

Hillbrook School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101057
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307576
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Robin Hammerton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Damon
Headteacher	Mr R Brading
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Hillbrook Road Tooting London SW17 8SG
Telephone number	020 8672 3957
Fax number	020 8767 1081

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Inspection number	307576

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hillbrook is a larger than average, expanding, primary school with nursery. It has extended provision, with several pupils attending after-school care and clubs. A new unit for young children with specific communication difficulties is being built on the site. It serves pupils and families from a rich range of backgrounds and heritages, with 24 nationalities represented. Just over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The school's area is one that includes some significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. More pupils than in most schools join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Hillbrook is a friendly and welcoming school. The staff do much to raise pupils' self-esteem, ensuring successfully that their personal development and well-being are good. The pupils are ready to learn. The school's leaders have engendered a strong sense of community and team spirit. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy school. Pupils generally behave very well, though a few parents have some concerns about poor behaviour. Young children make a good start in Nursery and Reception. The curriculum and the care provided to all pupils are satisfactory with some good aspects.

However, the progress made by too many pupils over the age of 5, especially in literacy, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is too slow and has declined. Many lower-attaining pupils, or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make particularly slow progress. Often the teaching of these pupils depends too much on hard-working teaching assistants, rather than teachers, and consequently is not effectively enough planned or delivered. Teaching overall is inadequate because, whilst it is lively, enjoyable and teachers are skilled, it does not challenge pupils enough. Standards in the most recent national assessments, and in pupils' current work, are too low. The school has a straightforward system for tracking pupils' progress, and believes pupils are now doing better. However, this information is not well enough analysed. It is not used sufficiently in lessons to provide activities that meet pupils' needs, or tell them clearly what they should do to reach the next level. Pupils for whom English is an additional language attain better than their peers.

The school's leaders and governors are aware of most of these issues, which have also been raised with them by external advisers, but the processes and methods they use to address them are not showing significant enough impact. The school's self-evaluation is, in most respects, too positive and does not identify clearly what needs to be better. The school improvement plan involves many people but is unwieldy and insufficiently succinct. It is therefore has too little influence across the school. Some actions are identified in individual action plans but are not brought together into a coherent enough whole. However, staff find their individual performance management discussions supportive and helpful. These are now better linked to targets for pupils' progress, though not as well linked to key objectives for school improvement, and their impact is not yet proven. Overall, the effect of the school's current leadership and management systems on bringing improvement is inadequate.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with lower than expected communication and language skills. They settle quickly, progress well and go on to do just as well in Reception. This is because the hard work and focused, caring energy of the teachers and assistants provide a positive learning environment. The managers have an accurate understanding of the Foundation Stage's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, they have made improvements, including introducing more effective measures to track children's progress. There is a strong concentration on helping

children to work with others, leading to good social and cultural development, which stays with them in older year groups. Children develop sound skills in counting, reading and writing and learn well about the world around them. They are assessed well, so activities are suited to their needs. Effective links with parents and outside agencies ensure that no child is overlooked. Children are successfully prepared to go into Year 1 and have good support from older pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Add more rigour to its self-evaluation procedures.
- Ensure the school improvement plan identifies clearly and coherently the main strategic priorities, and how they will be achieved, so that it ensures consistent improvement across the school.
- Accelerate all pupils' progress by improving the use of assessment data in lessons so that pupils are given challenging tasks well suited to their needs and know better how to improve their work.
- Improve the teaching for pupils with lower attainment, including those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Results in the Year 2 and Year 6 national tests in 2007 were exceptionally low in relation to national standards. Although some pupils achieved better than others, overall this represented inadequate progress from their starting points. Many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those whose first language is English, made particularly slow progress. However, several higher attaining pupils made good progress. Standards for 11 year olds were lower than the previous year, though there was a small rise in the 7 year olds' results from 2006, especially in mathematics. The school did not achieve suitably challenging targets. The work many current pupils do in Key Stages 1 and 2 continues to be of a low standard overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Writing standards are particularly low. Most pupils take a real pride in their work, but it is often too easy for them. Some groups make better progress than others. In particular, many pupils for whom English is an additional language generally make the best progress, because of specialist support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils agree with and understand the school rules. They learn to socialise well and care for others. For example, they were very helpful to inspectors finding their way around the building! They say that bullying and racism are rare and dealt with effectively, so that they feel safe. Pupils clearly enjoy school, especially the investigation of topics involving different subjects, and exciting projects like producing a Trojan Horse. Their behaviour in lessons and the playgrounds is good because they are happy and supervised carefully. They are pleased to have the opportunity to make friends from a range of backgrounds. Pupils make healthy choices of food, and show enthusiasm for exercise in physical education lessons and after-school games. They take winning a class cup and certificates for attendance and punctuality very seriously. Attendance has improved, and is satisfactory. However, many pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are of a low standard so they are not prepared well enough for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Pupils' learning is inadequate overall, particularly in core subjects, because too many make insufficient progress and underachieve. The teaching is often lively and classes are well managed but, in itself, this is not enough. The work given to pupils of all abilities is too often not well enough matched to their needs and is generally too easy, leading to low achievement. Teaching assistants take too much responsibility for the teaching and learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with teachers insufficiently involved. The teaching assistants support these pupils sympathetically but are not sure enough how to help them make enough progress and their rate of learning is slow. For example, in one lesson, a group of lower attaining pupils worked with a teaching assistant to solve number problems using a number line. The pupils enjoyed the activity and the support of the teaching assistant was very caring, ensuring pupils recorded their work neatly. However, the sums involved used very small numbers and the level of challenge for the pupils was much too low. In another class, the work of pupils with learning difficulties supported by teaching assistants was insufficiently linked to the curriculum of the rest of the class and not varied enough, with unsatisfactory marking of work allowing errors to persist, so the pupils made inadequate progress over time.

