

Hillsgrove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101408
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	323459
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	425
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	65
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sunny Singh
Headteacher	Mr Jeff Laws
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sidmouth Road Welling DA16 1DR
Telephone number	020 8303 4949
Fax number	020 8303 4828

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Provision and developments in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- How well the school is improving writing, especially for boys and higher ability pupils, between Years 1 and Year 2.
- Why the school does especially well in mathematics.

The inspectors gained evidence from lessons and from the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and two governors. A range of documentation was evaluated. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised and the views of parents were gathered from questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Hillsgrove Primary is a large school. The school has a Nursery class, which, with its Reception class, forms EYFS. The school has an onsite, privately run, after school club.

Three quarters of all pupils are from White British families. The next largest groups are from Black African and Asian Indian backgrounds. Only a small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Of these, very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A lower than average proportion of pupils have some kind or form of learning difficulty and/or disability. Difficulties mostly relate to learning basic skills or autistic spectrum disorders. The school has gained awards including Healthy Schools, the Activemark and an award for financial management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hillsgrove is a good and caring school with a strong community ethos. A committed and enthusiastic headteacher leads the school well and is effectively supported by senior staff and governors. Inspectors agree with leaders when they said, 'This is a happy and successful school, that instils a love of learning for its pupils.'

The pupils develop into well rounded, confident young people who are effectively prepared for their future lives and longer term economic well-being. Leaders' clear vision and their high expectations, when coupled with good teaching and learning, enable pupils to flourish and achieve well.

Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress from their wide-ranging starting points because they are given helpful support. This results in standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is particularly impressive as a very high proportion of pupils gain the higher Level 5. Standards are close to being outstanding in mathematics. Pupils do so well because teachers have high expectations and understand how to teach the subject very well. This ensures that pupils apply their mathematical skills to help them to solve interesting problems in many different subjects. Pupils remarked that, 'Mathematics is made interesting and fun' and, 'It's my favourite subject'. Pupils are encouraged to have the confidence to use their mistakes as opportunities for learning. Teachers ask questions which make pupils think hard and pupils explain their problem solving strategies in very individual ways.

Leaders are ambitious to make the school outstanding in the future and have clear plans in place to aid this. There is a good capacity to improve, as evident in the way that standards have risen by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. Leaders accurately evaluate the work of the school. They set challenging and achievable targets for the end of Year 6 and they carefully check pupils' progress.

Leaders are working successfully to develop writing, especially in Years 1 and 2. This is because, although pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading, it is not as strong in writing. The school has successfully raised the profile of spelling by helping pupils to link letters and sounds (phonics) to improve their writing and an immense amount of time is given to this. However, not enough time is given to other aspects of literacy. Creative and extended writing are underdeveloped, for example, and drama is not used enough to inspire and challenge pupils, especially boys, to write. Added to this, the marking of pupils' work does not give enough guidance on how pupils might edit, extend and improve their work. These factors have contributed to why boys do not do as well as girls, and why few Year 2 pupils gain the higher Level 3 in writing. Teaching and learning in English is good at Key Stage 2, as pupils learn a strong range of skills and read and write for a wider range of purposes.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and they note that teachers are, 'Friendly and helpful'. Pupils behave well and are a great credit to the school, their parents and especially themselves. As one parent put it, 'Children are courteous and respectful and any children who do step out of line are dealt with firmly and fairly.' Pupils show good respect for others and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is evident in the high quality displays of art work around the school, in their musical achievements and in the way that the school promotes community cohesion. Overall, pupils benefit from a wide range of interesting activities clubs and visits, which enliven learning and broaden their personal development. They take

part in many different sports and have a well-developed knowledge and ability to be fit and healthy. They are especially active in making a positive contribution to the community. For example, by doing several impressive recycling activities.

Parents make a positive contribution to their children's learning. The very active parents' association provides many additional resources, which contribute to their children's success and enjoyment of school. Most parents have considerable confidence in the school. However, a significant number of parents, who responded to the questionnaire, noted that they feel that the school does not take enough account of their views. The headteacher senior staff and governors are keen to improve this.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children often come into the Nursery showing lower than expected skills, especially in their social and speaking skills. Children make steady progress, although standards remain slightly lower than average by the end of the EYFS.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children benefit from being in a spacious learning environment. This allows them to explore things for themselves and take part in adult led activities. Sometimes activities are not challenging enough and role-play is underdeveloped. As a result, opportunities are missed to enliven and extend learning to best effect. Staff work hard to help pupils to make good progress in their speaking skills and there is a good focus on counting and simple problem solving. Children's all-round personal development is good and this helps them to work effectively with others and behave well. Important aspects of reading, writing are lower than average by the end of the EYFS. Correctly, this is the main priority for improvement. Teaching is generally stronger in the Reception classes. This is because teaching is more challenging. Assessment of children's progress is better developed in the Reception class than in the Nursery.

Good relationships with parents and carers aid children's welfare. Staff treat children as unique individuals and they are well cared for in many ways because staff are kind, friendly and keen to make children's start to school a happy time. Leaders are working effectively to ensure that the latest guidance linked to welfare is being implemented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the EYFS to ensure that learning is good and children reach higher standards in reading and writing.
- Provide wider opportunities and challenges for writing in Years 1 and 2.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

13 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillsgrove Primary School, Welling, DA16 1DR

You may remember that two inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so welcoming. We are writing to let you know that you go to a good school.

You told us that you enjoy school and we can see why because you go to a happy school where you make good progress and learning is fun. You are a credit to your school, your family and yourselves, especially in the way that you behave and work hard. The adults provide many extra clubs and visits for you. This makes learning fun and helps you to understand more about the wider world in which you live. Well done for doing so many things in your local community. In particular, we are impressed by the standards that you reach by the end of Year 6, congratulations! You do so many recycling activities and we were delighted to find out that you do a wide range of sports and musical activities. We loved the attractive displays of your work and were especially pleased to see good artwork and the many links between different subjects. Because teaching and learning are good, you are helped to do well. You clearly enjoy mathematics and this work is especially impressive, please keep this up!

Your headteacher and other adults are working especially hard to make the school special for you. They would like the school to be outstanding in the future and with this in mind, we have asked them to keep up their good plans for improvement. In particular, we have asked them to work on the following things.

- Make everything in the Nursery and Reception classes as good as possible especially when helping the children to learn their letters and sounds, reading and writing.
- Make sure that children in Years 1 and 2 do more exciting and longer pieces of writing.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector