

# Hillside Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102434
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	308005
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Simmons

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Sean Boyce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Chris Drake
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Northwood Way Northwood HA6 1RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 671 959
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 829 970

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Hillside Infant School is an average sized school. Only a few pupils receive free school meals. Pupils' social and cultural backgrounds are very diverse. A half of all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A significant number of pupils come from Portuguese backgrounds and there are increasing numbers of pupils from Eastern European heritages. The next largest groups are from Asian, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. Close to half of all pupils speak English as an additional language and 29 languages are spoken in total. A high proportion of children are at an early stage of learning to speak English when they join the school. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school has gained the Healthy School Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hillside Infant School is a welcoming and good school, which is well lead. The school has outstanding features in the way in which staff show sensitivity and outstanding care for the pupils. Aspects of pupils' personal development are also very impressive. When these features are combined with good teaching, they enable pupils to achieve well. Parents have great confidence in the work of the school. Inspectors agree with the words of one parent when saying, 'Children flourish, not just academically but socially and emotionally'. The outstanding links with the community help this to be a very inclusive school.

Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and mostly good overall progress between Years 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well and children who are new to learning English make excellent progress in developing their English speaking skills because of the skilled support that they receive.

By the end of Year 2, standards are above average because teachers are skilled at helping pupils to learn basic skills very well. As a result, a very high proportion of pupils reach the expected average level in their work (Level 2). However, the proportion reaching the higher level (Level 3) could be higher and has not increased enough in the last year. Leaders are keen to lift standards and achievement to an outstanding level and they recognise that although the curriculum is good it could be better still in meeting the needs of the highest ability pupils. Although this group often make good progress in securely gaining basic skills there is room for more excitement and independent learning. In particular, by widening opportunities for investigation and creative activities, so that pupils show their initiative more.

Since the last inspection, good strides have been made in developing the school and there is a strong capacity to improve further. This is because the headteacher is leading the school very well. As one parent put it, 'He sets the whole tone and is fantastic'. He is well supported by the governors and teamwork amongst staff is excellent. Middle managers are being helped to widen their roles but there is still more to do to ensure that they are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress in the subjects that they are responsible for.

Pupils' are enthusiastic to learn and they enjoy school. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have a very good knowledge about how to be healthy and safe in the world around them. They contribute well to the school and local community. Pupils develop outstanding social and moral skills. They show superb respect for others and their behaviour is excellent.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Nursery are wide ranging and vary from year to year. Overall, a significant number have lower than expected skills in language and communication because they are new to learning English. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and this sets them up well for further good progress in their Reception year. Overall, the very good teaching and learning leads to standards, by the end of the Foundation Stage, being above what is usually expected. In particular, a significant proportion is at high levels in their social, language and mathematical skills. Attainment has been consistently high since 2004.

Children explore things for themselves and enjoy all that they do. The skilled translation help and emphasis on discussion activities ensures that children are fully involved in learning and make rapid progress in developing their language skills. A recent research project has been conducted by a member of staff in the Nursery and this has enthused all staff to promote more ways of helping boys to enjoy writing. This is very helpful in working towards lifting standards still higher. Children enthusiastically learn letters and sounds (phonics) and this helps them with their reading and writing. Children are encouraged to have fun, learn to work together and gain confidence. Creative activities are very good in the Nursery but limited space restricts these more in the Reception classes. Relationships are excellent.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the roles of middle managers so that they are fully involved in checking the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' progress.
- Help even more pupils to reach the highest levels (Level 3) in their work.
- Promote independent learning more. Especially widening opportunities for investigation, research and project work and by developing creativity still further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and have been held at this level overall, since the school was last inspected, although there was a dip in 2005. Standards were best in 2006, when they were close to being outstanding. Leaders are keen to get standards up to a consistently outstanding level in the future. The school has had a pattern of doing especially well in writing. This is because of the very high expectations and rigorous development of handwriting, punctuation, spelling and the use of descriptive vocabulary. Standards in reading, for the current Year 2, are very similar to those of 2007, when they were above average. However, there is a trend for even higher standards coming through the school in Year 1. In mathematics, there is a very strong emphasis on basic skills, which is good practice but, real life problem solving is less well developed. In science, almost all pupils gain average skills and an increasing proportion are beginning to work at higher levels.

