

Dial Park Primary School

Halfmoon Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5LB

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Dial Park is improving pupils' standards so that they are now in line with national averages for pupils in Year 6. This is because of dynamic and determined leadership, good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils' attitudes are delightful. They are unfailingly polite and eager to share their learning with each other, their teachers and with visitors. They are a credit to their families and to their school because of their positive attitudes in persevering with their work, their joyful appreciation of learning and their sense of pride at taking responsibility. Their behaviour has improved and is good. Pupils feel safe, cared for and secure.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also make good progress because they are well-taught. They are well-prepared for school life and so they are settled, happy and reassured in their first experience of school.
- Good quality teaching is enjoyed by each pupil because it typically takes account of their individual abilities as well as their interests. Pupils are encouraged to believe in themselves and to strive for the best standard of work possible. Their work is celebrated by each other as well as by their teachers and support staff.
- Leadership and management are good. They are characterised by a very clear expectation of how well pupils can achieve, sensitive and challenging support and guidance for staff and a business-like attitude to getting things done.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons pupils' different abilities are not sufficiently taken into account when setting work, asking questions and adapting activities.
- There is variability in marking and some pupils are not aware of how well they are doing or what, exactly, they need to do to make their work better.
- There are some weaknesses in pupils' ability to spell and punctuate accurately or write in complete sentences. Pupils have grasped basic skills in learning their numbers but are not always helped to use that knowledge to help them solve problems in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspectors observed 10 lessons and four were joint observations with the headteacher. Shorter visits were made to classes to check the quality of the curriculum.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body, school staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and examined the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors took account of the responses made to the school's recent survey of parent views. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to reflect parents' views. The questionnaires completed by 14 staff were taken into account.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and various documents including the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, tracking records of pupils' progress, pupils' work, governing body records of meetings and performance-management documents.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This slightly smaller than average-sized school is set on a campus that includes a special school and a nursery school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high.
- The number of pupils who need extra help (either at school action or school action plus or who are undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs) is above average.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body runs a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that every pupil makes consistently good and better progress by:
 - closely matching activities in the classroom to each pupil's ability
 - making sure that pupils clearly understand what they do well and how, precisely, they can improve their work
 - checking pupils' understanding and using this information to re-shape lesson planning, questioning and lesson activities.
- Raise attainment further, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - focusing more on improving pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction
 - improving pupils' ability to apply their basic skills in numbers to help them solve problems in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the school with a wide variety of skills and knowledge which are, overall, below those that are typical for their age. Some children demonstrate understanding and skills that are above what is typical for their age and make the same good rates of progress as most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Good quality teaching by all adults excites children's interest and their curiosity for learning because of a wide range of tempting activities, especially indoors. As a result their skills are close to average at the start of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' standards and their progress have improved steadily over the past three years. A determined approach to make sure that improvements are secure throughout the school has been successful. The quality of teaching and a consistent focus on improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are instrumental in raising standards. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are in line with the national average and pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 is set to reach their challenging targets.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and their listening skills throughout the school. They are eager to debate and express their views and this sets the foundation for their accelerated progress in reading and writing as well as their social development. Non-fiction, literature and information and communication technology research are based on pupils' interests and preferences and reading is celebrated all around the school.
- Pupils receive a good grounding in number skills and basic English; reading recovery and 'Numbers Count' programmes support teaching and help raise standards from Key Stage 1 onwards. Occasionally, there is not enough focus on building up pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and sentence construction. When this happens some pupils have weaknesses in English. Similarly, pupils' good grasp of numbers is not always used consistently to help them to apply that knowledge to solving problems and conducting investigational work.
- Pupils who are disabled, those with special educational needs, the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium also achieve well. The high numbers of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attain the same broadly average standards as do others. Senior leaders and the governing body have successfully concentrated on providing effective and well-placed support for pupils at risk of falling behind. Good quality teaching, effective one- to-one teaching and small group work help pupils to make good progress over time.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good quality teaching includes examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers expect a lot from their pupils who enjoy proving them right. Learning is brought to life by exploring as many ways of studying a subject as possible. Pupils acquired detailed and thorough knowledge about the world and nature in a Year 2 lesson about animals and their habitats. They studied a very realistic looking representation of a fox as well as other animals, vivid and vibrant photographs of wildlife, maps of terrain, foodstuffs and video documentaries, for example, to make detailed and thorough analyses of how animals hunt and survive.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage thrive because there are so many wonderful activities to whet their appetite for discovery and learning. Good teaching enables children to learn to read, write and count by linking letters and sounds and adding up numbers for shopping lists or saving for a special toy, for example. Children start to put letters together to form words. They become cleverly diverted by the many interesting books that are all around them and then practise reading out the words and, often, singing them. They further develop their independence and speech outdoors although there are fewer opportunities for them to experience as wide a range of activities as when they are indoors.

