual pupil's strengths and areas for development so work is generally well matched to their needs. Teachers have a high expectation of good behaviour, and expect pupils to work hard. Pupils respond well and are enthusiastic about their learning. Teachers make explicit to pupils what is required of them and opportunity is given at the end of lessons for pupils to reflect on what they have learned. Great emphasis is placed on extending pupils' vocabulary and promoting speaking and listening skills. Teachers skilfully use questioning to probe pupils' understanding and previous knowledge. They are encouraged to work independently from an early age. Marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. All pupils have targets appropriate to their needs. They know what they are and most are clear about what they need to do to achieve them. The good quality of teaching is not yet fully consistent throughout the school. For example, targets are not always focused enough and learning in a minority of classes is sometimes passive.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum provides a range of complementary learning opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils. Well qualified and skilful support staff ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is well planned and appropriate to their needs. The curriculum is enhanced by theme weeks, such as International Week and Arts Week, which pupils particularly enjoy. The wide range of clubs, projects and activities support both academic learning and personal development very well; for example, the environmental club, the project to regenerate a local wood and all children in one class learning to play a brass instrument. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and staying safe are particularly well promoted. Visitors and visits are used very effectively to stimulate learning and enjoyment in the various areas of work being studied. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to promote learning and the school makes good use of its computer resources in all classes. Careful planning ensures that teaching, support strategies and experiences in extra-curricular activities combine to provide an education which is focused very well on pupils' individual needs so that they gain the greatest benefit.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school takes great care to ensure each pupil is well cared for and carefully nurtured to achieve their full potential. Robust systems are in place to ensure the safety of all pupils. Risk assessments are firmly embedded and child protection and safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. All staff have been trained in child protection procedures. The care the school takes to ensure each pupil is making good progress, the support given to enable this to happen, and the determination of the staff to enable each child to flourish, ensure that academic guidance and support is outstanding. Support for vulnerable pupils is exemplary, enabling these pupils to develop self-esteem and interpersonal skills. The inclusion team fulfils a crucial role in regularly monitoring the progress of pupils who are supported by particular teaching programmes. The school works closely with a wide range of external agencies within the local community to ensure that pupils and their families have their needs met. Transition between year groups and to secondary school is closely monitored to ensure that the care and support offered to pupils is seamless.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher is an exceptional leader. She has ensured that all share her vision for the school and that all are working together for improvement. Staff restructuring has created teams which are developing the leadership potential of middle managers and which complement each other in improving the school. The inclusive ethos of the school, in which each child is valued as an individual, is central to all the school does and is reflected in the high quality provision. Monitoring by the headteacher and the management teams is wide-ranging, thorough and accurate. Weaknesses, at school, teacher or pupil level, are identified quickly and effective action taken. Plans identify and include the necessary professional development for teachers and support staff. While the many developments are leading to clear and sustained improvements in teaching, learning and achievement, there is insufficient consistency in the implementation of some strategies, leading to variability in classroom practice. The school works closely with local consortia and national pilots of projects to share experiences and improve its practice. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are knowledgeable of and care passionately for their school. They support the headteacher and are challenging in holding the school to account. Financial resources are effectively used to provide a well-resourced school.

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## 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	3
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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>	1
<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.

## 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	1
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	1
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 very much for your welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play.

We think your school is a good school and getting better all the time. You told us how much you enjoy school, how you like your teachers and that lessons are fun. You said you feel safe and cared for at school and that there is someone you trust and would go to if you have any worries. Most of you behave very well and you are very polite, especially to visitors. You are well taught and, as a result you learn well and make good progress. Your teachers and classroom assistants understand the different needs that each of you has. Together they work hard to meet these needs and make sure that you are helped in every possible way to learn and develop. All that they do in the classroom and all the other activities you have are carefully planned to help you succeed. You work hard and you do make good progress from the time you joined the school. You clearly enjoy the visitors, visits, clubs and other activities organised for you. It is good that the older pupils organise and run things for younger pupils and raise funds for charities. You run your School Council well and through it you contribute to your school's development. You have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and how to keep healthy. By the end of Year 6 you are self-confident and ready for the next stage.

We think your school is well led. Your teachers regularly check what they are doing and plan ways in which they can improve. They also monitor how well you are progressing and if you are struggling you are given extra support and help. You know how well you are doing and you know the targets teachers give you to help you improve your standards. Marking also tells you how to improve your work. To help you do even better we have asked that teachers particularly help you improve your writing skills as these are very important. We have asked school leaders to make sure that all their plans for improvement work as well as they possibly can.