

Devonshire Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103942
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355494
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gurinder Josan
Headteacher	Sharron Philpot (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons taught by 13 teachers. They observed assemblies and break times and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Parents and carers at the school gate were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress records, teachers' lesson plans, pupils' work, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They analysed completed questionnaires returned by 98 pupils, 18 staff and 103 parents and carers.

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

- Do white, English speaking girls make enough progress?
- Does teaching sufficiently challenge all groups, especially in mathematics?
- Do improvement plans have sufficient rigour to accelerate progress in all subjects for all pupils?

Information about the school

Devonshire is a larger than average junior school. Half of the pupils come from Indian heritage homes. The remainder come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. The large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The executive headteacher, who has been in post since September 2010, is also the executive headteacher of the neighbouring Devonshire Infants School. The two schools form a federation. There is no shared provision. The infant school was inspected during 2010. The schools have a single governing body. The deputy headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

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. In its caring and stimulating atmosphere, pupils feel very safe, behave well and grow into articulate and mature young people. They enjoy all aspects of school and most attend very regularly. Parents and carers are very pleased with the standard of education the school provides. Typically, one told an inspector, 'My child loves coming to school and is well looked after. She is making good progress, especially in reading.'

Under the determined leadership of the new executive headteacher, the school is improving strongly. Successful plans have accelerated pupils' progress, which is good across the school. This is especially so in mathematics, where progress has been slow over the previous three years. Progress in reading is outstanding. Attainment is average and rising rapidly; it is above average in reading. Since the last inspection, the school has raised achievement and sustained pupils' good personal development. Teaching, the curriculum and care have all improved and are good. Leadership is now good. Leaders' rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provides them with secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. This leadership record shows the school has a good capacity to improve further.

In lessons, relationships are very positive and pupils enjoy their work. Teachers use resources well to engage learners and promote their good progress. Mostly pupils work hard but occasionally a rapid pace of learning is not sustained throughout the lesson, typically when work does not match closely each pupil's needs. The pace sometimes slows also when introductions are over long and learning becomes too passive. The curriculum supports personal development well and provides a good range of educational visits and well-attended clubs. These activities widen horizons, raise aspirations and add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils are well cared for and confidently approach staff with their worries, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. Close and effective partnerships with the local authority and other agencies have made a significant contribution to the school's strong improvements over the past year in outcomes, provision and leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a rapid pace of learning is sustained throughout lessons by ensuring that:
 - the difficulty of the work for each pupil matches his or her needs closely so that each is fully challenged
 - lesson introductions do not last too long.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to the school is below average. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and children known to be eligible for free school meals, enjoy learning, and their achievement is good.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress when they are working in small groups with an adult. This is because accurate records are kept of their learning and the work planned for them provides challenging next steps. For example, the progress of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties is accelerating because adults provide them with a wide range of games and other resources that promote their understanding. However, learning in groups is not yet outstanding because sometimes pupils who finish their work quickly are not always provided with extra challenges. Pupils who work individually with an adult often make outstanding progress because staff make excellent use of their detailed knowledge of the child's previous progress to plan very challenging next steps.

The attainment and progress of white, English speaking girls were well below their peers last year. Their progress has accelerated because they find the work in lessons interesting and challenging. They especially enjoy participating in the many after-school clubs that have been introduced this year. As a result, they now have positive attitudes towards their learning and their achievement is now similar to that of their peers.

The learning observed in lessons was consistently good and sometimes outstanding. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils were working hard to prepare a biased introduction to a newspaper article they were writing. They were curious and enjoyed answering teachers' questions and discussing ideas in pairs. This promoted their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding well. They especially enjoyed the work because they could choose the topic they were writing about, which made the task relevant and interesting. They used self and peer assessment well to judge the quality of their work and to understand how it can be made better. Pupils' proficiency as independent learners is developing quickly, particularly when they work with their peers in solving problems for themselves and making decisions about the direction of their investigations. Pupils mostly concentrate well but occasionally their attention drifts when lesson introductions last too long.

Teaching consistently makes very good use of data to plan pupils' challenging next steps in reading. Those who find reading difficult receive individual support that is very effective in promoting their recognition of words and understanding of text. The school has purchased new, exciting reading books that pupils, especially the boys, are very keen to read. Rapid improvements in the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and sentence construction have contributed to pupils' good progress in writing. They are making increasingly good use of a wide range of vocabulary to express their views clearly in longer pieces of work. Progress in mathematics has improved because the curriculum now provides enough time for pupils to solve mathematical problems accurately and quickly make accurate mental calculations.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that the rare cases of bullying are quickly resolved. They know precisely how to keep others and themselves safe, for example on the internet. Pupils do their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. They

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are well informed about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils collect generously for charity and the choir regularly entertains local people. They are keen to take responsibility as members of the school council. As yet, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to provide school leaders with feedback, for example on their preferred learning styles, to help them improve the school. Average standards in the basic skills and positive attitudes to school mean that pupils' preparation for secondary school is satisfactory. Pupils reflect very maturely on their own actions and those of others. A strong moral code underpins their good behaviour. They have a well-developed understanding of the diversity of British culture.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teachers' questions are challenging and really make pupils think deeply. Occasionally some members of the class find the work either too easy or too hard because teaching has not taken full account of individuals' prior attainment when planning the work. Marking and other feedback is good. It provides pupils with a clear understanding of how they can make their work better and reach their challenging targets. This means older pupils are taking a good measure of responsibility for their progress.

