

Hillside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120982
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339820
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Charles Powles
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
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Age group	4–10
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analysis of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 80 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what the school is doing to raise attainment in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1
- how much of the teaching is good or better, especially in Key Stage 2
- the extent to which pupils have direct experience of other cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but the number with statements of special educational needs is high. The school has a specialist resource base for pupils with learning difficulties. The governing body is registered to run a Nursery on site for 24 children. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

The school is in the process of changing from a 4-8 first school to an all through primary school, with its eldest pupils currently in Year 5. This cohort will leave the school in July 2011 as Year 6.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hillside is a good school. It has succeeded in retaining its distinctive character and caring ethos that made it a popular first school, while extending good provision in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is above national expectations by the end of Year 5 and they make good progress from broadly typical starting points. Parents speak highly of the school. One, reflecting the views of many, said, 'The children are nurtured like a big happy family and they learn to respect others and work as teams.'

Teaching is good in most classes, with some outstanding teaching. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and make lessons interesting and enjoyable. On a few occasions there is some variability in the quality of teaching, when the pace slackens because pupils are not involved enough in their learning, or when there is insufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils. Assessment is good, with effective use of data to make sure nobody is falling behind. While most of the marking and target-setting is carried out well, occasionally there are inconsistencies that mean not all pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to do to improve. An exciting curriculum motivates pupils and is adapted well to their needs. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and enjoy visits and visitors. At times, however, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills by writing at length across different subjects. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are included well, and that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

The vast majority of pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they show consideration and understanding for one another, especially for those who face particular difficulties. The achievement of Healthy Schools status and the Activemark recognises pupils' outstanding awareness of healthy lifestyles, and the very high numbers who participate in extra-curricular sports such as cross country and karate. The school council runs its own healthy tuck shop and pupils are involved in growing vegetables in the garden. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community as buddies, and the older ones support the younger ones well. A large majority of pupils attend school well, and staff work hard to reduce the persistent absence by a few that makes overall attendance average. Pupils learn about other cultures and beliefs through religious education and aspects of the curriculum, but have limited direct experience of the diversity of traditions and heritage in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Accurate self-evaluation comes about through rigorous monitoring by leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body. The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive improvement well and have good systems in place to track pupils' progress. Measures to raise attainment in reading and writing are bearing fruit,

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especially in the Reception and Year 1 classes. There is a high level of need in the present Year 2 and the school has supported these pupils well, so that they have made good progress from their starting points, even though attainment for this year group, unusually for the school, is below average. There has been good progress since the last inspection and the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress further by:
 - ensuring all lessons move at a good pace and provide sufficient challenge for all pupils
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing across different subjects
 - improving the consistency of marking and target-setting so that all pupils know the next steps in their learning.
- Enhance community cohesion by:
 - developing links that give pupils direct experience of different cultures and traditions, nationally and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. As one said, 'Because it's fun we learn.' They are keen to take part in lessons, and apply themselves with concentration to tasks. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils worked hard to produce poems that contained literary features such as alliteration, and performed them with pride. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 wrote enthusiastically to the mayor to suggest how tourism could be developed by the acquisition of a giant red ball the size of a house! These letters formed part of a script that the pupils were going to film, so that they could post the presentation online. All pupils achieve well, including those in the specialist resource base and other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in helping groups and individuals meet their targets.

Pupils say they feel safe at school, something endorsed strongly by parents. Year 5 pupils appreciate the additional responsibilities they are given and are good role models for the other pupils. One buddy said, 'When younger children are having a hard time they come to us and we sort them out.' Pupils have won an award for their commitment to cycling to school. They have a strong awareness of sustainability and are lobbying for the school to become a 'Fairtrade' school, having produced a presentation for the governing body. Pupils have good involvement with their local community, taking part in a project to plant trees, and the choir singing to the elderly. The Year 5 pupils are being prepared well for their move, in a year's time, to secondary school, having above average basic skills and developing the personal qualities they need to become successful learners. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, the spiritual dimension explored through some outstanding artwork and lessons in philosophy. Cultural development is satisfactory, mainly taught through religious

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education and aspects of the curriculum. There are few opportunities for pupils to have direct experience of other traditions and beliefs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school has succeeded in continuing the existing good teaching in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 into Years 4 and 5. Teachers make good use of technology to engage and interest pupils. Lively class discussions and good questioning are a feature of the best lessons. An emphasis on helping pupils to improve their writing is proving particularly effective in the Reception class and Year 1, and the purchase of books that appeal to boys is having an impact on attainment in reading. More rigorous assessment procedures are ensuring that teachers have a good appreciation of how pupils are progressing and are able to plan work that will help them to improve. The extent to which this is communicated effectively to pupils varies, with some marking clearly setting out the next steps in their learning, but not all. Similarly, while most pupils know their targets for improvement, some are less clear because they have not been highlighted sufficiently well.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' positive personal development and well-being, and enjoyment of school. Much work has gone into drawing up a relevant and creative curriculum for new mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2, building on the good practice in Key Stage 1. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' artwork in particular, with some good examples of still life work and weaving patterns. There is a wide range of clubs, which are well supported, including scrap-booking and cheerleading. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to go on a residential visit, which helps to boost their confidence and independence. A large majority of pupils learn a musical instrument, sufficient for the school to have its own jazz band. While pupils have some opportunities to extend their writing across different subjects, for example in giving an eye-witness account of the Great Fire of London, there is too much reliance on commercial sheets which limits the scope of their work. The school's virtual learning environment is well-developed, enabling pupils to continue their learning at home. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, making a real difference to its most potentially vulnerable pupils, both through the specialist resource base and with the help of its very experienced teaching assistants. There are good links with outside agencies, which provide additional support and guidance. A wide range of interventions ensure all pupils' needs are met. The school is doing all it can to reduce the persistent absence of a few families that makes attendance average, even though the large majority of pupils attend well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher set out a clear vision for the school as it moves to becoming a fully fledged primary, and have managed the transition extremely well. The leadership of teaching and learning is good, although there remain some inconsistencies in the provision, particularly relating to pace and challenge in a few lessons. Leaders and managers take a robust approach to monitoring and hold staff to account. They know what the school does well and how it can improve. Strategic plans are generally good. Occasionally, the measures outlined to evaluate the effectiveness of actions are not specific enough. The governing body has a positive impact on school development, because governors are rigorous and systematic in their monitoring and ask pertinent questions. The school's links with parents are good. There is a thriving parents' association and many parents help around school.

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The school promotes equal opportunities well, ensuring that all pupils are included and that there is no discrimination. Pupils from the specialist resource base join the other children for assemblies and playtimes, and some are integrated into the main school in the afternoons. Safeguarding arrangements are good. All policies and procedures are reviewed and kept up to date and careful records kept. The school has a clear understanding of its local community and reaches out well to all groups. Plans to give pupils more understanding of the diversity of cultures and traditions in the United Kingdom and globally are at an early stage. Links have been started with contrasting schools in another county and in Spain to help bring this about.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is good provision in the Nursery and in the Reception class in the main school, with lively and energetic staff who make learning exciting for children. A good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensures that children can pursue their own interests both inside and outside the classrooms, while at the same time receiving structured support to develop their early literacy and numeracy skills.

Children join the school with skills and abilities usually in line with the expectations for their age, although they are below in personal development and aspects of language and communication. Children make good progress in both the Nursery and the Reception class because of consistently good teaching and a vibrant curriculum that engages children well. Visitors enhance the provision, such as a hen and her chicks and a new-born baby. During the inspection, a special multicultural week was taking place in Reception and children loved making chapattis and diva lamps, and learning Indian

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dance. Good assessment means that staff know the children well, and record their progress in 'learning journeys'. These are more established in the Nursery, and form a useful resource for children and their parents. In Reception, there is not enough use of observations to help bring the learning journeys alive, although they are illustrated well with photographs of the children taking part in a variety of activities in all areas of learning. Children enter Year 1 with attainment that is often average or above, depending on their starting points. Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has moulded together an effective team of staff who have a deep understanding of the needs of young children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A third of parents and carers returned questionnaires, and expressed mainly positive views about the school. All agreed that their children enjoy school, the teaching is good, the school helps to promote a healthy lifestyle, meets their children's particular needs and that they enjoy school. Inspectors' findings agree with these views. A few parents expressed uncertainty about how effectively the school is preparing their children for secondary school, which is just over a year away. Inspectors found that the school is doing a good job in giving the eldest pupils additional responsibilities, acting upon their views and ensuring that they have the personal qualities and academic skills necessary to succeed in the next stage of their education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hillside Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	61	30	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	64	27	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	40	45	56	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	49	39	49	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	49	41	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	41	44	55	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	51	39	49	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	28	44	55	5	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	50	40	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	38	42	53	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	29	46	58	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	49	37	46	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	61	29	36	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillside Primary School, Bradwell, NR31 8PA

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. Hillside is a good school. Here are some of the things it does well.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start in their education.

You make good progress in your work so that your attainment is above average.

You feel safe at school and your behaviour is outstanding.

You have an excellent understanding about how to stay healthy and you take part in lots of clubs.

You help out around the school well, and are involved in your local community.

The school is giving you the skills you need to prepare you well for secondary school.

The teaching is good and lessons are interesting and enjoyable.

You often go on educational visits, including residential journeys.

The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you are having difficulties.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well.

You produce some good writing, but sometimes you do not write enough in different subjects, so we have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to write at length. We have asked them to make sure that lessons are always good, and that you know exactly what you have to do to improve through reading comments in your exercise books and understanding your targets. We have also asked your teachers to develop links with schools in the United Kingdom and abroad to give you more direct experience of the variety of different cultures and traditions that exist. You all can help by telling your teachers how well you think you are doing and what you enjoy learning, and by making sure you always attend school.

Many thanks again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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