

# Hill Top Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107823
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309510
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joe Peacock

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stephen Bolland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Danny Kenny
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Batley Road West Ardsley Wakefield West Yorkshire WF3 1HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 3074750
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is in a semi-rural suburb of Leeds and is slightly smaller than average. It is rapidly becoming oversubscribed. About one in five pupils travels from outside the normal catchment area. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both below average.

## 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. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. School leadership has succeeded in raising standards rapidly within the past two years. Previous areas of weakness have been successfully resolved and the school is providing good value for money.

By Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is good overall. However, standards in English are not as high as they could be because higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should in writing. The school has concentrated on improving reading with much success as the results in the latest national tests for 11 year olds show. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets in 2008. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Excellent relationships throughout the school help to give pupils confidence. They clearly love being at school and attendance is consistently above average. Their very positive attitudes contribute effectively to their outstanding personal development and well-being. A good and well-planned curriculum enables pupils to have a very good knowledge and understanding of religions and cultures different to their own.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but occasionally teaching is less effective when tasks lack challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils. Teachers are beginning to place more emphasis on promoting writing skills but do not always plan sufficient opportunities in other subjects as well as in literacy sessions. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, especially for those who find learning difficult. Assessment procedures provide accurate information on the standards being reached and this information is used effectively to set new targets for pupils.

Pastoral care and support are strengths and parents showed how much they appreciate this in their mostly positive responses to the inspection questionnaire. Academic guidance and support is good overall although less effective for higher attaining pupils. Parents have plenty of opportunities to meet staff to review their children's progress and there are regular reviews for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and dynamic leadership. Staff fully embrace their responsibilities and are fired-up to build on the school's growing reputation. They monitor standards closely, and regularly check the quality of teaching and learning to give them a clearer picture of strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body, led by a conscientious chair, supports the school effectively. The school's strengths in leadership and the recent rapid pace of improvement show that there is outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter Nursery with skills that are broadly at the expected levels although their skills are weaker in listening, calculating and elements of personal and emotional development. Good teaching in the Nursery class ensures that children settle in quickly and make good progress overall. However, progress in writing and in developing knowledge of sounds and letters is not as strong as in other areas. In Reception, children are constantly challenged with exciting and stimulating activities and make very good progress. Many planned opportunities are provided for children to practise

their writing. By the time they transfer to Year 1, all children at least reach and some exceed the overall standards expected for their age but a small number still lag behind in their emotional development.

The Foundation Stage is well led. Staff work well together to plan a curriculum which interests and engages children. They carefully assess children's standards on entry and track their progress in detail. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and very well supported, enabling them to make good progress.

The spacious and extremely well-equipped outdoor area contributes much to children's learning. They share, take turns and enjoy the challenge of the large climbing equipment and many other activities, such as 'hunting dinosaurs' and recording how many they find. The indoor accommodation, however, is rather cramped, making it difficult for children to concentrate without being disturbed.

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

- Provide sufficient opportunities across the curriculum for pupils, especially higher attainers, to develop their skills and raise standards in writing.
- Ensure that teaching consistently provides the level of challenge and guidance that will enable all pupils to achieve as well as they should.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a rapidly rising trend in standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with pupils making good progress as they move through the school. The preliminary results in the 2007 Year 6 national tests show that the proportion of pupils reaching expected and higher levels in English, mathematics and science is growing. Pupils did especially well in reading although higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they should in writing. The exceptionally good performance in reading, with over half the pupils achieving above average standards, is the result of some decisive action to improve teaching and follows the introduction of a new reading programme. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they very much enjoy school and hence they thrive.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school's positive ethos and excellent relationships result in excellent attitudes and outstanding behaviour. Pupils are adamant that bullying has no place in their school. They say that they really like school and this is reflected in their good attendance. 'School helps pupils to feel good about themselves' was a typical comment from parents.

