

# Hillside Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131587
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	341169
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Herring

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>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Teggin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Margaret Steel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Ridgeview Road Prenton Merseyside CH43 9HG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited twelve lessons, observed eight teachers and spent approximately 60% of the time looking at learning. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and local authority representatives. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, teachers' plans, individual education plans, records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, reports from partners in the local authority, and examined 48 completed parental questionnaires.

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

- attainment in English in Key Stage 2
- progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly girls
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in catering for different groups
- the effectiveness of management actions in bringing about improvements
- the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. More than half of pupils are entitled to free school meals and over a third have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The school has close links with the Children's Centre that shares the same site. From the beginning of September 2009, the headship has been shared between the long serving headteacher, who is to retire at the end of this term, and the former deputy, now acting headteacher, who took up post in September 2008. The privately run Kiddywinks before- and after-school club and the Windmills Day Nursery on site are inspected separately.

**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

This is a satisfactory school. Amongst its strengths are the good care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils and the good and effective provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils enter the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good quality of teaching and learning which helps children to achieve well. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in the rest of the school. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently below average over several years and progress is satisfactory. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has fallen over the last two years and is below average, though not significantly so in mathematics. Work in pupils' books indicates a similar picture for the current year. The school's records indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support.

Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, with strengths in the good relationships, use of resources and the contribution of learning assistants. Whilst some good practice was seen in marking in English, in accordance with the school policy, it is inconsistent across the school and subjects and does not always provide clear suggestions as to how pupils can improve. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly but do not routinely evaluate learning in lessons to plan the next steps for different groups. This is particularly so for the more-able pupils who sometimes have to complete routine tasks before getting on to more suitable, challenging activities.

A new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress has recently been developed but it is too soon to have had an impact on standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders has not been sufficiently rigorous to improve the quality of teaching and so raise standards. The role of middle managers in monitoring their areas of responsibility to identify weaknesses in provision is at an early stage of development. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. There are appropriate policies for guiding teachers' work and improving the quality of teaching but senior leaders do not routinely check that all staff are following the policies. The school evaluates its work accurately and has identified areas for improvement.

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

- Raise standards, by:

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- making effective use of the new systems for tracking pupils' progress in order to identify and address potential underachievement at an early stage.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, by:
  - ensuring that marking is consistent through the school in helping pupils to improve
  - evaluating learning in lessons more systematically to plan the next steps
  - matching tasks more clearly to the needs of different pupils, particularly the more-able.
- Develop the role of the middle managers in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Approximately 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils join in well in lessons, listen carefully and are eager to answer questions. They enjoy the practical elements of lessons, for example, moving along a number line to show the effect of multiplying by 10. On occasions, however, explanations are too long and pupils lose their concentration. From a low starting point children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, though standards are still below average when they enter Year 1. They make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. Attainment has been significantly below average for several years at the end of Key Stage 1, with a particular weakness in reading. After a high point in 2007, when attainment was slightly above average at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment has fallen in the past two years and is below average in English though close to average in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support.

Pupils say they feel safe because 'adults are friendly, give you advice and you can rely on them'. Pupils are polite, friendly and behave well in lessons and around school. They particularly enjoy the sports activities organised at lunchtime. They show a good awareness of the importance of exercise and a balanced diet for a healthy lifestyle. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through responsibilities, such as class monitors, school councillors and play leaders and make a contribution to the wider community through activities, such as fund-raising for charities and distributing Harvest gifts. Satisfactory attendance and a positive attitude to school help to prepare pupils for the future. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' moral and social awareness are stronger elements and this contributes well to their good behaviour. However, the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' awareness of different cultures and religions.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	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>3</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>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of resources to demonstrate and explain and to develop pupils' understanding, for example, using cubes to work out the remainder when dividing. The skilled support staff make a good contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra support. There are good relationships between adults and pupils and this promotes good attitudes and behaviour. On occasions, marking is used well to give pupils clear suggestions for improvement, but there are inconsistencies in marking between classes and subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory but teachers do not routinely evaluate pupils' learning to plan the next steps for different groups, particularly the more-able.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate focus on developing basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills and so that pupils are making satisfactory progress. The school is now developing a more creative curriculum to use and further develop these skills in other subjects. Strategies to improve writing using published programmes have been introduced but it is too soon to judge their impact on standards. There is good provision for pupils with emotional and learning needs and the school is seeking to extend this well matched provision to provide greater challenge for more-able pupils. The one-to-one support offered to some pupils in Year 5 and 6 has proved effective in helping them to attain the expected level. There is a good range of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum and promote

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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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pupils' enjoyment and interest. The developing programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship is contributing well to pupils' well-being. Additional activities after school are well attended.

The school provides good quality care and support for its pupils, including those in challenging circumstances. By working closely with the adjacent Children's Centre the school is able to identify children's needs before they come to school and to provide good support from an early stage. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Parents and carers are welcome in school to discuss concerns and this is helping to improve pupils' learning. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, due in large measure to the school's good support for families. Pupils receive good guidance about how to keep themselves healthy and safe through projects such as visits from the Life Education Caravan.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The longstanding headteacher, and more recently the joint headteachers, have been successful in providing good quality care for pupils and providing a welcoming ethos in which pupils want to come to school. The senior leadership team has monitored the quality of lessons but this has not been sufficiently rigorous to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise attainment. The school has recently developed a good system for tracking pupils' progress, though it is too soon to have had an impact on standards. The role of middle managers in monitoring the quality of their area of responsibility is at an early stage of development. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and is now beginning to inform its plans for development.

Governance is satisfactory. Plans are in place to appoint a new headteacher for the start of 2011 with the acting headteacher continuing in the interim. The school has developed good partnerships with other services, particularly those in the Children's Centre, to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The school has developed a good range of initiatives, including workshops about the curriculum, to engage and support parents in their children's learning. The strong, caring ethos of the school is reflected in good procedures for safeguarding pupils. Recommended systems for safeguarding pupils are in place and the school responds promptly to any safeguarding issues.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has good links with the local community and is seeking to extend this to schools with pupils from different backgrounds. The

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school has sponsored a child in Sudan for several years and pupils follow his progress with interest.

The school is inclusive and has clear policies to address potential discrimination. It is addressing some differences in achievement for different groups, for example, girls are achieving less well than boys in Key Stage 1.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery class with a range of skills that overall are well below those expected for their age, particularly in language and social skills. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but nevertheless the majority enter Year 1 with skills that are below the expected level. Staff provide a good range of purposeful, practical activities that shows a good understanding of how young children learn. Consequently, children are developing into active learners and this is helping to address the fact that, in the past, some boys have not made such rapid progress as the girls. Children are learning how to stay healthy as they enjoy regular exercise and healthy snacks. Good relationships and a quiet, busy working atmosphere help children to feel safe, enjoy their learning and develop good attitudes to school. They learn to make a good contribution in class as they are encouraged to follow routines and tidy away equipment.

All adults are involved fully with the children, whatever the activity, to develop their language and social skills. There is a good balance between those activities led by an adult and those which children choose for themselves. Assessment procedures are good



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and generally used effectively. Activities in small groups are well-matched to children's needs so they make good progress in their learning. Ongoing activities are well-organised to help children develop independence. There has been considerable improvement in the use of the outdoor area to extend learning and this development continues.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. All recommended procedures for safeguarding children are in place. There are good procedures for introducing children to school and so they settle quickly. The very good links with the adjacent Children's Centre are rightly regarded as an example of good practice in the local authority and this is helping to identify and address children's needs from a very early stage. Parents and carers are engaged successfully in their children's learning and are invited to make their own contribution to the children's learning journals.

*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

Inspectors agree with the vast majority of parents and carers who say that the school takes good care of their children and that the children enjoy school.

## 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 178 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	58	20	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	65	16	33	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	67	16	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	56	19	40	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	65	17	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	50	24	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	52	21	44	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)	26	54	16	33	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	52	20	42	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	50	16	33	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	46	21	44	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	52	19	40	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	65	14	29	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.**



9 March, 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hillside Primary School, Prenton CH43 9HG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Yours is a satisfactory school, which means there are many good things about it and also some things which could be even better.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that the school takes good care of you all and there is always someone to give you help when you need it. You play your part by working hard and behaving well. We enjoyed our visits to the Nursery and Reception classes. There are lots of interesting things for the children to do so we can see why they make good progress. From Year 1 you make the sort of progress we would expect and you reach standards that are just below the level expected for your age by the time you move to the high school.

So you can do even better in school we have asked the adults to:

- give you clear suggestions of how you can improve when they mark your work
- check that you are making sufficient progress through the school
- plan work that helps different groups to achieve as well as they can.

Thank you once again. I hope that you continue to enjoy school and to come every day.

Yours sincerely,

Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector

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