

# Smithdown Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131597
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	360298
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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

---

<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>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Norman Christian
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Robina Crowe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Chatsworth Drive Liverpool Merseyside L7 6LJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 709 6229
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 709 5020
<b>Email address</b>	smithdown-ht@smithdown.liverpool.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	360298

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors, and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at: national assessment data alongside the school's assessments; policies; governing body minutes; samples of pupils' current work and documentation relating to safeguarding. Sixty-five questionnaires returned by parents and carers were taken into account as well as those completed by staff members and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are there signs of improved attainment at the end of Year 2?
- Do pupils who speak English as an additional language make the progress they should?
- How effectively is the school working to improve attendance?
- How well do all school leaders contribute to its improvement?

## Information about the school

Most of the pupils in this average-sized primary school are from an extremely wide range of minority ethnic groups. Many speak English as an additional language. An increasing number of pupils are from European countries, and join the school with no English. A significant minority join and leave the school at other than the normal times. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than is seen in most similar schools. The number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average.

This is a Dyslexia Friendly school. Among its other awards are Healthy School status and Activemark. A breakfast club is provided on site by the 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

This is a good school. Leaders and managers have increased their effectiveness in some key areas of the school's work and successfully maintained the momentum of improvement seen at the last inspection. At all levels they are more skilled at evaluating the impact of their work, and have gained a complete and accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has led to improved provision, rising attainment and pupils' good achievement. As a result, the school shows good capacity for sustained improvement.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a good start to their learning and development. Their skills and abilities, when they first join Nursery are very low in relation to expectations for their age. Children make good progress, despite being still below expected levels of learning at the end of Reception. Good, and at times outstanding, teaching and learning ensure that a good rate of progress continues throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the good care and support they receive. Those who speak English as an additional language settle quickly and, because of well-targeted support, readily acquire the language skills they need to progress well. All pupils, given their varying starting points, achieve commendably in reading and mathematics. The school recognises that pupils do not achieve the same standards in their writing, especially at the higher levels, and this is a current focus for improvement.

Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved well and were polite and friendly. In some lessons their behaviour and attitudes to learning were exemplary. Most of their personal development outcomes are good. Although attendance is low for a very small minority, it is improving because of the increasingly effective work with parents. Leaders recognise the need to come to an even better understanding with a small minority of parents about the importance of regular attendance. Pupils' learning benefits well from links with other partners. The curriculum is planned effectively. It is rich and enjoyable for pupils and meets most of their needs well. It is carefully adjusted for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure their good progress and achievement.

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

- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - – ensuring that more-able pupils are always sufficiently challenged
  - – providing clear individual targets for writing which identify specifically the skills needed to become better writers.
- Raise attendance to match at least the national average and improve punctuality by:

**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

- – extending measures taken to communicate to parents and carers the importance of attendance and punctuality
- – monitoring the impact of those measures.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn and achieve well in lessons because they enjoy the challenges that teachers provide. They are attentive, hard working and keen to do their best. They work well with each other, for example with partners to discuss problems, and this helps their clarity of thinking as well as developing their language and communication skills. With the focus now on writing, role play in Key Stage 1 to encourage talk for writing, and self-assessment in Key Stage 2 to improve quality are clear examples of how pupils are helped to learn effectively. Subjects are often linked to give learning more purpose and make it more fun. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed buying and selling to develop mathematics skills in the 'Pudding Lane Shop' because it reminded them about their history topic and where the Fire of London started.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average and has been consistent over the past three years. Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been low but school assessments and pupils' current work in lessons indicate notable improvement. This is particularly promising in view of the number of pupils who joined the class relatively recently and have not had the benefit of continuous schooling from Nursery. Nevertheless, despite the promising signs, writing at both key stages is a main focus for the school because standards are not improving as well as they are in reading and mathematics. The progress of different groups of pupils is checked very thoroughly and no group is underachieving by the time they leave the school. There is a good raft of additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Individual learning plans give specific targets and the impact of the support they receive is clearly recorded and shows good progress. The school works well, within its means, to target those who speak English as an additional language or who are at early stages of speaking English. The supportive ethos of the school helps to raise confidence levels so that pupils learn to communicate well, especially through reading. Those who remain in the school achieve as well as expected for their age by the end of Year 6 and some exceed expectations.

Pupils enjoy school. They say that they feel safe and get on well with one another because there is no bullying or racist behaviour. They also know how to keep themselves safe outside of school. The school council gives them a say in everyday matters. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as being play leaders and other caring roles in the playground and generally make a good contribution to school life. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to maintain a healthy lifestyle and most say they want to improve their health and fitness. Pupils develop some of the essential life-skills they will need to become good community members well. For a very small minority, attendance and punctuality are weaknesses and limit that part of their overall personal development. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

**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

*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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

For most lessons, teachers' planning is good, pupils are engaged purposefully and they are motivated to learn. Staff use electronic whiteboards and computers effectively as tools for learning and generally use their good subject knowledge to challenge and question pupils. During the inspection, the highly imaginative use of resources in a very well-prepared lesson resulted in outstanding learning and progress. Here, the teacher linked pupils' writing very creatively to their science topic, first by having them search for a 'time capsule' in the classroom then encouraging pupils to use similes to describe the different materials which the capsule contained. The challenge for pupils was to use the similes in their creative 'science fiction' descriptions of insects. Pupils were highly motivated and well equipped with the vocabulary they needed to write successfully. There is some less effective teaching and learning, however. This occurs when lesson planning, though detailed, does not identify clearly enough what pupils will know, or be better at, by the end of the lesson. This leaves pupils uncertain about what is expected of them so they are not motivated to learn and do not make sufficient progress in the lesson. The skilled team of teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are well trained to provide focused support to boost pupils' skills. They know the pupils well and are very sensitive to their particular needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress effectively in lessons, by questioning and asking pupils to say how well they think they have learned. Marking gives pointers to how they can improve their writing, but this guidance is not always linked closely enough to specific individual targets.

**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

The school provides a highly effective curriculum that is tailored well to the needs of pupils. There is a good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology, but planned provision for more-able pupils' writing is not a clear feature. Pupils' learning and enjoyment are strengthened by a very purposeful and creative approach to the development of their skills. Learning is enriched by a good selection of visits to support topic work, as well as visitors to school, and a satisfactory range of after-school clubs. Spanish lessons are a well-established feature of the curriculum.

Parents agree, overwhelmingly, that their children are well cared for in school. Indeed, the care that the school provides for some of its most vulnerable pupils and families is exceptional. Increasing pupil attendance of a very small minority is a high priority and the school is making headway towards their challenging targets for rates of attendance. Pupils are supported extremely well when they first enrol and there are equally good arrangements for transfer at the end of Year 6. Good links with supporting agencies and positive guidance on relationships are reflected in pupils' attitudes and good personal development.

*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?

Astute appointments and well-managed professional development have had a positive effect on leadership qualities in the school. Staff confidence is high and some members fulfil leading roles within the local authority in areas such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and leading arts projects with other schools. Leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate good ability to evaluate the school's work and contribute to the drive for its improvement. All leaders are ambitious for every pupil. The quality and rigour of leaders' monitoring to ensure pupils achieve their best is excellent. Discrimination is challenged strongly and the school provides good equality of opportunity. To that end, raising expectations of more-able pupils is already added to the school's list of priorities. The governing body monitors the school's work rigorously and holds it to account by reviewing the impact of actions taken. As a result, members have a very clear overview of strengths and weaknesses and play a crucial part in supporting the school and helping to bring about improvements. This has made members of the governing body aware, for example, that in order to improve attendance further, the school needs to communicate more effectively to a very small minority of parents and carers the importance of good attendance in contributing to their children's achievement. Furthermore, they are aware that they need to monitor even more closely the impact of actions taken on rates of attendance. Safeguarding procedures are good. Staff and pupils are very aware of their

**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

responsibilities. Systems are checked regularly and effectively maintained. The school promotes community cohesion well and provides a culturally harmonious environment for the various groups who use the school building. Contrasting schools in the United Kingdom, Florida and Mozambique provide good insight for pupils into the lives of other communities and contribute well to their cultural understanding and tolerance of others.

*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>3</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

Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children's good learning and development. All children are welcomed into a supportive environment where there is a good balance of activities to encourage confidence and independence. Personal, social and emotional development is given high importance. During the inspection, for example, Nursery children enjoyed learning how their hands can spread germs and how important it is to wash them thoroughly. Children quickly become familiar with classroom routines, behave well and learn to respect one another's feelings. Early language and mathematical skills are taught well and a good range of resources is available for children to follow up activities both in the classroom and outdoors. Particularly good use is made of computers to encourage children to improve those skills independently. Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress and, for example, are soon able to enjoy listening and responding to a story with the rest of the class. Provision for children's welfare is good. Staff members are watchful over their safety and well-being. Parents and carers appreciate the good level of contact they have with staff before and during their time in Nursery and Reception classes. There are good opportunities for them to share in the process of their children's learning and development through discussion with staff and by contributing to the evaluation of their progress.



**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

*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

A minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. All of those who responded indicated that they are happy, overall with the school's provision for their children. There were almost no written comments but a very small number did indicate concerns. The most common of these related to a lack of information about their children's preparation for the future. Inspectors took account of these concerns which were discussed with school leaders. It was found that the school has recently improved the ways in which information is sent out and is conscientious about providing informal as well as formal opportunities for parents to meet staff.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Smithdown 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	60	26	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	51	28	43	1	2	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	37	38	58	2	3	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	46	32	49	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	49	30	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	37	35	54	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	37	38	58	1	2	1	2
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)	25	38	34	52	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	38	33	51	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	42	34	52	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	38	37	57	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	42	34	52	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	45	29	45	1	2	1	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



25 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Smithdown Primary School, Liverpool, L7 6LJ**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We were very impressed by your politeness and good behaviour and it was a pleasure to talk to you.

I am happy to tell you that Smithdown is a good school. The main reasons are that you work hard and make good progress. That is because your teachers also work hard to make sure your lessons are fun so that you learn as well as you can. You reach average standards in your work but your reading and mathematics are better than your writing. The grown-ups in school take good care of you which is why you learn to take such good care of each other and achieve well. However, not all of you attend school as often as you should so this is something some of you could help to improve.

Your parents and carers are proud of your school. So are your teachers and members of the governing body. I know that you are too, which means, in fact, that everyone would like it to be even better. For that reason we have asked your teachers to make sure that you have targets for writing which show exactly what you all need to achieve to be a better writer, especially those of you who are capable of reaching the higher levels. The second thing is for school leaders to do all that they can to help some of you to improve your attendance so that the school's record is the same as most other schools in the country. You can help by keeping up your good work and continuing to enjoy school as much as you already do.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**