Pupils are highly motivated and engaged. They enjoy learning and contribute well in discussions, keen to show their knowledge and skills. Pupils work well independently and in collaboration with others. This effectively contributes to their good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils try their best to be healthy. All are knowledgeable when talking about the fruit and vegetables they enjoy eating and the sports activities they do to keep fit. The 'wake up and shake up' sessions are eagerly anticipated each morning. As a result, the school has gained a Healthy School Award. Pupils are very aware of staying safe in school and outside. They make

a good contribution to the school community, as members of the school council and in the wider community through fundraising events. Good links have been established with the local church and local industry. Pupils' development for future economic well-being is good, with useful numeracy, literacy and social skills being successfully promoted.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall although occasionally teaching is less successful and this slows the rate of progress pupils make in some lessons. Common features of good teaching and learning are the relationships pupils and teachers enjoy, plenty of challenging activities to make pupils think and teaching assistants being used effectively to support those who need help. In Year 3, the teacher's enthusiasm in a literacy session was infectious and motivated pupils to produce some lively Rap poetry and in Year 2, the teacher pleaded with pupils not to be too scary when they wrote their stories, successfully motivating them to try and do precisely that! The very good management of pupils' behaviour ensures they work hard and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Skilled teaching assistants do a very effective job of supporting pupils. Teaching is less successful when the pace of lessons is slow and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. The quality of learning in these lessons suffers, especially for higher attaining pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. In addition, all pupils in Key Stage 2 have lessons in French. Pupils in both key stages study a very good personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. Good use is made of discussion time, where pupils often sit in a circle to talk about issues that interest or concern them. The curriculum in some subjects does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. The wide range of additional activities such as 'The Four Corners of the World Week', visits, visitors, music and drama, further enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures. Strong ties have also been established with a school in the USA. Education for business enterprise is enriched by links with the local paint industry. There are good extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and many enjoy taking part in team games and competitions. All have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and there are two school orchestras and a choir. Healthy living, including sex and drugs education, is effectively taught across the school.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils are given good quality care, guidance and support. However, there are weaknesses in the quality of academic guidance for some more able pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are well established and pupils say they feel safe. Pupils know they can talk to any member of staff about a problem because of the strong supportive ethos that exists across the school community. A wide range of appropriate outside agencies is used most effectively to support pupils and families. A recently appointed learning mentor is developing good support in a variety of ways to further help pupils personally. Pupils' views are clearly heard via the school council, which is active and

enthusiastic. The great majority of parents are happy with the care and support given to their children. Systems to track pupils' progress are well established and effective in identifying weaknesses. Assessment information is used well to set challenging targets in literacy and numeracy and to identify any pupils who may need additional help or support.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The very effective work of the senior management team is having a strong impact in raising standards, although the rapid pace of improvement means that some of the judgements that the school has made about itself under-value its current performance. Senior managers' shared vision for a successful school is helping to develop a strong staff team. The headteacher is particularly influential in all this, as a typical view from a parent indicates: 'The new headteacher has made a very good school into a fantastic school.' The strong emphasis on consistency in teaching across the school is being well managed through training and support. Equal opportunities are strongly promoted and the management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The school's resources are well managed; recently installed information technology equipment and computerisation of the library has greatly enhanced the learning environment. The monitoring and close tracking of pupils' progress by subject coordinators has had a positive impact on the raising of standards. The governing body is well informed and is fully involved with the senior management team in the development of 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
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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

<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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when I inspected your school recently. It was refreshing to meet such polite and friendly pupils. I really enjoyed talking to you all and looking at your excellent work on display around school and in your classrooms. The display in the hall on your work towards the Stephen Lawrence Award was fascinating and I can see why you were successful in gaining the award. The following is a list of other really good things about your school.

- You absolutely love being at school and behave really well in class. It was good to see everyone playing so well together at playtime.
- Your headteacher and staff are working so well as a team to try and make school exciting and interesting for you all.
- All of you get off to such a good start in Nursery and Reception. I can see why some of you are upset that there is no school at the weekends!
- Standards are rising quickly. Well done for working so hard, especially in your reading.
- There are so many computers for you to use and I was pleased to see how good you are at using them. It must have taken ages to computerise the library books but I am sure it will be worthwhile. You will know who has each book now.
- The school takes such very good care of you all and is quick to support you if you need help.
- Staff work very hard to provide you with so many things to do outside lessons. I wish that I could have seen the Thai boxing and listened to the school orchestras!

Your headteacher, governors and staff know the school well and have their own programme to make it even better firmly in place. They are right to concentrate on helping you to improve your writing skills and to ask your teachers to guide the quicker learners to do even better by giving them more challenging work.

Thank you again for helping me with my work. You are right to be proud of your school because there are lots of very good things happening there. I hope that you will carry on enjoying everything that it offers and try your best to make it even more successful.