



Hill View Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108771
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288184
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Penny Parrish

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Helvellyn Road
School category	Community		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	3-7		SR2 9JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 553 7665
Number on roll (school)	414	Fax number	0191 553 7670
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Nichol
		Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Angus
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average infant school. It serves a mixed socio-economic area, but many families experience social and economic hardship. Children's attainment when they start in the Nursery is generally below expected levels. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are White British; about 5% of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, including some pupils in the early stages of learning English.

The school also provides care for children from three to eleven years before and after school and full time during school holidays. Children attend the Nursery for a half-day session but parents have the option of paying for care at the school for the other half of the day. An inspection report of the care arrangements is available separately.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hill View is an outstanding school that succeeds exceptionally well in meeting the needs of its pupils. Parents think very highly of it. One quite rightly said, 'Hill View has the child's concerns at its heart.' Achievement is excellent; pupils with varying abilities and aptitudes achieve well at all stages. Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding so that standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although high standards have been maintained very well since the last inspection, results in national tests in 2006 showed a slight fall due to a higher than usual number of pupils in the year group with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition to the subjects tested nationally, pupils excel in music and in information and communication technology (ICT). Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and by the end of Reception, the learning goals set nationally are met by almost all of them and exceeded by many in personal and social development and in physical development.

An outstanding curriculum caters very well for the whole child and, consequently, personal development is exceptionally good. Pupils enjoy school very much and by Year 2 they are confident and mature in their approach to all they do. Behaviour is excellent and the very small number of pupils with specific behavioural difficulties are helped to improve well through the good understanding and support of staff and other pupils. The staff ensure that, for their age, pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe, healthy and contribute to the community. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and senior staff make a dynamic team, continuously focused on improving the school. On-going work to improve boys' attainment in reading and writing is paying off very well and, by the end of Year 2 in 2006, there were only very narrow differences between the standards reached by boys and girls. The school's high ambitions for pupils' progress mean that the staff apply searching judgements, but underestimate their own effectiveness in some aspects of the school's work. The governing body provides substantial support and energy to promoting the school's high standards and maintaining high quality provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no issues for the school to improve that are not already being dealt with very well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and progress are outstanding for all pupils, whatever their needs, abilities, background or gender and by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start in

all areas of learning, reaching the nationally set learning goals with great enjoyment and exceeding them in personal and social and physical development. Through Years 1 and 2, progress builds momentum and the standard of pupils' work by the end of Year 2 is impressive. They read, write and calculate very well for their age. Displays of pupils' writing show plentiful examples of imaginative and descriptive work of good quality. The school is constantly vigilant and adapts provision promptly to resolve identified concerns, such as the lower attainment of boys compared with girls in reading and writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Everything that happens in school is planned and assessed with their personal development and well-being in mind. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. Projects such as 'A day in the life of a Hindu', support pupils' cultural development very well. Relationships between all in the school's community are very strong and attendance is very good. Pupils feel safe, enjoy school and develop first-rate attitudes to learning: they like achieving well and take great interest and pride in their work. A child working in a small group in Reception, for example, asked if he had achieved all three targets for learning identified for his task and was thrilled when he found he had in fact learned four. Pupils are confident and self-assured, readily giving their opinion and contributing ideas to class discussions. Those with learning and/or behavioural difficulties are effectively encouraged to make very good progress by the positive and encouraging attitudes of others. Pupils on the School Council have very good opportunities to contribute to the development of the school. Projects such as improvements to the school grounds and the curriculum are strongly influenced by their views.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding, leading to outstanding learning. The Nursery fosters a love of learning and curiosity about the world and this is built on very well through the school. The staff use the results of rigorous assessment of pupils' progress to plan lessons very carefully to meet their differing needs, including the more able and those who need extra help. Those learning English as a new language benefit from the frequent opportunities for discussion with adults and with 'talking partners'. Learning moves at a good pace for all. Pupils are well informed on the purpose of each task and review their own learning at the end of each lesson. However, the marking of writing does not always inform them sufficiently of their successes and progress towards their targets for learning. Perceptively planned resources, such as texts of high quality and well-selected computer programs, enhance learning and enjoyment well. Lively and practical tasks help the younger children to learn easily.

Those who find learning more difficult are supported well but with good challenge. For mathematics in Year 2, for example, pupils are organised into sets based on previous attainments, with good challenge available for all children but smaller groups and more adult support for the ones who need most help. Good partnerships with other schools, locally and nationally, are effective in promoting the development of teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. All statutory requirements are met. There are consistently good opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills of literacy, numeracy, ICT and problem solving across the whole curriculum. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very well thought out and underpins the pupils' excellent personal development. The school is skilled at providing extra support from specialists, such as in music, French, and a range of sports that extend learning. Unusually for infants, a good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs is available. The majority of pupils benefit from these extra opportunities. A number of teachers on the staff are recognised as experts in their own field by the local authority and provide training for colleagues and for other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support are exemplary.

Excellent procedures ensure that they are safe and well cared for at all times. Staff go out of their way to help pupils with specific health or behavioural problems and to settle any anxieties or concerns for them or their parents. All required child protection and safeguarding arrangements are in place. There are excellent systems for identifying any areas of concern about children's learning and action is taken promptly to resolve any problems. Pupils are guided and supported very well to promote their excellent achievement. They understand and review their own targets and those set for each lesson. Excellent links with other professionals and schools improves provision for those who need extra challenge or support. All pupils' varying needs are very well catered for, be it extended writing for the more able, those with just below average science skills joining the science club or a small 'nurture' group for those with behavioural difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is a school in which the needs of all pupils are paramount in the management of resources. The headteacher is talented, hardworking and at the hub of the school's leadership and management systems. Excellent relationships and high expectations are fostered successfully at all levels

throughout the school. Teaching staff are highly committed and those with management responsibilities show initiative and vision in securing the very best provision for pupils. Governors are integrated well into the management of the school and support the school's continuous improvement efficiently and enthusiastically. Systems for identifying and implementing priorities, and checking and evaluating their progress and impact on the pupils' learning, are rigorous and well established. Teamwork is strong. Skilled teaching assistants and administrative staff ensure high quality care and support, and excellent day-to-day running of the school. The school has sustained and improved on its high quality of provision since the last inspection and the staff and governors are right in believing that it has excellent capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Helvellyn Road

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR2 9JJ

24 January 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for helping me to feel so welcome in your excellent school. Your friendly faces and happy smiles made me feel like staying longer.

I found out that you work very hard and achieve some splendid things. I was very impressed with your writing, especially the accounts of the Iron Man in Year 2 and the Gingerbread Man in Year 1. I think you are very quick and clever as you work through your calculations in numeracy. You are very confident with computers, and I saw children using the interactive whiteboards well, even in the Nursery. The Arctic topic in the Nursery was amazing with all the equipment in the role-play area and the investigations with different blocks of ice and warm and cold water. It was good that it snowed and children in the Nursery could go outside to play in 'Arctic conditions' on their safe surface. Everyone else showed how excellent their behaviour is, even when there are no playtimes all day.

I really enjoyed listening to the children in Year 2 singing at the end of the day. You sang a very good range of songs from around the world with great skill and enjoyment and it gave me great pleasure to hear such young children sing so well.

Sometimes people talk about putting their heart and soul into their work. I think I saw that in your school, from the children, your headteacher and all the staff and governors. Everyone works very hard to make sure your school is one of the best, and it is. I know you will continue to work very hard to keep up your high standards and to keep your school a very special place.

I wish you good luck and happiness in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Penny Parrish

Lead inspector