Achievement is good for all groups of learners overall. Within this, pupils learning English as an additional language do very well in gaining the speaking skills to enable them to access learning in other subjects. The school gets a broadly average proportion of pupils to higher levels in their work (Level 3), but this is an area for further development to help lift standards to outstanding in the future.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils talk about their ideas, feelings and opinions very well and they quickly learn how to work cooperatively. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary as evident in the way that they listen in lessons and play with other pupils. They show a bubbling enthusiasm for their work and enjoy the range of activities that are provided. They show a great deal of respect for their friends and members of staff. They enjoy raising funds for a wide variety of charities. Visits to different places of worship and interesting religious education lessons help them to show respect for different cultures. They keenly take on responsibility through things such as the school's council. Pupils have a real understanding of why they need to be healthy and they enjoy a good range of physical activities, which help them to be fit. As one parent noted, 'I love the inventive ways

of getting her to try new food'. Pupils develop confidence, self-belief and a core of very well developed basic academic skills. Pupils leave the school with strong moral values and the ability to relate well to others.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are well planned so that pupils learn new skills quickly. Teachers have high expectations. They place a strong emphasis on promoting social skills and speaking and listening. Moreover, teachers in all classes ensure that they focus very well on helping all children to learn and understand new vocabulary and learn in different and often practical ways. These skills underpin pupils' good learning. Teachers skilfully help pupils to write well. They give them good help so that pupils know how to improve and extend their pieces of writing. In mathematics, pupils practise and develop new knowledge but the over use of work sheets hampers independent thinking and problem solving. Teachers and assistants plan good activities for pupils with learning difficulties. Sometimes, opportunities are missed which could help to make learning exciting. For example, so that pupils radiate real joy, sparkle, spirituality and creativity. Teachers are keenly working to improve this.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well organised and rooted in helping pupils to gain a good range of academic skills. For example, there is a systematic way of helping pupils to quickly learn joined handwriting and write for real purpose. The improvement in the way that guided reading is being done is lifting standards well, especially in Year 1. Leaders know that pupils need to do more investigation activities in science and mathematics so that more pupils might gain even higher levels in their work. Leaders have successfully started work to improve these, but there is still more to do. Pupils enjoy visits and the good range of clubs. These contribute well to pupils' outstanding personal development and general learning. Links between subjects are developing but there is room for more independent learning so that pupils can show their initiative and be as creative as possible. For example, by using the library, computers, art and music more and by widening opportunities for role-play and drama activities. Thus, enlivening pupils' imaginations to very best effect.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Parents rightly recognise that staff are very caring. Sensitive support helps pupils build self esteem and develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a rigorous focus on child protection and the promotion of very good behaviour. There is very effective support for pupils with a range of social, emotional and learning difficulties; the guidance they and their parents receive in managing their difficulties is exemplary. Pupils who are new to the school benefit from excellent induction arrangements. The support for pupils new to English effectively enables them to quickly become a part of their class. The marking of work positively enables pupils to know what they have done well and gives them very good guidance in how to improve their writing. There is often very good verbal feedback given to pupils on their work. The guidance about how to improve mathematics is not as well developed. Pupils are becoming more aware

of how to assess their own and other's learning. The initiative to involve more Portuguese parents in the life of the school is very impressive. Links with other schools and support services enhance the care provided. Since the last inspection, attendance has improved from inadequate to become satisfactory.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher wants pupils to do as well as possible and staff are right behind him in setting high expectations. The headteacher's calm, sensitive and caring way of dealing with pupils, staff and parents helps to set the tone and ethos of the school. There is a real sense of teamwork amongst staff and this is an important factor in the school's success. Two senior members of staff are shortly due to retire following several years of dedicated commitment to the school. As a result, the leadership team is in the process of being restructured to allow more middle managers to develop further their roles. In the past the headteacher has done almost all of the checking of the quality of lessons and pupils' progress himself. This is now going to be shared out to other subject leaders and they are enthused by this, saying, 'This is a positive step'. They are keen to take on greater responsibility for standards. The school has a good plan for further development because the school's evaluation of itself is accurate. Target setting is generally good although this could be more challenging for higher ability pupils. Leaders recognise that the school environment is not as attractive as it could be. Governance is good with the chair of governors showing considerable skills in helping the school to develop.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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	1

### 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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

15 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Hillside Infant School, Northwood, HA6 1RX

You may remember that two school inspectors came to visit your school recently to see how well you are getting on. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Your school is good. This means that most things are just right for you. There are only a few things left to do to make it even better. We agree with you that your school is a happy place to be and you told us that you like your teachers. They also like you and are helping you to learn important new things. Your teachers and other grown ups look after you very well. You are doing well because you like learning and your teachers give you a lot of help and support in learning to read, write and to do mathematics. Those of you who are new to learning English or find learning a bit hard, get plenty of help. We think this is super. By the time that you get to the end of Year 2, almost all of you are able to do the things that we expect. This is good because it means that you are working hard. It was good to see that you are beginning to do more interesting investigations in mathematics and science. We think you need to do lots more of this, as it is fun and helps you to think hard. Well done for behaving so fantastically well and for being polite and kind to the other children at your school. Congratulations for trying so hard to be healthy. The adults are working very well to keep improving things for you. We have asked them all to:

- share out some of the jobs that Mr Drake does with some of the other teachers
- help those of you who find learning easy to get to very high levels in their work
- make learning a bit more fun so that you do more investigation activities and project work; also, help you to do more things like music, art and drama, so that you can use your imaginations really well; we think you will enjoy this.

We hope that you all have a lovely summer holiday. Remember to keep reading and send a few post cards to your friends, so that you keep up with your very good writing! Congratulations to you all for helping to make your school a happy place.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector