

# Hillcrest Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131522
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol, City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	315820
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Norma Watson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	School Road Totterdown Bristol BS4 3BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01173 772440
<b>Fax number</b>	01173 772441

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Most pupils in this large primary school are of White British heritage and almost a quarter are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Hillcrest is a good school with outstanding features. It is a school where staff consistently strive for improvement. Good self-evaluation ensures that pupils' achievement is good and improving further and that their standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Parents think very highly of the school and many are very grateful for the strong contribution the school makes to the local community. They correctly report that Hillcrest is a very happy school, with high standards of care. One parent wrote, 'This is a wonderful school with a strong sense of community. I'm proud to say my children attend Hillcrest.'

Many parents comment on how well the headteacher leads the school. Supported by an outstandingly effective governing body, she has forged a close-knit team of teachers who share her ambition to provide a continuously improving quality of education. In practical terms, this involves regular monitoring and careful analysis of the effectiveness of provision to ensure that all pupils do well. The school uses information gained through monitoring to set clear, relevant priorities for the future. Both its improvement since the previous inspection and the school's capacity for future improvement are good.

Pupils have positive attitudes and contribute well to ensuring that Hillcrest is a harmonious community. Pupils know which factors contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy the many opportunities to take exercise and understand the benefits of a nutritious diet. Pupils' good understanding of healthy eating is well promoted by opportunities for them to grow their own vegetables. Pupils know how to stay safe and the school cares for them well. However, guidance for pupils on their current standards and how to improve them is inconsistent.

Teaching and learning are good and well promoted by the school's effective monitoring of the quality of lessons. Assessment information is used carefully to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs, although there are some occasions when activities do not challenge the more able pupils fully. Teachers manage pupils well and foster good relationships. Pupils respond in kind, demonstrating positive attitudes and working well with their fellow pupils. The school's curriculum has been recently revised and is outstanding in meeting pupils' needs. Provision in the arts and physical education is particularly strong and there are very good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities, such as clubs, outside of the normal school day.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good leadership and management result in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) provision being effective and running smoothly. There is a sharp focus on promoting children's achievement and enjoyment. Detailed assessments provide accurate information on what children know, understand and can do and teachers use this well to plan activities at the right level.

Adults work very well as a team to provide very good care, guidance and support. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Lessons provide the right balance between whole-class sessions where children learn new skills and group work to develop their understanding and skills further. Children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, nearly all attain or exceed the expected goals in all areas. The school is continuing to improve transition between key stages

## What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that activities in lessons always fully extend the more able pupils.
- Ensure that pupils receive clear, consistent guidance on their current standards and on how to improve their performance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school with standards that are at the level expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, standards are above average. Their achievement during their time at school is good overall and has improved steadily in the last three years. The effective Foundation Stage provision ensures that children get off to a flying start. Children quickly develop good learning habits and, when they move into Year 1, their standards are above the level expected.

Above-average standards are maintained throughout the school. In most recent years, standards have been significantly above the national average in Years 2 and 6. The 2007 results show that pupils' achievement was good. Pupils who took the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2007, for example, had made good progress in relation to their starting points in Year 3. The school is quick to understand if individuals are not doing as well as they should and intervenes decisively to put things right. In practice, this ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language achieve as well as others in their classes.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and that they find lessons interesting. They attend regularly and the attendance rate is broadly average. One pupil's comments about how much he enjoys school are typical: 'I just want to leap out of bed and get to school'. Pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong and nearly all behave well. Bullying is rare and is not tolerated by the school. However, a few pupils, mostly boys, sometimes find it hard to keep to the rules.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community, particularly by making improvements to their school through the school council. All pupils are involved in improving the local environment, for example, by planting hedges and trees or painting murals. Pupils perform concerts for local people and raise substantial funds for charities.

Pupils think deeply about issues such as poverty and bereavement. They have a very good awareness of cultures other than their own and have gained much from strong links with a school in Uganda. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being by their good literacy and numeracy skills. They enjoy growing their own vegetables and selling produce locally and this gives them experience of handling money.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Teachers promote constructive relationships in lessons, offering warm praise. Pupils respond well and are keen to get on with tasks, so that their learning is good. Behaviour is well managed and this encourages a positive approach to learning.

Teachers make sure that lessons are enjoyable because they know that this leads to good learning. For example, one teacher enlivened a numeracy lesson by casting one pupil in role as 'Burglar Bill' to 'steal' objects while the rest had their eyes closed. This proved an engaging and jolly method of teaching subtraction.

Lessons are thoroughly prepared. Interesting resources capture pupils' interest and the pace of learning rarely falters. Teachers maintain a clear focus on lesson objectives, usually set high expectations and regularly remind pupils of their learning goals. Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities but, occasionally, activities in lessons do not fully extend the learning of the most able. Books are well marked. Teachers write friendly, helpful comments and pupils are expected to follow these up, although these do not necessarily lead to the setting of personalised targets.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum promotes positive attitudes to learning and meets pupils' needs extremely well. It reflects clearly the aims of the school, enhancing pupils' personal development, promoting their enjoyment of education and extending their knowledge of the wider world. Pupils experience an innovative curriculum with strong cross-curricular links that are underpinned by opportunities for the development of key skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Planning throughout the school is thorough. It takes full account of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is also good support for pupils whose first language is not English. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is good. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy learning Spanish, German and French. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of opportunities additional to lessons which include residential visits, visitors and special days focused on particular subjects. The many after-school activities are well attended and much enjoyed.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is valued very highly by both pupils and parents. The school has comprehensive systems to encourage good behaviour that mostly work well and ensure the school is a safe place. Health and safety procedures are good and teachers are very careful to emphasise safe practices in lessons, on visits outside school and on residential trips. Child protection systems are robust and all staff have had good recent training. Links with other professionals such as educational psychologists, education welfare officers and health staff are good and provide valuable support for the school and individual pupils. The very good care and support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensure that they feel safe and are able to take a full part in school life. Academic guidance is not as strong as

pastoral care, although it is satisfactory. Pupils are not told enough about their current standards or how to improve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good quality leadership and management is the main cause of the school's success. The headteacher's high expectations of pupils, staff and herself encourage all members of the school to strive hard to succeed. The headteacher is supported well by other senior staff, who fully share her vision and make important contributions to school improvement.

Self-evaluation systems developed by the leadership team are thorough and robust. Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, sharp analysis of standards and effective action to rectify weaknesses, the school ensures that pupils make good progress in all areas. For example, these systems have led to better attendance, behaviour and standards in writing.

Leaders set challenging targets for the school in national tests but recognise that the setting of individual targets for pupils would raise standards further. The school has very constructive links with nurseries and other schools which ensure smooth transitions for the youngest and oldest pupils. Governance is outstanding. Governors are critical and supportive and have an excellent grasp of what is needed to raise standards. The school has effective systems to ensure it gets good value from its spending. It ensures that spending decisions are related to improving pupils' achievement.

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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?	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 <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?	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	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?	1
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	1
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**

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful when the inspectors visited your school recently.

You told us that you think that Hillcrest is a good school and we agree!

There are a lot of good things going on at the school:

- You are taught well and achieve well during your time at school. Your good behaviour and attitudes help make sure your learning is good.
- The standards of your work are above average overall.
- The school cares for you well, so that your personal development and well-being are good.
- The curriculum is excellent and contributes much to your enjoyment of school. It is interesting and there are lots of very good opportunities for activities additional to lessons, such as clubs and visits.
- Your teachers and the other adults work as a close team, leading and running the school well.

Almost all schools could improve what they do. Hillcrest is good already and, to make it even better, we have asked the school to work on two things. These are to make sure that:

- activities in lessons always challenge those of you who learn quickly; and
- you are given clear guidance about how well you are doing and how to improve your work.

Once again, thank you very much for all your help. It was a delight to meet you.



11 October 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hillcrest Primary School, Totterdown, Bristol BS4 3BW**

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With all good wishes

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector