

Hillside Primary School

Headfield Road, Newsome, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD4 6LU

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils are currently making rapid progress in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Leaders have been successful in improving teaching over the last two years. Staff are motivated and passionate about their work.
- The school's work with vulnerable pupils and their families is very strong. Parents hold the school in high regard. The Castle Community Hub provides valuable support for families.
- Leaders have put in place effective systems to check on the quality of teachers' work and pupils' learning. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.
- Pupils' attainment remains below average, despite the good progress made by those currently attending the school. Differences between the progress made by boys and girls are diminishing but are still marked.
- Leaders have ensured that children in the early years make a strong start in developing their skills. Children are confident and inquisitive. There are few opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to assessing their child's learning.
- Teachers are skilled in helping pupils to give thoughtful answers. They check pupils' understanding well and make sure that they pitch work at the right level.
- Pupils behave well in the classrooms and in the playground. They are well mannered and kind to each other.
- The curriculum supports pupils in developing positive attitudes to learning. The large range of out-of-school clubs and activities builds effectively on pupils' aspirations and interests.
- Governors provide a useful source of support and challenge to school leaders. However, minutes of their meetings show that, at times, they are content with the first answer they receive from leaders, rather than asking supplementary questions.
- Leaders' planning sometimes lacks sharpness and this makes it difficult for them and governors to be precise in checking on the success of their actions.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have stronger phonic skills than those in key stage 2.
- Teaching and pupils' progress in foundation subjects are not strong. Pupils' handwriting, presentation and attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment so that it is closer to national averages by:
 - embedding the approaches to developing phonics skills across the school
 - diminishing the remaining differences between the progress of boys and girls
 - making sure that teachers insist that pupils present their work neatly and pay more attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' work are as high in foundation subjects as they are in reading, writing and mathematics
 - sharpening leaders' development planning so that desired outcomes are precise and measurable
 - ensuring that governors continue to develop the effectiveness of their challenge to leaders
 - increasing parental involvement in assessing children's learning in the early years.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has secured the full support of staff, pupils and parents. After the previous inspection, the school went through a period of instability at senior leadership level. During this time, pupils' progress declined and leaders did not fully consider important national changes to assessment and the key stage 2 curriculum.
- Following her appointment, the headteacher, assisted by the deputy headteacher, set about halting the decline in pupils' outcomes and putting in place a new curriculum and assessment system. Leaders are undaunted by the significant difficulties faced by pupils. They adopt logical, reasoned and well-researched approaches which are having a marked impact on pupils' self-confidence and progress.
- Leaders have been successful in making sure that all staff understand their part in improving the school. Teachers told inspectors about a change in culture which they described as 'revolutionary'. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are generally high. As a result of carefully tailored professional development and leaders' encouragement, teachers are optimistic about trying new teaching approaches.
- The curriculum is broad and has been effective in raising pupils' aspirations. A love of reading is developing rapidly. Pupils have many opportunities to read and talk about stories and facts in the classroom, corridors and a well-stocked library. Many pupils attend clubs and activities before school, at lunchtime and after school. The well-attended breakfast club gets pupils off to a positive start to the day, ensuring that they have a good breakfast and develop valuable social skills from playing together.
- Leaders have worked effectively to make sure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are identified early. Teachers and specialist staff have high expectations of pupils, regardless of the barriers that they face. Leaders and teachers keep careful records of how well pupils are doing and make sure that pupils get exactly the right blend of specialist teaching and in-class support to make sure that they fulfil their potential. As a result, most pupils are making progress in line with that expected for their age. Consequently, the SEN funding is spent well.
- The physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively. Leaders track which pupils attend which activities and encourage pupils to get involved. Consequently, over half of the pupils are involved in activities, as well as in PE lessons.
- The school's development plan is based on the right priorities and includes appropriate actions to bring about rapid improvement. However, measures by which leaders and governors will judge the success of actions are not precise, nor are there interim evaluation points. As a result, while leaders can judge that there has been improvement, it is not easy for governors to be sure of the extent of that improvement.
- Leaders have not been successful in ensuring that foundation subjects have been given sufficient attention. Pupils' progress in these subjects is not as rapid as in reading, writing and mathematics. Subject-specific skills in subjects such as history are not being developed fully.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and passionate about their work. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They ensure that information from the headteacher is presented in a way that they can easily understand. Minutes of meetings show that they ask leaders challenging questions and make sure that their questions are answered. Occasionally, leaders' answers are accepted without any supplementary probing.
- Governors are effective in ensuring that the pupil premium funding is spent well. Funding is used to good effect to raise pupils' attainment through small-group work so that pupils can get to grips with skills or concepts that they have not quite grasped during lessons. It is also used very well to meet the specific needs of individuals and their families with packages of tailored support. As a result, pupils are becoming more resilient and their progress is accelerating.
- Governors fully understand the challenges faced by many pupils at the school. When the school introduced work to help pupils develop positive attitudes to learning, governors visited the school so that they could properly understand how this was changing pupils' perceptions of learning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. All staff are vigilant for any signs that a child could be at risk of harm. A significant number of pupils experience turbulence in their lives. The school has thorough and effective systems to support them. The school makes highly effective use of the Castle Community Hub to support families. For example, staff intervene before a problem reaches crisis point by providing a quiet space, helping make phone calls and running classes to support parenting.
- There are strong systems for making sure that referrals are made to other agencies in a timely fashion. Staff are dogged in following up referrals and making other arrangements where there is delay or drift in other agencies taking action.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers consistently use effective questioning. Pupils are routinely expected to grapple with difficult questions and work things out for themselves. As a result of this skilled approach, pupils are confident learners and unafraid to make mistakes. The most able pupils are now appropriately challenged because teachers make sure that the questions they ask them are hard and that answers need careful thought.
- Pupils of all abilities, including middle- and low-attainers, have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils and teachers talk optimistically of the skills and knowledge pupils currently have and those they do not have 'yet'. Pupils enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic about the progress that they are making.

- Teachers have been successful in instilling a love of reading. Younger pupils develop strong phonics skills and use them effectively to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils also enjoy reading but their ability to use phonics skills is less well developed. Pupils talk about what they are reading to each other and to adults. Teachers have been particularly successful in helping boys to enjoy reading and this is helping them to improve, although girls still make better progress.
- Teachers are skilled in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported in gaining fluency quickly so that their progress accelerates when they have a confident grasp of English. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, adjusting tasks to help pupils overcome their specific difficulties.
- Pupils work through mathematics problems confidently and offer reasons for their answers. Others are happy to challenge these reasons or offer alternative solutions.
- Overall, teachers use assessment well, to make sure that work is pitched at the right level. This is less effective in topic work, where teachers' expectations are not as high.
- Pupils' books show that writing skills are generally strong and pupils are developing stamina in writing extended pieces. Pupils use an increasingly interesting range of vocabulary. Their handwriting, however, is weak. Their presentation lacks care and precision, as do their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's strength lies in the confidence that pupils are developing. This has been achieved by detailed attention to making sure that pupils understand the power of learning. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that making mistakes is an important part of their learning. Through this approach pupils develop positive attitudes to learning, and this is at the heart of the school's success.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right, wrong and fairness. There are many opportunities for them to take on roles of responsibility, including that of 'befriender'. This involves pupils looking out for anyone who feels left out and making sure that they have someone to talk to.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and talk confidently about keeping themselves safe when using the internet. They are also confident about knowing what constitutes appropriate behaviour in themselves and adults. Pupils told inspectors that the 'pants' assembly had sparked off helpful and frank discussions about personal safety.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were confident in describing what bullying is and understood the harm that it can cause. They were confident about what to do if they or others experienced bullying. Pupils have a great deal of faith that staff will take effective action should they need any help.
- Pupils generally accept and celebrate differences in the community and the school.

However, their knowledge, tolerance and understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people is less well developed. Leaders know that there is still some way to go in challenging pupils' perceptions in this area.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in the classrooms, around the school and in the playground. They are friendly and respectful to each other and to adults. There is little in the way of disruption to learning and staff are skilled in spotting when pupils need support in making the right choices.
- Pupils with identified behavioural, social and emotional needs are being helped to overcome their difficulties.
- Fixed-term exclusions are decreasing and attendance is consistently in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below the national average because of the strong work the school does with vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Occasionally pupils call each other names. They know that this is wrong. They say that staff are quick to deal with any incidents.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From their various starting points, pupils currently in the school make rapid progress, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. Progress is also strong in key stage 2, but some pupils experienced weaker teaching in previous years. This weaker teaching resulted in some gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in the current Year 6. Nevertheless, they have made rapid progress over the last year and are catching up quickly.
- Pupils make better progress in reading than published data suggests. In 2017, a number of pupils experienced significant difficulties at the time of the test and results did not give a true picture of the progress they had made. Currently, pupils are making rapid gains in reading and writing. Boys are more engaged and the difference between the progress they make and that of girls is diminishing.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in mathematics has been improving strongly. This is because teachers are confident in providing regular opportunities for pupils to solve problems and give reasons for their answers.
- Disadvantaged pupils are also making strong progress and in some respects they make better progress than their peers. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because support is effective in helping them to overcome their difficulties. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make strong progress.
- Most of the pupils in Year 1 in 2017 reached the expected standard in phonics, and this continues to be a strength. It is providing a strong foundation for pupils to develop confident reading and writing skills.
- Pupils' starting points are generally low when they start school and, despite making strong progress, they remain below the national average by the time they leave at the

end of Year 6.

- Pupils' progress in foundation subjects tends to be weaker than it is in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Early years provision

Good

- Most of the children in the early years start with skills and abilities below or well below those typical for their ages. Boys tend to have weaker personal, social and emotional development.
- Additional funding has been used thoughtfully to fund a nursery nurse to support those children who are disadvantaged or in need of extra support. Children maintain their engagement and interest in adult-led and child-led activities.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of both the strengths of the unit and where it requires development. He ensures that training for adults is focused on pertinent aspects and this is improving teaching.
- Adults model language well and extend children's language by helping them to think of different words. For example, Nursery children were encouraged to describe going under trees or over bridges as they acted out 'We're going on a bear hunt'. Children found the activity exciting and were enthusiastic about trying new vocabulary.
- Children are happy and confident in working together. They used puppets to act out the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' to pick out words such as 'ears' and 'eyes' and match them to their own ears and eyes.
- Children follow well-established routines and respond well to signals such as the tap of a tambourine to listen to adults.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is below the national average. However, they make significant gains in their social development, their ability to concentrate and cooperate with each other and their reading, writing and mathematical skills. This provides them with a strong foundation as they move to Year 1.
- Parents do not have enough opportunities to contribute their own observations of their children's learning. Children's learning journals capture their rich experiences in the school but miss the vital learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	135098
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10045485

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cynthia Dawson
Headteacher	Nadine Sadler
Telephone number	01484 226834
Website	www.hillside-primary.co.uk
Email address	office.hillside@kirkleeseducation.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2013

Information about this school

- Hillside is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The headteacher was appointed in December 2015.
- Since the previous inspection the on-site children’s centre has closed and the school uses the building for the Nursery class. The Castle Community Hub is attached to the school building. It provides activities and support for families and residents in the local area.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average. There are also high proportions of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils from multi-ethnic groups.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning across the school and made some short visits to classrooms. Senior leaders jointly observed some lessons with inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break was observed.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and held formal meetings with pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and class teachers. In addition to this, they met with members of the local governing body, a group of staff and staff responsible for safeguarding and attendance. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's improvement planning. They also looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's own policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- An inspector considered the views of parents during the inspection, as well as 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils gathered in formal and informal meetings.

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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