- The best teaching is closely matched to the abilities of each pupil. The more-able pupils are challenged to achieve their best because they know exactly what they are aiming to do as well as knowing what methods they can use to achieve this, for instance. The less-able pupils and those who are disabled and who have special educational needs are similarly challenged by good quality teaching and guidance from well-placed support staff. Occasionally, activities are not closely matched to individual ability and learning slows.
- Teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, challenging targets for achievement and a 'can do' atmosphere. Pupils gain knowledge and experiences and make positive moves forward in their learning. They are also given skills for life-long learning. Open-ended and philosophical questions, for example, allow time for pupils to respond, which encourages pupils to think and consider as a matter of course.
- Occasionally, pupils are not quite sure of what is expected from them because it is not explained clearly enough for them to understand. In these cases some pupils do not complete work while some others complete it quickly and become restless. Pupils' understanding is not checked by appropriate questions and so activities are not re-shaped to match every pupil's ability.
- Most marking is thorough and all is up-to-date. The vast majority is very thoughtful in helping pupils to improve because it is very clear and understandable. Teachers typically use information from their assessments to make changes to how they provide further challenge or help for pupils. Good teachers and support staff then check to make sure pupils have acted on their recommendations and intervene if there are still any gaps in pupils' knowledge or understanding.
- Many pupils and staff made a point of showing us the 'Forest Books' and the 'Big Book of Photos' showing pupils' learning. Photographs and 'videos' are often used in marking to highlight pupils' successes, as well as examples of where they can improve. Pupils said how this makes it very clear to them about where they are doing well, as well as how to make their work better. A minority of marking does not, however, routinely inform pupils about how well they are doing or how to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are welcomed by all staff and pupils in the school. They are known by name by all staff. Pupils take pride in looking after them whether in the breakfast club or by the extremely sociable and knowledgeable house captains and vice captains, for instance. They feel part of school life and settle down quickly. They learn to share and any minor arguments are rare because they are well-looked after and appreciate how, 'Everybody is one person.' as one child said.
- High standards of behaviour are modelled by leaders and staff. They are polite and respectful of pupils and consequently pupils behave in the same way. Pupils are extremely positive about behaviour in the school. 'There is no bullying. Absolutely none. Anyway our parents and Mr Clark wouldn't stand for it.' said one pupil that was echoed by others. Parents are positive about the school and behaviour in the school survey. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and the views of a very small percentage of parents who had a concern about behaviour was not supported by the good behaviour seen during the inspection.
- Pupils are eager to learn because lessons are interesting and well-explained. They become restless occasionally when they are not quite sure what is expected from them. Mostly they describe 'great teachers' and 'fun' learning. All pupils spoken to said how 'brilliant' the headteacher was in making school a happy and enjoyable place to learn.
- Attendance has improved because pupils enjoy coming to school and their parents are made aware of how important it is for their children to come to school regularly.
- Pupils spoken to all said they felt safe and knew who to turn to if they were worried about anything. They have a clear sense of justice and of what is right and what is wrong. They develop their confidence and self-esteem because they know that they are valued as individuals and because they are frequently reminded of how well they are doing in their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The professional, business-like tone of the school is set by a demanding headteacher who is also sensitive to the needs of pupils, parents and staff. Staff and pupils share an ambition and drive to improve, which is infectious. Pupils and their parents comment about how well they make progress and achieve.
- Careful support and training is matched to individual teachers and school priorities. Performance-management targets are rigorous and closely examined to ensure that teaching is constantly improving and ensuring that pupils make at least good progress. All groups of pupils achieve well reflecting the school's effective equality of opportunity. Opportunities to share good practice and resources reflect effective partnerships with the local nursery and special school.
- Senior and middle leaders know their school because they regularly observe lessons, examine pupils' work and carefully monitor pupils' progress. They are aware of what the school does well and what is required to make further improvements. Since the school's previous inspection all areas of school have improved; standards have risen, pupils' progress has been accelerated, teaching quality has improved and behaviour and attendance are better. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to make further improvements.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, cultural and moral development is successfully fostered and pupils are extremely polite and engaging. They are well-aware of art, music and drama through good and sometimes outstanding classroom display as well as enriching teaching and extracurricular experiences. Pupils' sense of responsibility is taken seriously especially through the house system and in carefully and sensibly suggesting improvements. Their reasoned requests for individual lockers were granted by leaders and the governing body for instance. Although pupils learn about people from different walks of life, leaders acknowledge the need to develop this further to increase pupils' first-hand experiences of people from different ethnic backgrounds than their own.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and training undertaken by members of the governing body and staff is regular and thorough.
- Since the previous inspection the local authority has provided thorough and effective support. Its involvement has lessened as the school has improved. This good support has been challenging and helpful in securing improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body challenges and questions the school's performance through probing pupils' standards and sharing in improvement planning. It astutely manages the school's finances, especially in reducing deficits in the budget. The governing body allocates additional funding, such as the pupil premium, carefully and effectively to provide good value for money. The effects of this can be seen in positive pupil outcomes for all groups of pupils. Governance is good and the governing body is keen to improve the school further and continues to become increasingly more involved.

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	106043
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	400818

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Southwick
Headteacher	James Clark
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
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