Despite this teaching has some more positive aspects. Relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently good. Lessons are often fun and well-paced. Teachers are friendly, engaging their pupils skilfully. Pupils learn to work effectively together and listen to each other. Teaching is good in some subjects and lessons, including the music and physical education lessons taught by specialists. Pupils who are learning to speak English receive effective specialist teaching and help, including, where necessary, bilingual support from teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is sufficiently broad, covering all requirements, and has good aspects including, for example, the regular and effective French lessons in Key Stage 2 and cross-curricular teaching of topics that give some opportunity for study in depth. A fulfilling range of visits and visitors to the school widens pupils' experiences. Many extra-curricular activities are popular. The curriculum provides suitably for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. However, it is not adapted well enough for the full range of pupils' needs, especially in English and mathematics. The ways that particular skills should be developed over time in many subjects are considered by staff and often included in their planning but are not well enough structured at whole-school level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with good aspects. The staff know the pupils well and care a good deal for them. Their positive attitude reassures and motivates pupils well. Staff manage behaviour skilfully, in line with the school's procedures. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language welcome the extra attention they receive. These strengths lead to the pupils' good personal development. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are suitably organised to provide a

generally safe environment, although some parents are apprehensive about aspects of the security of pupils, particularly at the end of the school day. Exclusions are kept to a reasonable minimum with good strategies used to keep any vulnerable pupils in school. Links with outside agencies are managed well, providing important support to many pupils. Teachers sometimes use aspects of assessment and marking successfully to help pupils understand how they can improve their work but, across the school, the arrangements for this are not sufficiently robust and it is not consistent or embedded.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher works hard, with his deputies, to create a happy school in which people matter. These senior leaders listen carefully to the staff and trust them. As a result, the staff feel valued and the school has been able to recruit and retain a well-motivated and hard-working team. The school roll has recently increased and pupils' well-being and self-esteem is developed successfully. Rightly, the school leaders and governors point to these achievements as evidence of leadership success. However, the school is not achieving similar success with upholding and raising standards. Staff are not complacent but the school's systems for monitoring and improving teaching and learning have allowed a situation to develop where work in key lessons is not demanding enough for many pupils and their progress is too slow. The process of setting targets to challenge pupils is helpful but too basic, because it takes too little account of their individual needs. Senior staff regularly review and discuss together issues about pupils' progress but have not pulled these ideas together into a coherent enough improvement plan. This leads to members of staff seeing too many priorities without always being sufficiently focused on the main strategic issues and how these might be addressed. Significant whole-school improvement is not apparent.

School self-evaluation processes are not rigorous enough. This means that insufficiently effective strategies (for example, the over-use of teaching assistants to teach pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) are too often continued without significant change.

The school has a recently restructured team system in which teachers from different year groups work together to share ideas and pass information. It is not effective enough in driving forward the key priorities. This allows some inconsistencies to occur across the school. Senior leaders are readily available to advise or help, and the staff value their involvement. However, this work is more focused towards support for individuals than it is to improvement of whole-school practices. It therefore lacks strategic impact.

The governing body is appropriately organised, committed and fulfils all its legal obligations. Like staff, governors are not complacent, but they have not been able sufficiently to challenge the school to improve, partly because they have received and accepted information which is too positive.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillbrook School, London, SW17 8SG

We really enjoyed meeting you when we came to inspect your school recently. Everyone we met was really friendly, smiling and helpful. You made us feel very welcome. Thank you!

You told us that you enjoy coming to school and many of the activities you do. You said the staff look after you well and we saw that. We enjoyed eating the school dinners, which are good and healthy, and we were pleased to see so many of you enjoying them too. It is also really good that so many of you enjoy sport and keep fit. Most of you who do not speak English as your first language get good support and help. The lessons in Reception and Nursery are good.

We also found that some things about your school need to improve. One of these is that often you are given work, which is too easy, so you don't learn quickly enough, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Some of you told us this and we found you were right. You enjoy doing this work with your classmates, but it doesn't always help you to learn fast enough. We are going to ask the staff to try to make sure the work is just right for each of you and help you all to make faster progress. This is a big thing to sort out but you can help by knowing your targets and working towards them. The school also needs to improve the way it does new things or develops different ideas. Most schools have a plan called a school improvement plan. Your school has one but it is not helping the school improve quickly enough. It needs to be changed and done in a different way. That is another big job.

Although your school is so good in many ways, there is important work to be done, so we have decided the school needs special measures, which means it will get extra help. It also means inspectors will visit from time to time to see how things are going until the school does not need special measures any more.

With best wishes for the future,

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector