



Hillside Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109930
Local Authority Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 294542
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Mary Sinclair

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rushey Way
School category	Community		Lower Earley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Reading RG6 4HQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 975 5771
Number on roll (school)	339	Fax number	0118 975 8389
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr T Yendell
		Headteacher	Mr A Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	6–7 December 2006	294542

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hillside is a larger than average school with nursery provision for 52 pupils. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school admits pupils from diverse backgrounds. Over one third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and fifteen are at an early stage of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hillside is now a good school, as many parents testified. 'As a family we are very happy with Hillside and couldn't wish for better'. 'This is a totally committed and approachable place of learning'. We are 'very impressed with the turnaround of the school since the headteacher arrived'. 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds'. These are just some of the views of parents of this much improved school. Children make good progress in the nursery because provision is good. Their individual needs are well met in a warm and friendly environment. At the end of Year 6 standards overall are above average and pupils' achievement is good.

The headteacher's strong leadership is the main reason why this school has improved significantly since the last inspection. He has given the school a clear focus on raising standards. Staff, governors and pupils recognise their responsibility to work together to achieve higher standards and this creates a purposeful climate for learning. Concern for continual improvement is also seen in the school's procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This is having an impact on standards. Although these records help teachers to identify the next steps of learning for pupils, the use of assessment in mathematics is not always sufficiently developed to provide teachers with the information they need to refine their teaching for pupils of different abilities. Teachers do not analyse mathematical concepts sufficiently to identify precisely what needs to be taught and the best methods to use, particularly for the less able.

There are several reasons why pupils do well in their academic attainment and personal development. Relationships are good. Pupils feel secure and able to express themselves. The overall quality of teaching is good, making learning enjoyable. Planning is rigorous. Teachers have high expectations. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and to take some responsibility for improving their learning. The school has developed a rich and stimulating curriculum with meaningful links between different subjects. Partnerships with others to promote pupils' well-being are strong. The school promotes healthy lifestyles.

In accordance with Section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a significant improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment in mathematics and ensure teachers use this information to match teaching to the needs of all pupils.
- Improve the teaching of mathematical concepts, particularly for low attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence shows that overall standards are above average. Overall achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities,

is good. The key factors since the last inspection are the higher expectations and improvements in teaching and the curriculum that have improved the progress pupils have been making. When they enter the nursery, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Progress is good and by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are just above average. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in 2005 were significantly above the national average and, according to provisional data, have been maintained in 2006. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in 2005 were significantly above the national average, while progress was satisfactory. For Year 6, standards in 2006 rose in English and science but fell in mathematics. Analysis of school data indicates that this cohort of pupils has made exceptional progress in English and science and above average progress in mathematics in their final year at the school. The lowest ability pupils, although achieving well in other subjects, are not making the progress expected in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins their personal development and features strongly in the creative curriculum. Pupils understand the need to work co-operatively, behave with consideration and respect other cultures. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are keen to come to school 'because it is enjoyable'. Although behaviour is good, the school recognises that pupils need to develop more responsibility for resolving issues. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and work hard to achieve their curriculum targets. This helps them to develop the skills they need for their future lives. Pupils contribute to the local community in a variety of ways, including taking part in concerts and carol singing. They feel safe because 'teachers are available to talk through problems'. Healthy eating helps pupils to develop a healthy lifestyle. The school council has shown initiative in acquiring new playground furniture.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's judgement that teaching is satisfactory, whilst modest, recognises the improvement since the last inspection and their determination to get better. From lesson observations and the good progress made by pupils, it is clear that the overall quality of teaching is good. Planning is consistent throughout the school and identifies targets on different levels for each lesson. Pupils are challenged to work towards the higher levels and this increases the pace of learning. Relationships are good and teachers' expectations are high for work and behaviour. Pupils' contributions are valued and they develop their ideas with 'talk partners'. Interactive whiteboards, computers and other resources are used well to support learning. In most lessons good progress is made because pupils are actively involved and work is pitched to provide appropriate

challenge. The less able struggle when the teaching of mathematical concepts, such as classifying shapes according to their properties, is not well matched to their needs and starting points and this slows their progress. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution and care is taken to deploy them where they are most needed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is good, broad and balanced. French is taught throughout Key Stage 2. Good emphasis is placed upon the acquisition of basic numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills. This prepares pupils well for the world of work. Although recently introduced, the benefits of the school's creative curriculum are already evident. Cultural awareness is woven through this curriculum, helping pupils to develop their understanding of others and of wider issues. Teachers are inspired and pupils are challenged and motivated by the interesting links across subjects. Pupils reinforce their learning by applying what they have learnt in one subject to others. Opportunities for writing are well developed and this increases the pace of learning. The links made with mathematics are underdeveloped. Additional, extra-curricular, opportunities allow pupils to develop their talents. They attend residential visits and participate in a range of clubs, including sports activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents confirm pupils are well cared for in a good climate for learning. This is an inclusive school and teachers strive to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Marking provides good guidance for pupils. Although many of its assessment procedures are effective, the school recognises the need to refine its systems for mathematics. Health and safety provision, risk assessments and child protection procedures are robust and fully observed. Parents and carers appreciate the school's initiative to organise workshop sessions so that they can discuss a range of curriculum matters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges leadership and management as good. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, senior management team and governors, has been the catalyst for considerable change and improvement in a short time. His clear vision for the school as an inclusive learning community and his relentless drive for higher standards in pupils' learning and behaviour are transforming the school. All share his vision. As one teacher said, 'Everyone is completely behind these changes'. The headteacher has acted swiftly to address the issues identified by the last inspection. A new behaviour policy is starting to engage pupils in resolving issues. Teachers and pupils are set challenging targets. Effective systems are in place to monitor teaching and to track

pupils' progress through the school. The resulting information is used to provide additional support and resources where they are most needed. An innovative approach to curriculum planning has been developed by the school, linking subjects together in an interesting way. Additional opportunities for writing have helped to raise standards. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and rightly sees its next priority as improving standards in mathematics. The school's track record since the last inspection demonstrates its good capacity to improve. Governors fulfil their statutory duties. They provide strong challenge and support and are prepared to make difficult decisions to ensure the best for the school.

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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 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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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

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?	2
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

Thank you for welcoming us and being so helpful when we came to inspect your school. I am writing to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

You go to a good school that is getting better and better. Here are some of the things we liked about your school.

- you enjoy school and get on well with each other and with your teachers.
- you like doing challenging work and try hard to reach your targets.
- your teachers make lessons interesting.
- the school's new curriculum helps you to make links between subjects.

Mr. Griffin is a good headteacher. He and all of the other people who help to run your school want it to be even better, so this is what we have suggested.

- we would like your teachers to keep a good record of what you can do in mathematics to help them to plan work for you.
- we would like your teachers to make sure that those of you who find mathematics difficult are taught in a way that helps you to do really well.

We enjoyed being in your school. We hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Mary Sinclair Lead inspector