

Hill Mead Primary School

Moorland Road, London, SW9 8UE

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Hill Mead is a school that continually seeks to improve and, as a result, is now outstanding. The school is on a firm upward trajectory and pupils achieve very well as a result.
- The headteacher's very strong leadership provides clear direction for staff. He has a very clear vision for the school, and staff and governors are equally committed to achieving it.
- The deputy headteacher and other leaders are highly effective in their roles and have a very clear impact on raising standards and promoting excellent behaviour.
- From very low starting points, pupils make substantial and sustained progress. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because expectations are extremely high and routines are very well established. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in every classroom and this allows pupils to concentrate on their work and to achieve well.
- Pupils feel safe at Hill Mead. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, such as while using the internet. Pupils feel safe from bullying and are very confident that staff would quickly sort things out should an issue arise.
- Pupils show exceptional attitudes to learning. They work extremely well on their own, with a partner or as part of a group. Pupils do not need direct adult supervision to behave sensibly and to continue with their work. They work hard because they are keen to learn and they want to succeed.
- The school's curriculum is rich and exciting and has a clear impact on how well pupils achieve. The school's topic-based approach is enhanced by a wide range of educational visits and by the school's work with providers such as the National Theatre and the Royal Opera House.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. There are three teachers in every year group of two classes and this model works extremely well. Teachers work together very closely and plan high-quality lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Assessment is used very effectively and teachers intervene in a timely fashion when pupils have gaps in their learning. Targets are set regularly for pupils and these are an effective and fundamental part of their everyday learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve extremely well at Hill Mead. By the end of Year 6, a higher proportion of Hill Mead's disadvantaged pupils achieve the expected level than other pupils nationally.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel that their children are safe and well cared for and achieve well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning. They observed pupils' learning in parts of 24 lessons throughout the school, some jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' exercise books, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their work. Inspectors examined the school's documentation on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including the 300 responses to the school's recent survey. There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for results to be made available. Inspectors spoke to parents informally on the playground and 12 parents attended a meeting with the lead inspector.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector spoke with two of the school's partner organisations on the telephone.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, and attendance and behaviour records.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janice Williams

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hill Mead is much larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes per year group from Reception to Year 6. There are three teachers in each year group.
- Children attend the Reception classes on a full-time basis and the nursery provision on a full- and part-time basis.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; approximately a third of pupils are of Black African heritage and a third are of Black Caribbean heritage. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority. A further group of pupils are disadvantaged but are not eligible for the pupil premium, such as the children of asylum seekers and other migrants with no recourse to public funds. A large majority of pupils are disadvantaged.
- The stability of the school's population is well below average; the proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the beginning of the Reception Year is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs is much higher than average.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club operate on site. The clubs are led and managed by the school and run by members of the school's staff.
- The school meets current floor standards; these are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that written documentation about self-evaluation and action planning reflects the rigour and robustness of the school's ongoing approach to further improvement.
- Raise the attainment of the most able pupils by ensuring that work is always challenging enough, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's dedicated and passionate leadership has created a school where pupils behave extremely well, show excellent attitudes to learning and try very hard to succeed. The headteacher's unswerving belief in the school's principle that 'every child who walks through our door is capable of great things' has created an environment where pupils believe that they can do well and see no limits to the standards they can reach or to what they can achieve in life.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very strong team. Their unrelenting focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in the school has paid dividends and there is a strong culture of continual improvement amongst the staff. The school's leaders have also made their expectations for how pupils should behave very clear and are equally clear about what staff need to do to achieve this. As a result, behaviour is excellent throughout the school.
- The school's other leaders (that is, those responsible for leading a range of subject areas) are highly effective. They know the strengths of their subjects very well and have identified clear priorities for further development. Leaders monitor their subjects rigorously and take appropriate actions to address any needs identified.
- The school's leaders care passionately about improving the life chances of disadvantaged children and this drives everything that they do. As a result, staff and governors are highly committed to this vision and have worked hard to achieve it. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is extremely high (approximately 70% of the school's population is disadvantaged), much higher than is indicated by the number eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium grant is spent extremely effectively and disadvantaged pupils achieve very well.
- The school's curriculum is a particular strength and has a strong impact on how well pupils achieve. The school teaches all National Curriculum subjects with appropriate breadth and depth. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' language skills and this is particularly effective in ensuring that all pupils are able to access the curriculum and to learn well. The curriculum prepares pupils well for their move to secondary school.
- The curriculum is enhanced by frequent educational visits to bring topics to life and broaden pupils' experiences. The school has also forged links with external partners such as the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Opera House, and these all broaden the opportunities offered to pupils.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural knowledge and skills is absolutely intrinsic to the full and wide-ranging curriculum offered by the school, and this enhances their ability to learn. For example, pupils are able to relate their understanding of the importance of hard work, and their ambitions for their adult lives, directly to their day-to-day work in their classrooms. Pupils are taught to work effectively together in teams and know the importance of getting on well with other people. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Performance management procedures are suitably rigorous and robust. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored comprehensively and effectively. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is continually improving.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. One full-time member of the leadership team and one part-time leader have completed training as designated safeguarding leads. Two further members of the leadership team are booked to attend the next available training session. This team approach to leading safeguarding is effective because it ensures that there is good coverage throughout the week.
- The school has been very effective in promoting good working relationships with parents. This is illustrated by the school's recent survey of parents in which over 300 questionnaires were returned. The results of the school's survey were overwhelmingly positive. Similarly, parents who spoke with inspectors were universally positive about the school.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Pupils are taught to respect other people, whatever their background or cultural heritage.
- The primary physical education and sports premium is spent very well. The school employs four full-time sports coaches who supervise playtimes and lunchtimes as well as providing physical education lessons and after-school training sessions. As a result, behaviour at lunchtimes and playtimes is exemplary and pupils achieve well in sporting activities. For example, Hill Mead are the current borough football champions.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to the school. The school improvement adviser knows the school well and recognises its considerable achievements and strengths.

- The school's leaders and governors know what the school does well and have focused on the right priorities for improvement in order for the school to become outstanding. However, the school's written self-evaluation summary lacks detail and is not self-critical enough. The school's improvement plan is too simplistic and does not link clearly enough with the self-evaluation document. The written documentation does not fully reflect the rigour and robustness of the school's approach to self-evaluation, action planning and continual improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is effective. Governors know the school well and are frequent visitors. They check that the information they receive from the headteacher is accurate by meeting with the local authority's improvement adviser when he visits the school and receiving copies of his reports.
 - Governors understand data on the school's performance very well. They know how well pupils are doing and are ambitious in their drive for continual improvement.
 - Governors have very good knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school. They are aware of where teaching has been weaker in the past and what has been done to improve it. Governors have appropriate knowledge of the school's arrangements for the performance management of staff and what is done to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance.
 - Governors hold the school's leaders to account well and this is reflected in the minutes of the governing body's meetings.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well because expectations are very high and routines are well established. Behaviour management is so effective that it is frequently hard to detect; pupils choose to behave well and do not need reminders or rewards in order to do so.
- The headteacher has very firm ideas about how behaviour should be managed and he ensures that these are followed. His belief that 'the less we manage them, the more they manage themselves' is firmly established throughout the school; as a result, pupils take responsibility for themselves and for their own behaviour. It is an absolute rule that staff do not raise their voices when speaking to pupils and 'teachers' voices are expected to be lower than the children's'. As a result, classrooms are calm, quiet and orderly places where pupils are able to concentrate and work hard.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning and this is a major strength of the school. Pupils concentrate well and try hard because they want to learn and they want to succeed, not because they are expecting an immediate reward. Pupils work equally well on their own, with a partner or as part of a group. Throughout the school, pupils work calmly and quietly together, without needing direct adult supervision. This has a significant impact on what they are able to achieve and the high standards that they reach.
- Hill Mead is highly inclusive and accepts all pupils that want to come to the school. As a result, a number of pupils have significant behavioural needs. The school's very high expectations and very clear boundaries, coupled with highly effective strategies, mean that pupils very quickly become part of the school community and it is soon very difficult to identify them amongst their peers.
- Pupils behave extremely well outside of lessons. The school does not employ midday supervisory staff but instead, lunchtime is managed by existing staff. Senior staff sit and eat with pupils every day, modelling the high standards that they expect. Sports coaches provide a range of activities every lunchtime for pupils to choose from. The way that lunch breaks are staggered means that all pupils are able to take part.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They display excellent manners, frequently holding doors open for adults and standing back to allow visitors to pass. Pupils show respect to adults and to each other because they are routinely treated with respect by staff.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school has rigorous processes in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are taught well about a range of safety issues, including e-safety, road safety and safe cycling.
- Staff receive regular training on child protection and there are clear systems in place for them to report concerns. The safeguarding leadership team is committed and effective. They ensure that they are aware

of the most recent guidance on safeguarding issues through regular updates from the local authority. The school uses a secure electronic reporting system and this helps to ensure that all members of the safeguarding leadership team are appropriately informed about ongoing concerns about specific children.

