

Sudley Junior School

Aigburth Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L17 6BH

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Year after year they leave the school with standards of attainment in English and mathematics that are well above average.
- Teaching is good and a notable amount is outstanding. Many lessons enthuse and inspire pupils, promoting their good progress and genuine love of learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. They make good progress and gain confidence in themselves as learners.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show excellent respect for adults and each other, listen carefully in lessons and work hard. Their attendance is above average.
- The school looks after pupils very well. It teaches pupils how to recognise dangers and keep safe.
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils are given exceptional opportunities to develop their understanding and appreciation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.
- They are successful in ensuring that the school's motto 'aim high and smile' is reflected in the challenging and exciting learning opportunities that are provided.
- Pupils' learning and enjoyment of school is further enriched by the wide range of interesting outdoor learning opportunities, visits, visitors and out-of-school clubs.
- Regular checks are made by leaders on the quality of teaching to improve pupils' learning.
- Governors make an effective contribution to the way the school is led and managed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Across the school, fewer pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points than pupils do nationally, particularly in English.
- Some teaching still requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not make the best use of the information they gather about pupils' attainment and progress to move achievement from good to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, four of which were conducted jointly with members of the school’s senior leadership team.
- Inspectors analysed pupils’ work and the school’s data about their attainment and progress. They held three formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at breaks and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and analysed a range of school documentation. This included: safeguarding records and those relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance; records of the monitoring of teaching and pupils’ learning; the school’s self-evaluation summary and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of 46 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Margot D’Arcy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Lawton

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Platt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or whose parents are in the armed forces, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. None are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School status, Artsmark Gold, Active Mark, Sing-Up Gold and the International School award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school's leaders and managers should raise achievement to outstanding so more pupils across all year groups, including specific groups of pupils, make rapid progress, particularly in reading and writing. The school should do this by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is at least good and more is outstanding
 - ensuring that in every lesson the work is matched precisely to meet all pupils' needs
 - fully embedding recent initiatives to ensure that assessments of pupils' writing are accurate
 - improving the way in which the school's leaders use assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress to increase the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress from their starting points and to check on the school's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The most recent (2012) national test results for Year 6 pupils show that, from the school's assessments of pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3, most made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- In the reading and mathematics tests, significantly more pupils than found nationally reached both the expected and the higher levels. In writing, the proportion that reached the expected level was similar to pupils across the country but significantly more pupils reached the higher level. Pupils with special educational needs generally attained better than pupils in this group nationally, but not as well as other pupils in the school. There was no significant difference between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils at the school, but fewer pupils from this group reached the higher levels in English and mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieved at least as well as other pupils in the school.
- The school's data from its assessments of pupils' attainment shows that most pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils are doing better than this, but some are not achieving quite as well as might be expected given the school's assessment of their attainment when they began in Year 3.
- This data shows some inconsistencies in rates of progress across year groups, between classes and for specific groups of pupils in English and mathematics. Generally, these differences are not wide and there is no specific pattern to indicate that any particular groups of pupils across the school are consistently underachieving in either subject. In some cases, it is those of average ability who do not appear to be making as much progress as might be expected, while at other times it is the more able pupils or those with lower prior attainment.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and fluent readers. They read for enjoyment, explaining the different types of reading material they prefer and why. Pupils competently use and apply reading skills to help with research tasks, including through using information and communication technology (ICT), in many subjects. They develop a good understanding of different types of writing and skill in writing for different purposes, for example, recounts, scripts, instructions, poems and letters. Pupils have well developed skills in calculation and use and apply mathematics in their work in different subjects.
- Pupils gain skills in ICT, science, art, music history, geography and religious education. They develop a secure understanding of how these subjects have shaped the history and present-day life of communities locally, nationally and in the wider world. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching in three-quarters of the lessons was good or better, with a third being outstanding. No inadequate teaching was seen, but in around a quarter of lessons teaching required some improvement in order for it to be good. Pupils' work and the school's data on the progress of pupils in different year groups and classes reflect these strengths and variation.
- The majority of teachers are successful in providing work that gets the best out of all pupils. This is because teachers' skilled use of questioning and the checks that they make on pupils' work during and after lessons enables them to adapt future work to meet pupils' different needs, providing more challenge or support as required.
- Lessons begin quickly and move on at a good pace so that learning time is fully exploited. Most teachers are successful in striking exactly the right balance of time for pupils to listen, answer questions, discuss ideas with a partner or group and to investigate and record their work. This keeps pupils interested throughout the lesson and enables them to learn well.

- Along with teachers' secure subject knowledge, these key features of successful teaching are enhanced by the careful thought that teachers give to planning work that captures pupils' interests and fires their enthusiasm to learn. Pupils are given many opportunities to investigate ideas, work things out for themselves and to learn in fun and interesting ways.
- In Year 4, for example, pupils worked with a partner using dice throws to sharpen their knowledge and calculation skills of three and four digit numbers. Moreover, because this task was designed to have more than one possible outcome, pupils' appreciation of the mathematical idea of probability was also enhanced. In Year 5, excellent use was made of archive television news to help pupils understand dramatic conventions in the language of news reports, while in Year 6, excellent use of drama was used to enhance pupils' understanding of poetry.
- The most significant feature of the less effective lessons is that the work set for pupils of different abilities is too similar or not designed in such a way that pupils are able to progress through it at their own level. For the most part this restricts the learning of more-able pupils but at times it also limits the progress of those of average ability. To a lesser extent, this was also the feature in good lessons that prevented teaching and learning from being outstanding.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' excellent relationships with pupils is another key factor that help pupils to learn well. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed, and make a particularly good contribution to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality in-class support and benefit from well-taught intervention programmes tailored to meet their specific needs and promote their confidence and belief in themselves as effective learners.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about their improvement targets. They provide pupils with good quality feedback on how well they are doing and how they can improve. Homework is regular and provides effective support for pupils' learning, with some particularly interesting activities in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils rise to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. In lessons and around the school pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, showing the utmost respect for their teachers and each other. They are proud of their school and willingly take on responsibilities.
- In discussions, pupils' were generous in their praise of teachers' efforts make to make lessons interesting and fun. Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning are clearly evident in lessons. They listen attentively and are eager to answer questions and offer opinions. When asked to discuss ideas with a partner they do so responsibly and in group tasks they show that they are able to work collaboratively, sharing and valuing each other's ideas.
- Pupils' skills in being able to work by themselves are very well developed because they get lots of opportunities to investigate and work things out for themselves. Some excellent examples were seen in science lessons. For instance, in Year 5 pupils worked in groups to construct a 'hall of mirrors' for a funfair. They listened carefully to each other as they discussed and drew on what they knew about light and reflection to construct their models. They organised their work to include notes to support their presentations to other groups at the end of the lesson.
- First-hand learning opportunities such as this are the norm rather than the exception at Sudley and underpin pupils' outstanding behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Similarly, pupils' understanding of themselves as learners is developed well in the regular opportunities they have to reflect on their work and consider whether they need more help or practise, or are ready to move on to new work.
- Pupils have a very well developed appreciation of how to stay safe. They recognise how the school has helped them to understand about different types of bullying and the dangers they might face in their lives, for example, when using the internet. They say that they feel safe and consider that there is little bullying or racist behaviour. Above all, the pupils were completely clear that they have trust and confidence in the adults in the school to keep them keep safe and

to deal with any concerns they might have.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders' and governors' commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, good community relations and eliminating discrimination are well met and entrenched within the school's curriculum and ethos. The success of this is evident in pupils' good achievement and their well developed knowledge of, and respect for, the different cultures, beliefs and customs of communities within school, locally and globally.
- Good improvements have occurred since the last inspection. High standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have been maintained and improved upon, with some significant improvement in mathematics last year. The last inspection's recommendations have been addressed and the improvements that were being introduced to the curriculum at that time have been embedded.
- The curriculum provides exceptional opportunities for pupils to learn about people and places today and in the past. Exciting lessons, both indoors and outside, visits to places of interest, effective use of up-to-date technology and visitors with specific expertise all add to the mix that makes learning at Sudley exciting, meaningful and relevant. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. In the last term, good improvements have been made to the way reading is taught and initiatives are underway to further improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' writing.
- Regular checks are made by senior leaders and managers on the quality of teaching and learning. These inform decisions about training and support for individuals, as well as for identified school improvement priorities.
- Senior leaders concentrate on ensuring that by the time pupils leave Year 6, they have made the progress expected nationally, including those pupils who find learning more difficult and those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. Leaders are vigilant in identifying pupils at risk of falling behind with their learning and ensuring additional support is provided to enable them catch up.
- There is less focus on ensuring that more pupils in all year groups, including pupils who circumstances make them vulnerable, are able to make progress at better than the expected level. This is because the school's system for tracking pupils' progress has not been developed well enough to fully inform leaders of differences between and within year groups, including for specific groups of pupils, at this level. This is limiting leaders' ability to raise pupils' achievement to outstanding and not providing precise enough information to ensure that they have a completely accurate view of the school's effectiveness.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this effective school. Nevertheless, visits are regular, focused and supportive. Some useful training has also been provided to enhance governors' understanding of data about pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The wide range of expertise among governors contributes well to the way the school is led and managed. Training has improved governors' understanding of pupils' achievement and enables them to ask incisive questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Governors use performance management information effectively to make decisions about pay progression. They are fully aware of how the pupil premium money is spent and are vigilant in asking about how well this is helping these pupils to learn.

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	104596
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	402949

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Thornhill
Headteacher	Scott Connell
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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