Pupils readily recall memorable stories from class and assemblies that have provided challenging opportunities to reflect on their feelings and actions. Pupils enjoy art and displaying their artwork around the school. They especially like lessons in which they are

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taught new and exciting skills by visiting specialists. The opportunities for pupils to practise and develop basic skills in all subjects are improving strongly. Enrichment is outstanding. Pupils in each year can participate in at least five different clubs each week and many do so. The many educational visits support classroom learning very well and add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

The learning mentors and other staff use their detailed knowledge of each child well to provide a good standard of pastoral care. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with sensitive support. The school uses experts well, such as outreach staff from special schools, to help assess these pupils' needs and help plan their learning programmes. Many staff speak pupils' home languages and provide pupils who do not speak English as their first language with valuable support. This ensures, for example, that they fully understand the meaning of technical words they meet in lessons. Measures to improve attendance are showing signs of success; it is currently above average but it is too early to say if this level can be sustained. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is very effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff enthusiastically embrace the executive headteacher's challenging and clearly-articulated targets for the school. Leaders' checks on pupils' progress are robust, regular and effective. They ensure appropriate work is quickly provided for any pupil whose progress slows so that they can catch up on missed work. Most middle leaders are taking responsibility for standards in their areas. Leaders, backed up by productive partnerships with the local authority and consultants, have provided successful training that has sharpened teachers' skills; for example, in planning exciting problem solving lessons in mathematics. In their quest to be even better, leaders are rightly working hard to fine-tune teachers' planning so that they sustain a fast pace of learning throughout lessons and that pupils working in small groups are always challenged well. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school and is playing a key role in its rapid improvement. Its good understanding of data means that it challenges the school robustly over its effectiveness.

The school is committed to equal opportunities. The rapidly improved progress of white, English speaking girls shows that its policies have a positive impact. Safety and safeguarding are given a high priority. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are rigorous. Lessons on safety and

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safeguarding provide pupils with a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school is good at promoting parents' and carers' support for their child's education at home. For example, learning mentors advise parents on behaviour strategies and routines for homework. The school regularly invites parents to work with their child in class so that they can see how their child learns best and how they can help their education at home. The school is a happy and harmonious community in which pupils from all backgrounds integrate well. Its promotion of wider community cohesion is developing strongly. For example, the school encourages people from all local ethnic groups to plan social events together and has considerable success, as seen at the recent party that they organised in the school grounds to celebrate the Royal Wedding which was attended by 600 local people including pupils and their parents and carers. The school is developing links with communities abroad to extend further pupils' understanding of diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was average. Parents' and carers' comments indicate that they believe their children are very safe, enjoy school and are very well cared for. They feel the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. Many said how much the school had improved during the last year. The inspection endorses these views. A few parents and carers thought that their children's progress was not good enough. The inspection found that in the recent past, progress in mathematics was slow for many pupils. It concluded that the school's procedures to address this shortcoming have been very effective and that progress in mathematics is now good. Several parents feel that their views are not taken into account by the school. Inspectors investigated this concern. They found that parents and carers have good

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opportunities to voice their opinions, either directly to school staff or through the forum that parents on the governing body lead. They found that the school does its best to act on concerns. This year, for example, in response to parent and carers' worries, the school has improved behaviour, re-established educational visits, extended the range of clubs and provided social events to forge links in the local community. Inspectors found that the school provides parents and carers with a clear explanation when it could not meet a request. A few parents and carers thought that the school did not deal with poor behaviour well enough. During the inspection the staff managed any lapses in behaviour effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Devonshire Junior 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 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	51	49	48	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	50	49	48	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	37	51	50	9	9	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	33	56	54	11	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	37	55	53	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	31	57	56	10	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	37	61	59	4	4	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)	31	30	55	53	9	9	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	26	65	63	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	31	59	57	12	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	26	55	53	14	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	38	57	55	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	43	49	48	8	8	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Devonshire Junior School Smethwick B67 7AT

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed looking at all the bright displays of your art work around the school. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Devonshire Junior is a good school and is quickly getting better. Here are some of the things we found out.

You told us that you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure. You try hard in lessons and your progress is good in writing and mathematics and outstanding in reading. Your behaviour is good. You are keen to take responsibility in school and collect generously for charity. You have good relationships with your teachers. The curriculum provides you with plenty of exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy. Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you. The executive headteacher and staff are working successfully together to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do the following to help you all do even better in your learning:

- improve your progress by making sure teachers always provide work for you that is neither too hard or too easy
- make sure lesson introductions do not last too long.

All of you can help the school by continuing to behave well and attending regularly. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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