

Devonshire Junior School

Auckland Road, Smethwick, B67 7AT

Inspection dates 28–29 November 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 feel very happy and safe at this welcoming school and they are eager to learn.
- Pupils who complete the whole key stage at the school make good progress. In 2013, all groups of pupils made particularly strong progress in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and benefit from a high quality of care.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve at least as well as other pupils and are given every opportunity to succeed.
- The quality of teaching is good and a growing proportion is outstanding.
- Teachers are skilled at giving pupils work that is pitched at the right level so that it is neither too hard nor too easy.
- Behaviour is outstanding and this helps pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Since the last inspection, the dynamic leadership of the headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
- Governors and other school leaders have made a strong contribution to the improvements in teaching and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Recent standards in mathematics have been below average for some pupils.
- Not all teachers have enough experience in planning and delivering the most stimulating and imaginative lessons.
- The standards and progress in reading of the most-able pupils has been lower than the national average.
- The quality of work in some pupils' books is not always high for all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which seven were shared observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the 11 responses to a staff questionnaire. There were not enough responses to show results in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanne Speller	Additional Inspector
Andrew Sierant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Devonshire Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Indian and Pakistani.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher also acts as executive headteacher for the infant school that shares the same site. Both schools are run by the same governing body but are inspected separately.
- The local authority has asked the headteacher to act as an adviser to another local infant school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve the progress of all pupils in mathematics by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their problem-solving skills.
- Improve the standards and progress in reading of the most-able pupils by giving them more time and opportunity to read in lessons and providing them with exciting and challenging books.
- Ensure consistently good teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - teachers sharing imaginative and varied teaching strategies with each other more often and by seeking the very best practice in other schools
 - making sure that the work in pupils' books for all subjects is of the same high standard as it is for English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last three years, pupils have arrived in Year 3 having achieved standards that are broadly average, though their attainment on entry has shown a slight year-on-year decline. Because of their enjoyment of and interest in learning, pupils make good progress each year in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- While the very large majority of pupils join the school in Year 3, in the last school year over 10% of the pupils in Year 6 had joined the school partway through Key Stage 2. These pupils made good progress over the time they were at the school but the standards attained by these pupils was below that of their classmates. This contributes to the overall standards being only average at the end of Year 6. Pupils at school for the whole of Key Stage 2 made good progress, with a higher than average proportion making expected progress.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has been transformed. Pupils' progress in 2012 required improvement because progress had been slow in writing. The school acted decisively to address this issue by providing additional teaching and by making the necessary improvements. As a result, all groups of pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2013 made good progress from each of their different starting points when they joined the school.
- Pupils in Year 6 who had done less well at the end of Key Stage 1 achieved standards in 2013 that were above that of similar pupils nationally. Some other pupils did less well in their reading and mathematics and standards were below average overall in mathematics. This was because pupils had not had enough practice in solving practical problems in their lessons.
- While English is an additional language for the very large majority of pupils, only a small proportion are in the early stages of learning English. The school makes sure that these pupils make rapid progress. All pupils overall, including those for whom English is an additional language and those eligible for the pupil premium, achieved above-average scores in the national test of grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- The school works hard to tackle discrimination and to provide equal opportunities for all pupils. Carefully targeted spending of the funding from the pupil premium has meant that those pupils who are eligible for it have made similar progress to other pupils in mathematics. They also made the same strong progress in writing in 2013 and have made better progress than other pupils in reading for the last two school years. The gap between the standards reached by pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils has narrowed to half a term in mathematics and writing and has almost closed in reading.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also similar to their classmates. This is because these pupils are provided with a range of particularly well selected and expertly delivered programmes of support and development.
- For the last two years, a below-average proportion of more-able pupils have gained high levels in reading. This is because they have not all had enough time in class reading appropriately challenging books.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is at least good in almost all lessons. Inspectors also

saw a number of examples of outstanding teaching. Many of the best lessons get off to a brisk start, with activities that immediately seize the attention and interest of the pupils.

- Teachers show excellent knowledge of the skills they teach, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and many communicate to the pupils their enthusiasm for what they are teaching. Teachers skilfully use questioning to check that the work they set is well matched to pupils' needs, and pupils show they are eager to know more by asking their teachers searching questions.
- The needs of all groups of pupils are met, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils are often assisted in class by highly skilled support staff who work closely with the class teacher to make sure that all pupils make good progress. The school's learning mentors provide social and emotional support to pupils when required, including through the use of a 'Sunshine Room'.
- All teachers are aware of those pupils in their class who are eligible for the pupil premium and who may need additional support, whatever their ability. A purpose-built and well-equipped 'garden room' in the heart of the school provides a focus for additional work with these pupils in particular.
- The work that pupils do in their literacy and numeracy books is well presented. There is very good use of the themes and topics that are being studied; for example, a discussion about the language of propaganda through a Second World War poster design. The quality and quantity of work in the pupils' books for some other subjects is not always so evident.
- While a variety of engaging activities are used in many lessons, these strategies are not shared by all teachers. This means that pupils do not always have the opportunity to make such good progress in all lessons. In mathematics lessons, teachers do not always use enough practical activities to show how the subject is used in everyday life.
- Teachers set homework and mark pupils' books regularly, frequently asking them to try a task again to make sure it has been understood or providing an additional task to move their learning on. The positive relationships between teachers and pupils can often be seen in the friendly greetings and thanks that are recorded in their exercise books. Pupils also assess their own and each other's work and are able to discuss their levels and their targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils clearly and confidently told inspectors that they felt very happy and safe at their school. Older pupils were keen to say how behaviour had improved since they first arrived some years ago. This is reflected in the drop in the rate of exclusions to zero.
- Pupils say they enjoy their work, particularly the fast pace of activities at the start of lessons, and their behaviour in the classroom is outstanding. Pupils are able to concentrate on individual work for increasingly longer periods as they move up through the school. They are also used to working together in pairs and groups and assessing their own and each other's work.
- Pupils show great pride in the colourful and imaginative displays all around the school that celebrate their achievements. They have a respect for the buildings and resources and are responsible and polite as they move around the school. This respect is also evident between pupils and between staff and pupils.

- Pupils are knowledgeable about being safe when using the internet and protecting their identities. They also feel safe at school, both outdoors and inside. School records show and discussions with pupils confirmed that while they know what bullying is and how to deal with it, they do not experience it at school. Pupils were clear that they could always tell someone at school if they had any concerns. They told inspectors that 'this is a telling school'.
- The school has successfully worked with families to improve attendance and it is now average. The rate of persistent absences has fallen significantly and the school celebrates good attendance in assemblies and with awards. Pupils enjoy coming to school early or staying on later in order to join in the wide range of musical, sporting and academic clubs and activities.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has significantly improved the quality of teaching, transformed pupils' behaviour and raised achievement. She now has a well-established, strong and determined team of school leaders who share her high expectations. The new deputy headteacher and the literacy and numeracy leaders all bring fresh ideas and good subject knowledge. Together, they are driving further improvements.
- School leaders have not been afraid to tackle underperformance in teaching. Inadequate teaching has been almost eradicated and there is little teaching that is not at least good. Leaders and governors ensure that teachers are clear about the link between salary progression and the progress their pupils make and there is no moving up the pay scale without evidence of strong teaching performance.
- The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the progress of pupils is closely monitored. This means that senior leaders are able to identify and address any areas of underachievement early on. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and is checked both by the school's own leaders and, whenever possible, by the local authority or with other schools.
- Teachers receive regular training and professional development, usually sharing the skills and expertise that are within the school. There are fewer opportunities to seek out the very best practice regionally or nationally.
- Parents, staff and pupils are all equally enthusiastic about the positive impact the headteacher has had on the school since her arrival. She has used her position as executive headteacher of both the infant school and the junior school to establish sound, long-lasting relationships with parents and to make the move for pupils from one school to another as easy as possible.
- The local authority considers the school to be in safe hands and has provided it with support and guidance when needed. It is a sign of the local authority's confidence in the headteacher that they have asked her to be an adviser at another local school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted both inside and outside the classroom. The diversity of faiths and cultures in the school is celebrated sensitively in assemblies and displays. Every year, pupils visit a church, a mosque or a temple, and they leave the school with an understanding of aspects of each of these faiths.
- An awareness of the importance of safeguarding by both pupils and staff means that any risks are swiftly identified and immediately addressed.

- The school has a particular focus on the physical well-being of pupils. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and the need for regular exercise, and some pupils take part in a fitness club before school each day. This helps pupils to be alert and energetic in their learning. The school has plans to use its primary school sport funding to develop these programmes further.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are included in the teaching of other subjects, and history and art are particularly strong. In one Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils worked on Tudor portraits, developing literacy skills as they were asked to describe the personalities of their subjects. Work is also tailored to the needs and interests of the majority of pupils. For example, in studying Victorian Britain, pupils also examine the British colonial role in the formation of modern India and Pakistan. The quality of this work is not fully reflected in the recording of it by pupils in their books.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since they share the same site, the infant and junior school have a joint governing body. This gives them a good understanding of the levels of skills and knowledge with which pupils start at the junior school. The governors have provided highly constructive support and challenge to the headteacher in making improvements. Governors keep their skills up to date through regular training and are very well informed about how well the school is doing. They receive regular and comprehensive information from the headteacher and senior leaders, and they make regular visits to monitor the school's work. They know where the best teaching is in the school and, as a result, are in a strong position to contribute to school development and improvement planning. Governors have contributed fully to the discussions on how the pupil premium funding should be spent and have kept a careful check on the impact of the extra support and guidance provided for eligible students. They hold the headteacher to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. They know how any underperformance is being tackled. Governors meet all their responsibilities well, including national requirements for safeguarding pupils. Parent governors play an important role in encouraging wider parental involvement with the school.

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	103942
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	427132

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gurinder Josan
Headteacher	Miss Sharron Philpot
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2011
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