

Hillcroft Primary School, Caterham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125123
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340724
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jennifer Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Stead
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Huggett
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
School address	Chaldon Road Caterham Surrey CR3 5PG
Telephone number	01883 342606
Fax number	01883 330910
Email address	head@hillcroft.surrey.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Inspection number	340724

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies and procedures for safeguarding, assessment and the analysis of data, together with examples of planning and pupils' work. They also analysed 53 questionnaires returned from parents.

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

- The standard of pupils' work and the quality of teaching.
- How assessment is used to challenge all pupils appropriately, including the more able.
- The quality and effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The majority of pupils come from the local White British community. Few pupils do not speak English as their first language. Many pupils have experience of other educational settings before they begin school. An increasing number of children transfer from the Nursery to the Reception Year. Pupils have the opportunity to attend before- and after-school clubs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. A greater number of pupils than might be expected enter or leave school throughout the school year.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Hillcroft School is a satisfactory school that cares well for its pupils. Pupils are polite and mostly well behaved, although, in some classes, there is too much low-level disturbance, usually because the lessons are not sufficiently interesting and suitably challenging, particularly for more-able pupils. There is a calm, happy atmosphere in school and pupils work well with each other and enjoy good relationships with all staff. There are opportunities for them to assume responsibilities, including organising the school shop, when they are in Year 6. However their involvement and understanding of cultures and heritages beyond their local environment is less well developed and this limits their aspirations. Pupils benefit from visitors coming to school and visits to places of interest, all of which make a satisfactory contribution to their social, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Pupils' academic standards have shown a steady improvement over the past three years, particularly in mathematics. They enter school with skills and understanding below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Years 2 to 6 their progress is satisfactory. The latest validated national data show that pupils' attainment by the age of 11 remains below national expectations but the gap is narrowing. Achievement is satisfactory rather than good because expectations are not sufficiently high. The headteacher and senior management team have recently introduced changes but it is too soon for them to have made a positive impact on accelerating progress and raising attainment.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and some is good. Recently adopted assessment systems are increasing teachers' knowledge and understanding of their pupils so that they can begin to match the learning tasks more accurately to the needs of pupils. In a few lessons, planning focuses on the needs of all pupils and additional tasks are organised to challenge the more able. High-quality support, often from well-qualified teaching assistants, is used well to help those pupils who need extra support. In the majority of lessons however, teaching is less effective and pupils have too few opportunities to become actively involved in their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the outdoor learning area is not used effectively.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what they need to do to remain healthy. They feel safe in school. One pupil reflected the view of many when he stated that the teachers are always there when you need them. Pupils grow in confidence and independence as was demonstrated when there was an unscheduled fire alarm. The whole school was evacuated quickly and calmly and the pupils waited for some time outdoors while the building was checked. Their behaviour was exemplary.

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

Although its self-evaluation is not quite rigorous enough, effective action has been taken to address the issues raised in the last inspection and the school has demonstrated that its capacity to improve is at least satisfactory. The senior leadership team has focused on improving the emotional and physical well-being of all pupils. Several parents commented how much they value the support they get from the headteacher and staff. The school has correctly identified many areas for improvement in its self-evaluation document and has introduced a range of strategies to bring about improvements. The intervention strategies used to raise standards in mathematics have been successful and the focus is now on improvement in English, especially writing. The curriculum has been reviewed so that skills and understanding in literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) can be practised in other subjects. The refurbishment of the ICT facilities enhances the learning opportunities for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve by ensuring they use assessment to plan and provide tasks which accurately reflect the interests and abilities of all pupils.
- Raise the aspirations of pupils by increasing their knowledge and understanding of the wider world.
- Improve the quality and range of outside activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children are even more stimulated and progress is accelerated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Over the previous three years standards have been slowly improving. End-of-key stage teacher assessments in 2008 showed that attainment by the age of seven was broadly in line with the national average for all subjects. At the age of 11, national tests results showed that standards were below the national average in English and mathematics but broadly in line with them in science. School data for 2009 show that attainment in mathematics has improved. Too few pupils are achieving the higher levels compared with the national average at 7 and 11.

Pupils' work in lessons and in their workbooks indicates that standards are similar to those expected for their age at this stage of the academic year. In the lessons seen, pupils were generally making satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Overall though, the intervention strategies adopted to support individuals and small groups of pupils, such as the reading recovery programme, are enabling these pupils to make slightly better progress than the majority.

Pupils are friendly and courteous. They clearly understand right from wrong. Pupils feel safe in school and any minor misdemeanours are dealt with fairly and promptly by teachers. They are aware of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. After-school clubs for games and activities are well supported. Pupils contribute to the school community by exercising their responsibilities as school

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

councillors and prefects; however, their involvement in and understanding of other cultures and heritages are less well developed. There are strong links with Tandridge Youth Council and the adjacent children's centre. Their artwork is displayed in the local community centre and the choir sing for local residents of residential homes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The best teaching is well planned and ensures that all pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning. In the majority of lessons however, planning and teaching do not take sufficient account of the needs of everyone in the class and lessons are not always evaluated to inform future planning. A new assessment programme has recently been adopted but it is too early to judge its impact on planning, target setting and expectations. The marking seen was of a very high quality. Comments were detailed, easily understood by the pupils and offered precise advice on how they might improve their work. The school works closely with external specialist agencies so that staff can better support the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils' personal

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

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

development is sensitively supported and includes whole families if necessary. The curriculum has been revised and includes stronger links between subjects. An emphasis has been placed on practising English and mathematical skills in other subjects and increasing the use of ICT to enhance learning. As part of a drive to improve writing skills, the 'Big Write' strategy has been introduced and is welcomed by many pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior management team have worked hard to develop an effective middle-management team. As a result, staff are becoming increasingly aware of the need to focus on raising standards and achievement for all pupils. There is a good monitoring system for teaching and learning to ensure that areas for improvement are identified and addressed. There is a very strong commitment to the academic and social care of pupils. The school has good strategies to promote equality, respect differences and challenge discrimination. It recognises the need to extend pupils' understanding of wider communities as part of its community cohesion provision.

Governors know the school very well and challenge leaders and managers effectively. They work closely with the staff and pupils to improve provision and attainment. Good policies and procedures are in place to safeguard all pupils. The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and express their appreciation of the care and quality of education their children receive.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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	
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children begin school their skills and understanding are generally below the expected levels for children of a similar age. Their strengths lie in their personal development and attitudes. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they leave the Reception Year their standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Provision is judged to be no more than satisfactory because of the relative weakness in the use of the outdoor environment to provide more interesting and challenging learning experiences.

Teaching and learning are good. Planning is clear and linked to all areas of learning. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Good use is made of the indoor learning environment but the outdoor facilities are not used to their full potential. Relationships are good and there is a calm happy atmosphere. Children play well together and generally behave well because they are interested and engaged in their learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff were aware of the relative weaknesses in assessment and took effective measures to make planning more comprehensive and accurate. All staff work well together to ensure children are kept safe and healthy so that they are able to enjoy their learning. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning as they are encouraged to improve their skills and develop confidence and independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They appreciate the

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

quality of provision and the good care taken of their children so that they enjoy their learning and feel safe. Positive comments generally reflect the findings of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hillcroft 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 298 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	56	23	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	50	24	46	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	46	27	52	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	52	23	44	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	50	26	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	50	24	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	52	23	44	1	2	1	2
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)	16	31	34	65	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	46	26	50	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	35	31	60	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	36	29	56	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	62	17	33	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	50	26	50	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillcroft Primary School, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5PG

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and looking at your work. We thought you behaved extremely sensibly when the fire alarm sounded and we all had to get out of school as quickly and quietly as possible. Well done!

We judged Hillcroft to be a satisfactory school although the care, guidance and support you receive are good. This means you are well looked after and helped to know how to make your work better. Teachers make sure you are safe and help you enjoy your learning. If you need any help to improve your work or to solve other problems you tell us that there is always someone available to help. Usually you are polite and courteous and most of you behave well. Unfortunately, in some lessons and assemblies some children become fidgety and restless which stops the rest of you concentrating on your work. Many of you work hard and try to improve but we think you could do better. To help the school help you even more we have asked your headteacher to:

- ensure your teachers give you work that is difficult enough for you to be interested and enjoy the challenge of reaching realistic targets in English, mathematics and science; we think you can all probably do better than you think if you work a little harder
- provide you with more opportunities to learn more about other countries and the way of life of the people who live in them
- give children in Nursery and Reception the opportunity to use the outdoor space like they use the classroom.

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and we wish you well for the future,

Yours faithfully

Jennifer Taylor

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.