

# Hill Mead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131340
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lambeth
<b>Inspection number</b>	341131
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Rayner

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Sandie Dunne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard West
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Moorland Road Brixton London SW9 8UE
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, school improvement partner, staff and some pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including the school improvement plan, assessment records, information from the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding records and related policies, minutes of governors' meetings, teachers' plans and records of curriculum activities. The inspectors analysed 55 questionnaires that were completed by parents, 31 from the staff and 40 from pupils in Year 6.

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

- the learning, progress and attainment of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies for writing
- how effectively leaders have shared their ambition and drive for improvement with staff and governors and what impact this has had on the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.
- the extent to which there are particular strengths in care, community cohesion and partnerships with other parties
- whether the school fulfils all statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils.

## Information about the school

This school is about twice the average size for primary schools. Over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals ' well above the proportion in most schools.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The groups most strongly represented are Black African and Black Caribbean communities, who between them number three quarters of the school population. Almost half of the pupils speak languages in addition to English, the main one being Somali. There is more movement into and out of the school other than at the normal times found in most schools. The school has Arts Mark Gold Award, Active Mark, Healthy Schools Status and is an Arts Council Creative Partnerships Change 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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Immediately after the previous inspection in 2006, standards dipped to low levels. Since then, the school has improved well and now provides a good education for its pupils. The leaders have rigorously carried out self-evaluation to give them an accurate view of the areas needing improvement. As a result of the actions taken, while all provision and outcomes are good, several are beginning to develop outstanding features. This is particularly so in aspects of care. The school is an extremely happy place in which all pupil groups make good progress, including some who face particular challenges. The school's leaders know that there is still room for further improvement in all areas and how this can be secured. The track record since the previous inspection, continuing determination and sharpness of view, shows that the school has a good capacity to sustain its drive for improvement.

Attainment is broadly average at the end of Year 6. It is comfortably so in mathematics and science, due to the very good progress that pupils make in these subjects. Following a determined and effective push to turn reading into something that pupils enjoy, progress in this area has recently accelerated so that standards also reach expected levels. One parent recognised this when she said, 'I never dreamed my son would read just for pleasure.' School leaders know that, while satisfactory, progress is least strong in writing, so that standards remain below average. There are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their writing by practising it in different subjects. To raise writing standards, staff are beginning to use an approach similar to the one that has been successful for reading, but it is too early to judge the impact.

Leaders know that, due to variations in teaching, pupils' progress, while good overall, is not at a consistent rate in each year, especially in writing. This is because the quality of teaching varies from year to year. Inconsistency is particularly evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While provision and learning are good overall, in these classes they range from outstanding to satisfactory because of variability in the imagination and challenge of the activities, particularly outdoors.

The pupils have played a full part in the school's successes. Because they know they are well cared for, pupils are happy, feel secure and enjoy their learning. They work hard and join in enthusiastically with all that the school has to offer. Pupils from all cultural backgrounds get along very well with each other.

The headteacher's exceptional leadership has been key to the school's progress. His dedication to raising pupils' self-esteem and aspirations is summed up in the comment of one pupil: 'Our headteacher really cares about us and would do everything he can for us.' The headteacher's often innovative approach is being increasingly recognised within

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the local authority, which is calling upon him to help to guide other schools in challenging circumstances.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
  - ensuring that this is taught consistently well across the school
  - providing more opportunity for pupils to practise and use their writing skills in all subjects.
- Improve the consistency of provision across the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - tackling variations in the quality of teaching
  - providing more consistently imaginative and challenging opportunities for children to explore and learn
  - using the outdoor area more creatively to support this.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Whether they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage or are among the substantial numbers who arrive later, pupils' attainment on entry is markedly below that which is typical for their age but they generally make good progress across the school. Pupils' very good progress in science and mathematics results in them becoming increasingly confident in using their skills to find things out and solve problems. Pupils become proficient in reading, but their English standards are reduced because in written work, many pupils find it difficult to develop their ideas in well-structured sentences and paragraphs. Consequently, while they make satisfactory progress in writing, their attainment remains below average.

In class, pupils demonstrate why they do particularly well, by working with effort and interest. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak an additional language, usually make at least as good progress as their classmates. This is due to the effective individual support they receive and their positive response. More-able pupils often make good use of the opportunities they have to show their thinking skills. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, some pupils came up with thoughtful questions of their own when using a graph to compare the noise levels from different activities. Previous school assessments indicated that girls did not always make the same progress as boys. Recent assessments and observations in lessons show that there is now no appreciable variation.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and trust the adults to help them if they have a problem. They know why a healthy diet is important and lead active lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although several pupils arrive with behavioural difficulties, they respond well to the positive guidance that they are given. Pupils' preparation for their

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futures has good elements, such as their general progress and the way they learn to cooperate together, but is satisfactory overall. This is because while improving, their independence is not strong and their progress in writing and information and communication technology skills is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

While good overall, some elements of care are outstanding and this underpins all the school's work. These strengths include the superb guidance and support given to pupils with disabilities, particularly those with sight loss. The pupils respond by producing work they can be truly proud of. Effective support for different groups contributes to their good achievement. An important factor is the careful tracking of each pupil's progress and the effective way in which the information is used to provide for all needs.

Teachers make their expectations for behaviour and effort clear to pupils, in a very sensitive and supportive manner that generates positive relationships, so that pupils are willing workers. Teamwork between teachers and other adults effectively provides additional support for pupils who need this to keep up with the pace of learning.

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<sup>1</sup> 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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Teachers are increasingly involving pupils in assessing their own and each other's work in activities, for example those where pupils devise questions for partners to answer. However, these strengths are not seen consistently throughout the school. For example, in a few lessons, behaviour management is less successful in making sure that pupils work well throughout the lesson. Marking usually encourages pupils well and often gives them good guidance on how to improve, but is also not fully consistent. For example, teachers sometimes do not check that earlier guidance has been followed.

The curriculum is well planned and takes good account of the pupils' needs and interests. Much work is based on the local area, so that pupils develop confidence by learning in familiar contexts. There is much to appeal to the Black African and Caribbean pupils, for example when Black history is studied in a way that is relevant to all pupils. A rich and varied enrichment programme includes clubs, visitors and trips. It successfully boosts pupils' involvement, enjoyment and self-confidence, as the school does consistently well in inter-school competitions in a range of sports. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and use their writing and ICT skills in other subjects. The school has worked effectively to raise attendance from the low levels of a few years ago to a rate that now matches the national average. Excellent links with agencies such as the local police child protection team ensure the highest quality of additional help for any who are in need. Care systems are very well organised and adults carry them out diligently. Monitoring of their effectiveness is generally efficient, but not consistently of the highest quality because the information needed by staff who carry out these checks is not always recorded in the most helpful way for them to do so speedily.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders have succeeded well in sharing their ambition to provide a continually improving school in which all pupils are made welcome and helped to thrive. This is shown by the generally good progress all pupil groups, including those who are entitled to free school meals. It demonstrates the school's success in providing equal opportunities and absence of discrimination for all. The school uses some innovative methods to secure its aims. These include good levels of staffing such as the deployment of three teachers to each year group consisting of two classes. The school is able to afford this model of staffing because of careful, imaginative allocation of resources. This is providing strong support for less experienced staff and those with

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more experience who need to improve aspects of their work. Progress is thus being made towards reducing the variation in learning that exists and which is the main factor preventing outstanding equality of opportunity. The model has also provided a potent way of sharing leadership responsibility throughout the school. The teachers who lead each year team are developing into a committed and effective middle leadership group. Leaders recognise that some of the team are fairly recently appointed and still developing their roles, so the quality is not yet fully consistent.

Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements well and have some excellent features, including extremely comprehensive systems to ensure safe recruitment. Most parents say that the school makes considerable efforts to find out and to take on board their views. Leaders carry out telephone surveys, as they know that many parents prefer to give their views verbally. Some elements of the school's work to ensure community cohesion are outstanding. These include a strong and successful commitment towards ensuring that the diverse school community is a very harmonious one, by ensuring that all pupils and staff treat one another with consideration and respect. The school is becoming increasingly influential in the local community. The relatively weaker area is in the steps taken to help pupils to understand cultural, ethnic and religious diversity further afield in the United Kingdom, which are now being planned.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although they have not yet fully caught up with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age



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by the time they move into Year 1, particularly in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy, they have made good progress from their starting points. Children enjoy their learning and play, quickly learning the rules to ensure their safety. Planned activities cover all of the required areas of learning well. They provide appropriate balance between adult-led activities and those where children explore and find things out for themselves. There is some variation in the effectiveness with which the plans are implemented. Some activities buzz with variety, excitement and challenge, such as one seen in the Nursery, where children thoroughly enjoyed developing their communication and writing skills while running their 'post office'. Others are more pedestrian. The outdoor areas provide limited space for physical activity. Even so, highly imaginative use made by the nursery staff ensures the fullest possible use of every nook and cranny to provide a stimulating, varied environment. Work to provide something similar in Reception is at an early stage. Not all activities are so consistently exciting and this restricts some aspects of physical and creative development. Leadership and management are good, with strong teamwork between the adults an important feature.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

School leaders believe that many parents feel more comfortable in communicating verbally with the school and a parent agreed with this. The few parents who completed the questionnaire had mainly positive opinions about the school and expressed considerable confidence in its leaders. They did not write many additional comments. While parents are very happy with the care the school provides for their children, a small group expressed concern about the 'astro turf' playing area, which has worn through to the concrete in some places, saying this could present a hazard. The school's leaders agree that it needs replacing and are currently negotiating with the Football Foundation to secure sponsorship for the considerable cost of this. In the meantime, the school is taking effective steps to minimise hazards, by ensuring close adult supervision at playtimes and only allowing activities unlikely to cause undue risk.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hill Mead 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	53	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	55	21	39	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	50	20	37	5	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	48	25	46	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	44	26	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	46	27	50	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	42	29	53	1	2	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)	21	39	25	46	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	33	25	46	5	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	42	23	42	3	6	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	33	31	57	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	40	26	48	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	42	29	53	1	2	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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 Hill Mead Primary School, Brixton, SW9 8UE

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and are grateful to you for sharing your work with us.

We could see that yours is a good school. Your parents and carers told us that this is what they think too and lots of you obviously agree. You learn well and by the time you get to the end of Year 6 your skills and knowledge are similar to those we see in most schools. This is because the adults usually teach you well. You do really well in mathematics and science. We enjoyed seeing how much you like reading and the good progress you make. You do not make quite as good progress in your writing, or use it enough in other subjects. The adults know that they need to give you more help here and we have asked them to do so as soon as possible.

The adults give you interesting things to do and are always providing extra things, such as clubs, to help you to enjoy school even more. Lots of you told us that you enjoy school. You feel safe and know that the adults care well for you. You help them a lot, by being cheerful, behaving well and working hard.

The headteacher and other staff know how to make your school even better. We have asked them to do one more thing especially. In the Nursery and Reception, some things are really good, but others are not as effective. We have asked the adults to make sure everything is really successful.

You will help the adults if you continue to work as hard as you do now. Well done and very best wishes for your futures!

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead inspector

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