- Pupils are taught well about different types of bullying. They say that there is some bullying in the school (in the form of name calling) but that this is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. The school's open attitude to the possibility of bullying means that pupils feel able to report any issues that may arise and, as a result, bullying is rare.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because the school's leaders have a very firm focus on its continual improvement. Teachers have very high expectations of how pupils should behave and of what they can achieve. Pupil premium funding is used to provide an additional teacher in every year group. This additional capacity is used extremely effectively to raise the quality of teaching and the standards pupils reach.
- Teachers use ongoing assessment very effectively to ensure that work is pitched at the right level. Pupils are regularly given their next target to work towards and teachers routinely check on pupils' progress towards achieving them. Teachers frequently prompt pupils to remember their targets and, as a result, pupils regularly refer to their targets independently during lessons. The school's system for assessing pupils' progress under the new National Curriculum is already well established and the school is continuing to develop it.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Teachers intervene quickly when pupils need extra help. The three-teacher model means that targeted support is provided by a qualified teacher who knows the pupils well. This is highly effective in addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly.
- Throughout the school, staff focus strongly on developing pupils' verbal communication skills. For example, they ensure that opportunities are taken to extend pupils' vocabulary and they routinely model correct grammar back to pupils. As a result, pupils' communication skills develop rapidly, including for those who speak little or no English when they start school.
- The year group teaching teams work extremely well together. They plan together, sharing ideas and expertise. The three-teacher model enables staff to teach together and to share their particular skills in order to improve the quality of teaching further. Provision in both classes is identical and year group leaders frequently monitor the quality of what is provided.
- Staff model tolerance and respect towards each other and to pupils. Pupils respond by behaving in an equally respectful way. The climate that this creates in each classroom is positive and encouraging; pupils are happy to take part in activities, and to try things that they are not completely sure about, because they are not frightened to make a mistake or to get things wrong.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to prepare and deliver lively lessons that capture pupils' interests. The topic-based approach works well and links between subjects are meaningful rather than tenuous. Activities are often practical and technology is used well to enhance learning (for example, the use of 'blogs' in each year group).
- Although teachers usually provide sufficient challenge for pupils, occasionally work for the most able pupils is not challenging enough, particularly in reading and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception Years with skills and abilities well below those typical of their age. In addition, a far larger than average number of pupils join the school other than at the usual starting points. These pupils frequently start at Hill Mead well below the expected level for their age.
- Standards in phonics (the sounds that letter represent) are good. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been above the national average for the last three years. The phonics screening check is a statutory assessment of pupils' phonics knowledge.
- Pupils made substantial and sustained progress across year groups and across subjects. By the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected level or above is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils that attain the expected level is above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and spelling and grammar.

- The proportion of pupils who made expected progress between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 this year was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who made greater than expected progress was above the national average in reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve exceptionally well at Hill Mead. By the end of Key Stage 2, from very low starting points, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved at least the expected level this year was higher than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, including those that speak English as an additional language, make at least good progress from their individual starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good, and frequently outstanding, progress throughout the school. Their progress is monitored very carefully and very effective strategies are in place to meet pupils' needs and ensure that they achieve well.
- Work in pupils' exercise books shows clear evidence of the good and often outstanding progress that they are making. Pupils are given a good range of other opportunities to write, including a regular slot in the local newspaper and writing entries for their class 'blog'.
- Pupils read extensively and show a great love of reading. Assessment is accurate and pupils are provided with the right books for their stage of development.
- The most able pupils make good progress. The proportion of pupils that reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 is increasing but is not yet in line with the national average in reading and mathematics.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter early years, whether the Nursery or Reception Year, with skills and abilities well below those typical of their age. The early years curriculum is very strong and teaching is outstanding. As a result, children make outstanding progress in early years and an increasing proportion leave Reception having reached a good level of development.
- The early years environment is outstanding. Although the school has a very limited amount of outdoor space, staff use this very creatively to provide children with as many opportunities as possible. The indoor spaces too are welcoming and attractive, encouraging children to settle quickly and to develop confidence in their surroundings.
- The leadership of early years is outstanding and staff work extremely well as a team. There is a very strong focus on developing children's language and communication skills and this helps to prepare them well for the move to Year 1.
- Children behave extremely well in early years and are kind and thoughtful to each other. The same strong boundaries and high expectations are in place in early years as for the rest of the school. The children learn the Hill Mead way from the very beginning and quickly follow the school's rules and routines.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131340
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	448858

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Bailey
Headteacher	Richard West
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2009
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