

Hill West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134477
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	328909
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	355
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Longhorne
Headteacher	Beth Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Clarence Road Sutton Coldfield B74 4LD
Telephone number	01213 085392
Fax number	01213 085061

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Hill West is a larger than average primary school. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds, with a few from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that found in most schools, although the proportion varies between different year groups. These pupils have mainly speech, language and communication or moderate learning difficulties. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in two Reception classes. On the same site as the school, there is an independently managed nursery, which was inspected separately, and a before-and-after-school club for 7 to 11-year-olds, managed by the school, which was inspected as part of this inspection.

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. It has made good progress since its previous inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school and are extremely pleased with the education it provides. 'The school ethos of promoting a love of learning is very apparent. The whole school plays an active role in making learning fun,' was a typical example of their views.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where provision has improved this year. Support from highly skilled staff who work as a cohesive team means that children's achievement is now good in Reception, and they are now reaching above average standards in most areas by the time they start in Year 1. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average. This represents good progress as these pupils were working at average levels when they started in Year 1.

Across Key Stages 1 and 2, good teaching ensures pupils' achievement is good. Much good, and a small proportion of outstanding teaching, which met the learning needs of all pupils well, was observed during the inspection. In a few lessons, however, teachers do not make sure pupils have sufficient guidance to help them complete tasks to a good standard. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who are well behaved and keen to learn.

The school's creative curriculum develops pupils' thinking skills, encourages good personal development and is interesting and varied. There is good progression of skills development and effective cross-curricular links. For example, much writing is undertaken in other subjects and this has helped to develop pupils' writing skills in 'real' situations. Opportunities for enrichment are diverse and innovative and take-up is good. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although the quality of marking varies between teachers and subjects. Although the school has introduced individual targets for writing and numeracy, teachers do not always refer to these targets when they mark pupils' work. Pupils are not involved in the process sufficiently, which means that they are not fully aware of how to improve their work.

Pupils enjoy school and are motivated, attentive and well behaved. Attendance is good and much work has been undertaken by the school to gain feedback from parents and pupils about all aspects of school life in order to make improvements. The school has achieved the Impetus award for its work on values and basic human rights and the bronze Eco-School Award. Good relationships have been forged with the local community and much work has been undertaken to promote pupils and their families interacting with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The school has good facilities for its breakfast and after-school club which provides satisfactory care for 7 to 11-year-olds.

Good leadership and management are key factors in the school's success. The school is well led by the headteacher who, together with all staff, continually seeks improvements for the benefit of the pupils. Equal opportunities and community cohesion are promoted very effectively. Governors exercise their responsibilities well and the school's capacity to improve is good. The whole-school tracking system is in its early days and as yet does not fully support the school's evaluation of the effectiveness of improvement initiatives.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception Year with levels of skills and knowledge in line with age-related expectations. However, despite being above these standards in dispositions and attitudes,

physical development and numbers as labels for counting, children are below in writing, reading and linking sounds and letters. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and this progress is carefully monitored. Parents support their children well, which benefits their learning. Actions implemented to raise standards are having a positive impact, demonstrating accurate self-evaluation. High quality planning and the provision of exciting activities that are well matched to children's needs and abilities result in confident, independent learners. The personal development and well-being of the children are outstanding as provision for their welfare is excellent as thorough procedures are consistently applied in practice. Children's behaviour and attitudes are excellent. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well, which has ensured that provision is good with outstanding features. Outdoor provision is identified by the school as an area for development, so that best use can be made of space, time and resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all classes.
- Involve pupils more fully in setting and checking on their progress towards their personal learning targets, and ensure these are securely linked to self- assessment and teachers' marking.
- Extend the analysis of data, to identify progress trends for cohorts and groups of pupils, in order to ensure that initiatives have the intended impact.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the time pupils leave the school, they reach standards that are above average in mathematics and science and broadly average in English. More able pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics and science, but standards in writing are relatively weaker. Progress is good overall, but uneven, depending on the quality of teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar good progress to their peers due to effective support. There are no differences between the achievements of any ethnic groups, but boys generally do less well than girls in writing. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is not as good as it is in the rest of the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils work together well and express their views confidently in front of classmates and adults. They appreciate the value of working in teams with the school house point system for good behaviour and their personal 'Star Card'. Attendance is good. Pupils say there is little, if any, bullying or racist incidents and they feel safe in school, knowing who to talk to if there is a problem. Much work has been undertaken by the school to promote good behaviour and the school's cultural development is outstanding, with meaningful links forged with other schools in the United Kingdom and in Pakistan. Pupils enjoy school, are well behaved and able to work independently. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community and enjoy taking responsibility, for example as play leaders. Pupils generally have a good understanding of the importance of healthy living, although some younger pupils do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'healthy' snack. There are also occasions when low-level disruption in some classes is not fully addressed. Pupils are prepared well for their future, as shown by their good aptitude for working in groups and independently and their good development of basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils are based on mutual trust and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Classrooms are attractive and displays used well to support and promote learning. ICT is used well and teachers work hard to ensure that the range of activities offered in lessons maintain pupils' interest. The pace of most lessons is lively and staff have secure subject knowledge. As a result of accurate assessments, work is well matched to pupils' different capabilities, although some teachers do not always make sure that pupils know what is expected of them in tasks set, for instance by using modelling. Support from teaching assistants is appropriately directed. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in checking on the success of their own learning to ensure that they make faster progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT and effective development of skills in the school's 'creative curriculum' where it delivers other subjects. Good enrichment activities are provided and the school offers a range of extra-curricular activities. The school has worked hard to ensure high take-up of these activities. For example, the school identified that only a small proportion of boys sang in the choir, so an orchestra was started which resulted in more than doubling the involvement of boys. The school has an effective integrated programme for personal, social and health education which supports pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. However, planned work in the curriculum is not delivered equally well by all teachers. Opportunities for some aspects of personal development, and structured teaching activities to encourage best progress in some Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 classes are not always provided to best effect.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in school and there are good systems for keeping parents informed through individual letters, newsletters, workshops and the school's website. There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and secure at all times and child protection procedures were fully in place at the time of the inspection. All staff work together well to promote the enjoyment and well-being of all pupils. Learning support staff are well briefed and provide the correct level of support to the pupils. Health and safety is well managed and monitored by the governing body. Good transition arrangements ensure that Year 6 pupils feel well prepared for the next stage in their learning. There is early identification of, and good support for, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with outside agencies used well when appropriate. The school's system for using pupils' personal learning targets is not sufficiently integrated with teachers' marking to enable pupils to make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a clear sense of common purpose among all staff and a strong sense of team spirit. The senior leadership team is clearly focused on raising standards and pupils' achievement. Staff embrace with enthusiasm opportunities for professional development and are keen to improve their skills. All pupils are treated equally, with a provision map used well to target those who require extra support. Regular monitoring by managers at all levels has provided the school with a largely accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. This is being used well to secure many improvements. Governors have worked hard to ensure that their knowledge of school data is backed up by their own first-hand experience based on monitoring visits with a class and subject focus. The promotion of community cohesion is good, with significant work undertaken to link with parents through Inspire workshops and to develop understanding and friendships with other cultures. However, the whole-school tracking system does not yet give a clear overview of how well groups of pupils progress to enable school leaders to undertake a detailed analysis of achievement and hence ensure that initiatives are having the required impact.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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**

18 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Hill Primary School, Sutton Coldfield, B74 4LD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work. Hill West is a good school. The inspectors were pleased by your good behaviour, your good attitude to your work and how well you cooperate with each other. Staff take good care of you and the school has a warm and friendly atmosphere. You obviously enjoy school and work hard to achieve well in your lessons. You make good progress as teaching is good and reach above average standards by the time you leave. There is an interesting and wide range of activities planned for you in the curriculum and you clearly enjoy all the extras as well, such as after-school clubs.

Your headteacher and all the staff want you to do as well as possible and we have been talking about ways of helping you to do this. We have asked staff to make sure that tasks in lessons are explained well, with examples, so that you can achieve your very best. We have also asked them to make sure that you not only know your targets for English and mathematics, but also to involve you in how you can achieve them, including giving you feedback on them when they mark your work. You can help by thinking about your targets when you do a piece of work and deciding if you have achieved a particular target when you check through your work at the end of a lesson.

We also want the school to keep detailed records about how each class is doing so they can make useful comparisons and so that if there is anything that you do not understand or find difficult, they can help you to catch up.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector