

Devonshire Infant School

Auckland Road, Smethwick, Birmingham, B67 7AT

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make very rapid progress so that by the time that they leave the school they reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have the skills they need to succeed in junior school.
- Teaching is outstanding and together with the rich curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Personal development is particularly strong. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' speaking, independence, curiosity and reflection about right and wrong.
- Behaviour for learning is outstanding and pupils feel safe. They are keen to learn and levels of engagement with their work are high.
- The headteacher is determined and sharply focused on raising standards. She has high expectations of all staff and pupils. She is well supported by the senior and subject leaders who are passionate about their areas of responsibility. Together they have improved teaching and raised achievement.
- The governing body has members from a range of ethnic backgrounds and quite rightly speaks very proudly of its links with the local community. It places great importance on the welfare of the pupils and their parents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and made other short visits to classrooms and outdoor learning areas.
- Inspectors talked to groups of pupils and listened to them read. They looked at their work in books and on display.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), staff questionnaires and held informal discussions with parents and considered the school's own survey.
- They examined the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data on the progress and attainment of pupils, and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Shahnaz Maqsood, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Georgina Beasley	Additional Inspector
Edgar Hastings	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Devonshire Infant School is much larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, pupils under the care of the local authority and those with parents in the armed services) is above average. In this school there is a high number of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- A large proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with Indian and Pakistani pupils forming the largest groups. Many from these groups arrive at the school speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and at school action plus is high.
- The executive headteacher has run both the infant school and the neighbouring junior school since 2010. Both schools are in a federation and share the same governing body.
- The governing body run a breakfast- and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by making sure pupils are given every opportunity to make improvements to their work during lessons, so that more-able pupils in particular can extend themselves and reach higher levels of attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress from their well-below average starting points and by the time they leave school at the end of Year 2 they reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A growing number do better than this.
- Pupils joining the Nursery have skills and knowledge well below those typical of children their age. They make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development so that after a few weeks they have good levels of independence and are able to join in with activities including those that they choose themselves.
- The learning environment in the Nursery and Reception classes is stimulating and extremely well organised to encourage active learning through exploration and play. It is highly effective in developing children's talk, independence, curiosity and keenness to learn and to find out more.
- A high proportion of pupils across the school make more progress than is expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium who do not have special educational needs make excellent progress to catch up with their other classmates from their lower starting points. There are no gaps in attainment in English and mathematics between these pupils and their peers.
- Pupils of Indian and Pakistani heritage as well as pupils who are at the early stages of learning English make excellent progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are extremely well supported by the school and they make excellent progress. Those with complex needs make outstanding progress through high quality one-to-one sessions with teaching assistants.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about the 'keys to unlock reading' which they use confidently to read with fluency and expression. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to read. For example, they set individual books which children can access at home or during lunchtime ICT sessions, and then teachers log in and check how well pupils have read afterwards.
- In every lesson observed by inspectors, pupils' speaking skills were developed exceptionally well. In literacy lessons, partners often take it in turns to give their ideas and through very thoughtful discussion decide on the best response to the teacher's question.
- When pupils check how well they are doing during lessons they make the relevant improvements. On the rare occasions when checks are not made until the ends of lessons, they do not always have enough time to make the improvements there and then which would have enabled more-able pupils in particular to reach higher standards in that lesson.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils' progress is carefully and accurately checked during and at the end of nearly every lesson. Teachers use the information to plan tasks and activities and to organise resources that fully support the learning of each individual pupil so that pupils gain new knowledge and skills rapidly.
- Teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and take it to the next

level. This is done in weekly conferences and through comments written in their books. Additional tasks are given to help pupils make the improvements.

- Expectations are high; all pupils are expected to achieve their best. Steps to success are used by teachers to clarify what pupils have to do by the end of the lesson to achieve the objective.
- Adults who work alongside teachers in the classroom support pupils' learning and development extremely well. They are involved in the planning of learning and work closely with the teachers to make sure that they use the same strategies to promote excellent learning, particularly those working with pupils with complex special educational needs. When adults talk to pupils in the language they speak at home pupils understand the tasks much quicker and so make more rapid progress in the lesson.
- Class routines are well established and managed by the staff so pupils are well aware of the rules of behaviour for learning. The positive atmosphere in lessons gives pupils' confidence to have a go with challenging tasks which helps them to make rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils display exemplary behaviour. They are polite, well mannered and welcome visitors. They hold doors open for each other and adults. Pupils manage their own behaviour extremely well. For example, at lunchtime two friends were standing in a queue some distance apart, but both stayed in their respective positions, resisting the temptation to move next to each other even though they desperately wanted to sit next to each other. There were no adults around.
- Pupils are very keen to learn. Lessons have an atmosphere of calm and order punctuated by pupils' bursts of enthusiasm for their work.
- Pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds play and work together happily during lessons, break and lunchtimes. The words of the school song 'joining in harmony, every nationality' are reflected in the pupils' highly positive attitudes towards each other.
- Pupils are very positive about the school. They feel safe and are sure that there is no bullying. They know to 'click on Hector' if they find something on the computer that they do not like and to not respond to emails without an adult reading them first.
- The school has taken highly effective steps to make significant improvements to attendance, especially in reducing the number of pupils who are absent often. These include the recruitment of an educational welfare officer who is working closely with these families.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The drive for improvement comes from the exceptional leadership of the headteacher and includes high aspirations for pupils' success which are shared by all governors and staff. As a result, improvement continues to be strong and successful.
- Checks on pupils' learning and progress are rigorous. Teachers and leaders are extremely knowledgeable about individual pupils' personal and academic achievement and that of different groups of pupils. Consequently, steps to make sure that those who start to fall behind rapidly catch up are successful.

- The headteacher has high expectations of her staff and monitors the quality of the teaching rigorously and accurately. Subsequent development targets are demanding and supported by relevant training. As a result, teaching continues to improve strongly and much is outstanding.
- The federation with the junior school has brought many benefits to the school. These include sharing of good practice and knowledge of individual pupils ensuring a smooth transition process from infant to junior school. Although the headteacher divides her time between the two schools, the school runs equally effectively when she is not there because of the strong team work of the staff. Staff take full responsibility for making sure the schools' high standards are met.
- The leadership of Nursery and Reception has resulted in excellent improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The leadership of learning and teaching in Years 1 and 2 has meant that the previous outstanding provision is maintained and improved.
- The school's inclusive ethos promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Interesting topics link learning across subjects and engage and enthuse pupils.
- Equal opportunities are at the heart of the schools ethos. Similarities between cultures and religions are highlighted and the differences celebrated with a strong focus on individuals and the community.
- The school has formed very strong relationships with parents and the local community. Initiatives such as the 'drop-in stay and play' sessions run at the school by the nearby children's centre and the family Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme, which is run by the schools' learning mentors, build relationships between parents and children. A parent commented, 'The family SEAL programme gives me the opportunity to spend some quality time with my child'.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents commented on how approachable all of the staff are and could relate in detail the activities in the school and what their children were learning.
- The local authority has a very high opinion of the leadership and quality of teaching at the school. It uses the school's expertise to support others as a 'hub' for outstanding practice. It has also provided effective training for the teaching assistants to improve their teaching.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are in place.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know their school well and have a clear understanding pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
 - The headteacher is supported effectively but challenged as well to make sure the needs of the whole school community are being met. She is set challenging targets for pupils' personal and academic development and the governors monitor them closely.
 - Governors check the quality of teaching closely and make sure that teachers are only rewarded if they meet their performance targets. They know how any underperformance is tackled.
 - The federation with the junior school is managed well by the governing body and it makes sure that the partnership contributes positively to pupils' learning.

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	103943
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	412097

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gurinder Josan
Headteacher	Sharron Philpot
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
Telephone number	0121 558 1652
Fax number	0121 558 8335
Email address	headteacher@devonshire-inf.sandwell.sch.uk

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