

Hillside Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 102435 |
| Local Authority | Hillingdon |
| Inspection number | 308006 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 December 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Olson Davis |

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

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 231 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Miss N O'Hanlon |
| Headteacher | Mrs J Greenyer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 March 2002 |
| School address | Northwood Way Northwood HA6 1RX |
| Telephone number | 01923 825991 |
| Fax number | 01923 824579 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves pupils from a diverse range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly below the national average. Most pupils are of White British background. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is not their home language are higher than in the great majority of schools. The largest group is pupils of Other White backgrounds, many of whom are of Portuguese heritage. The headteacher has been at the school for three years but there have been recent changes to the leadership team. Staff turnover has been relatively high following a long period of stability.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hillside Junior School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Since the last inspection pupils' standards and achievement had been slipping. In response, school leaders have improved systems for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. They use this information to monitor the progress of different groups to identify when pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Some teachers use this information well to plan their lessons and show pupils precisely what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving and is satisfactory. Pupils make steady progress to reach average standards because the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the school recognises that more remains to be done to raise standards further, particularly in science. Here, standards lag behind those in other subjects because pupils have had too few opportunities to plan and carry out investigations. In addition, not all teachers make rigorous and consistent use of assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can. Consequently, some pupils, including lower ability girls and some pupils with learning difficulties, should do better, given their starting points at the end of Year 2.

Adults promote a caring ethos within which pupils make good personal development. Pupils say that their school is 'friendly' and has a 'nice atmosphere'. This contributes to their enjoyment of school and is the reason why most attend well. Pupils know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the many opportunities to be active. The school council is well-established and pupils use it to voice their ideas to improve the school. Parents are appreciative of the way that the school successfully includes pupils from different backgrounds. One wrote, 'I am very pleased with all aspects of the school, especially the way that the school has integrated the Portuguese community.'

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has experienced recent changes in the leadership and staff teams. Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of teamwork within the school and staff are fully behind the headteacher's commitment and vision. Staff morale is high. Teachers are keen to improve provision for pupils and they are embracing new ideas. As one teacher enthused, 'These are exciting times for the school.' The shared understanding of the school's direction and growing expertise amongst school leaders mean that the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. School self-evaluation is sound, so the most important things that need to improve have been identified. Standards in English and mathematics have improved because of effective action. However, some initiatives, such as those designed to improve the achievement of girls, are not implemented consistently and a close enough check is not kept on their impact. Teaching is monitored regularly and useful advice and professional development given to teachers to help them improve. However, school leaders do not always make rigorous enough checks that teachers have taken up the advice given. As a result, some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in science through a rigorous and more consistent use of assessment and by providing more opportunities for pupils to do investigations.
- Keep a closer check on the impact of new initiatives on pupils' learning.
- Make sure that teachers act on the advice given to help them improve their teaching and reduce inconsistencies.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average at the end of Year 6, although there is some variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. Standards in science are not high enough, given pupils' starting points. This is because insufficient work is done on investigations. Standards in English improved in 2007 because the school successfully focused its teaching on improving pupils' writing. The progress pupils make throughout the school is uneven because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Although pupils achieve satisfactorily some pupils should do better. Lower attaining girls are not doing as well as boys because work is not always pitched at the right level for them or in a way that captures their interest. Pupils with statements of special educational need achieve as well as their classmates because of the additional support they receive. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities who do not get additional support make slower progress. There are no significant differences in the progress made by pupils from different ethnic groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respond well to the school's caring ethos. As a result, behaviour is good, pupils are polite and care well for each other. They are aware of some unkind behaviour but most feel that they are helped well by staff to resolve these difficulties when they occur. Pupils have a good awareness of their own and other's safety as shown in their behaviour in the playground and their responses to adults when their behaviour is checked. Many pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community by planning social activities like the harvest tea for elderly people and fund-raising events for charity. There are a number of roles which older pupils carry out responsibly to give a service to their community. By taking part in such activities and making sound progress in their studies, pupils show satisfactory development of skills for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst otherwise satisfactory, the quality of teaching is inconsistent between classes and year groups and this limits the progress that some pupils make. Relationships are good and pupils behave well because teachers use effective strategies for managing their classes. Teachers use a variety of approaches to make learning interesting, including the effective use of the interactive whiteboards. They give clear explanations of the tasks so that pupils know what to do. Regular assessments of pupils' progress are used to predict pupils' levels at the end of year and teachers know how much 'expected' improvement pupils should make. However, this knowledge is not yet sufficiently used to provide pupils of all abilities with the tools they need for them to do really well. Not all teachers make effective use of assessments when planning lessons, particularly in science, or provide individual targets to help pupils know what to improve. The quality of marking varies. Some comments give useful guidance to pupils. Other marking shows that some

teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's personal, social, health and citizenship programme is well-planned and effectively delivered and promotes the good personal development of pupils. The school places a strong emphasis on English and mathematics and this is helping to raise standards in these subjects. However, there are sometimes missed opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in other subjects. The science curriculum has not included enough well-planned opportunities for investigation and there was too little emphasis on developing pupils' scientific language. The school has suitable plans to improve this. There is a good range of activities outside lessons including a wide range of sports, music and dance. There are a number of visits and visitors which broaden pupils' cultural experiences and develop enthusiasm for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school promotes a caring environment in which the pupils feel safe and secure. Good use is made of a range of support from outside school and special programmes run by welfare assistants to support vulnerable pupils. The quality of classroom support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities varies across the school depending on the amount of planning and expertise of the staff involved. Academic targets are set for each pupil at school level, but pupils do not always receive clear enough guidance about what they need to learn to reach these targets. Appropriate risk assessments to secure pupils' safety are carried out and child protection procedures are robust. There are good links with the main feeder school which helps pupils make a smooth transition and reassures parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new leadership team shares the headteacher's vision and their contribution to school improvement is beginning to show impact. They are, for example, tracking pupils' progress and starting to identify and tackle weaknesses in pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics. School leaders are aware that standards should rise further and are now giving increasing emphasis to ensuring that all pupils make good progress from their starting points. Staff have targets to improve their performance and these are now more closely linked to school priorities and accelerating pupils' progress. School leaders have correctly identified where teachers need professional development to improve the quality of their teaching. However, they do not make careful enough checks to ensure that advice is taken up. They also recognise that they could do more to evaluate initiatives to ensure that they are being properly implemented and having the desired impact on pupils' achievement.

The governors' role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is developing. As a result, they are providing more challenge to the school about the progress made by pupils.

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

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ 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

| | |
|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillside Junior School, Northwood, HA6 1RX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited recently. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of the many good things about your school.

- You enjoy school and come to school regularly.
- The school teaches you to stay safe and healthy and is helping you to become responsible members of the community.
- You behave well and want to do your best in lessons.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning and this is getting better in English and mathematics.
- The adults take good care of you at school.
- The headteacher and governors have clear plans on how to improve the school.

We have asked the staff and governors to make the following improvements.

- To help you to do better in your science lessons. To do this teachers will give you work that is just the right level for you and give you more chances to do investigations so that you get better at thinking like a scientist.
- To keep a more careful eye on how well things are going when they try to improve the school.
- To check that teachers improve their lessons so that more lessons are good ones.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your school. We also hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely,

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector