

Hilton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112703
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310987
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	700
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Gallear
Headteacher	Mr J Hilton
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	Peacroft Lane Hilton Derbyshire DE65 5GH
Telephone number	01283 732334
Fax number	01283 735038

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how successfully the school is improving pupils' writing standards, how successfully the school develops the quality of teaching, and how the school has maintained its good performance since the last inspection.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work; scrutinising school documentation, parents' questionnaire responses and records of pupils' achievement and progress; and discussions with the headteacher, governors, senior staff and pupils.

Description of the school

Hilton Primary School is much larger than average. The school serves Hilton and surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. The proportion known to qualify for a free school meal is also below average. The school has grown substantially year-on-year and a well above average proportion of pupils have been educated at other schools prior to joining Hilton.

The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark (twice), School Achievement Award, an Anti-bullying Commitment Certificate, the National Healthy Schools Award, Eco-Schools Bronze, and the Walk to School Platinum Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hilton Primary provides a good education for its pupils. It has outstanding aspects in, for example; pupils' contributions to the school community and links with parents, pupils' behaviour and in the way pupils' good academic progress has been maintained during a period of many changes.

The school has a particularly positive open-door policy and welcoming attitude to parents and the village community. Many parents were observed enjoying sample lessons in Years 1 and 2 during the open afternoon. Parents acknowledge how well their children are performing and support the school strongly. Typical of their comments is, 'As a parent who is new to the school, I have been immensely impressed with all aspects of school life...'

Pastoral care is excellent and this is a happy school. Pupils gain a strong sense of personal achievement from the duties they perform for the school council and all pupils benefit from their work. Pupils care greatly about what happens to the school and the 'eco-warriors' are ready to get to work on improving the wildlife area. The 'anti-bullying committee' works most effectively. Parents commented that there was very little bullying and any incidents are quickly resolved. Pupils new to the school are accepted quickly by existing pupils and settle in well. Very many pupils offer to be buddies and ensure newcomers make a good start. The school has some excellent facilities, including a learner swimming pool. This provision allows the great majority of pupils to learn to swim by the end of Year 2. Close attention to pupils' personal development results in excellent behaviour and attitudes to work, and pupils' great enjoyment of school.

Pupils' good progress and standards have been maintained most effectively since the last inspection despite the high inward mobility of pupils, the consequent growth of the school and many changes of teaching staff. Results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, pupils make further good progress and standards of work in reading, mathematics and science are typically well above average. Teachers' assessments this year indicate a similar pattern in pupils' standards and progress.

Pupils' standards in writing have improved steadily over the last three years, but are lower than in other subjects. A smaller proportion of Year 6 pupils reach higher than expected standards in writing in national tests, than in other subjects. The school is well aware of this trend and the teaching of writing is improving in key areas. For example, there is wider use of well-focused writing tasks in subjects other than English, to develop pupils' sense of writing for real purposes. Teachers are increasingly using 'peer assessment', where pupils check each other's work in detail and make suggestions for improvement. Pupils are also encouraged to check their own work more thoroughly. These good initiatives need time to embed and become routine in all classes. The school has clearly identified further areas where the teaching needs to improve to raise standards in writing. Teachers plan to pay closer attention to the standards to be reached at the end of each year from Reception to Year 6, so that level 5 targets are met in Year 6. A key area, identified by the school, is to develop better marking of pupils' work, so that it shows them what the next step is to improve, and what they should try to do better in their next writing activity. Marking at present is well intentioned and usually thorough, but does not focus on this aspect enough.

The teaching continues to develop effectively. The teaching observed was predominantly good and occasionally outstanding. It meets the varying learning needs of pupils well. Pupils make good progress because teachers are particularly successful in making sure that every pupil has work that is difficult enough but not too difficult for them, according to their needs. Teachers set classes and groups relevant and challenging targets to meet in lessons, which motivate pupils. Pupils often receive clear verbal feedback about how well they have performed. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They fully engage pupils in their groups by using a series of questions and prompts to help pupils learn at a good pace. In a Year 6 English lesson, rapid progress was made because the teacher was very clear about what she wanted pupils to learn. Pupils worked fast on their tasks, which were to compare and contrast the qualities of life in Ancient Athens and Sparta. Peer assessment was used extensively and successfully.

The headteacher leads the school particularly well and he has been an essential constant since the last inspection, with a core of senior staff. During a period of great change, the school has continued to develop positively and maintain pupils' good achievement. A key positive feature is that senior and more junior staff share duties and all take a wider interest in the school as a whole, to assist in its successful management. New staff join a team of established teachers in each year group, who share their expertise and planning willingly with them. New staff therefore soon learn what is expected and become effective quickly. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a clear vision and take all the staff along together to support new initiatives. The school is not afraid to grasp new ideas and use the many talents that staff have in order to improve pupils' progress. The senior team and governors know the school very well, and self-evaluation is extremely accurate. The school evaluates the impacts of changes realistically; hence, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children's attainment on entry to Reception is typical of children nationally. Through consistent and well-planned teaching, children are on course to leave Reception this year above the standards expected of five-year-olds nationally. They make good progress from their starting points. The provision is well managed and children feel safe and secure. Teachers provide a good curriculum. Children were observed successfully revising letter names and sounds and many made good progress with their reading and early writing skills in a Reception lesson. Teaching assistants are efficiently deployed. They meet the needs of the less able children successfully in small groups, using similar lesson content as the rest of the class. Children discover ideas for themselves and they show great interest and enjoyment in what they do. They grow quickly into new routines, such as working on their own and making decisions. The school is developing the outside area further for children to use during lessons, so that they have greater access to outdoor activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the consistency of marking of pupils' work across the school, so that pupils know what the next steps are to improve their writing.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hilton Primary School, Hilton, DE65 5GH

Thank you for making my visit so pleasant and informative. It was good to meet some of you and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the groups I met after lunch and to those of you I joined in the hall at lunchtime. This letter is to give you a flavour of what is in my full report. Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make a good start to your schooling in Reception.
- You make good progress with your work in Years 1 to 6 and reach well above average standards at the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school well for your benefit.
- Many of you have joined the school quite recently - you settle quickly and soon start to enjoy school life.
- Teachers and other adults set work that you can do, but also challenge you to do your best.
- You often find what you study in lessons interesting.
- The school council, eco warriors and the anti-bullying committee are doing a really good job.
- You work hard and behave extremely well.

There is one area that your teachers and I agree needs further work. I have asked that the teachers continue to help you improve your writing skills, by giving you clearer written guidance in your books about how you can do better. You can help, as you have been doing, by continuing to work hard to reach your targets and responding positively to your teachers' comments when they mark your work.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry Lead inspector