

Dovecot Primary School

Grant Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L14 0LH

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- The achievement of current learners is good. Standards have improved rapidly since the last inspection.
- From starting points below typical levels, pupils are now making good progress.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is good and similar to that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress as a result of personalised programmes and effective teaching.
- The most-able pupils are challenged particularly well. Evidence in books shows that these pupils are working at a very high level for their age.
- Teaching is good over time and some is outstanding. Marking is excellent.
- Teachers plan activities which are well matched to the ability of the pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very good. They are able to work on their own or with a partner for sustained periods.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and proud of their school and their achievements. They feel safe.
- The curriculum provides pupils with exciting and memorable opportunities which the pupils thoroughly enjoy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding.
- Strong leadership and management have successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sharing of best practice has not yet brought about outstanding teaching across the school.
- Teachers miss opportunities to improve the quality of vocabulary used by pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons and parts of lessons taught by seven teachers. An observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' exercise books.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, middle leaders, managers responsible for leading specific subjects, other staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation to help gain an accurate view of its performance, safeguarding policies, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records of behaviour and displays around the school.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector held conversations with parents in the playground and looked at the most recent questionnaire sent out by the school.
- The inspector analysed 16 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The school was partially closed on the second day of the inspection due to industrial action by some staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Due to family mobility, higher than average numbers of pupils start at, or leave the school at various times during any school year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and achievement to outstanding by:
 - continuing to share the outstanding practice which exists in some parts of the school
 - teachers using every opportunity to enrich the vocabulary used by pupils when discussing ideas with their peers and adults.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils currently in the school is good. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection and pupils now make much better progress.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typical for their age, particularly in their understanding of literacy and mathematics. They make good progress in all areas of learning, in particular both boys and girls become enthusiastic writers and were keen to show the inspector the letters they had written to their mother. The information held about the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage indicates that they are ready to enter Year 1.
- Younger pupils show a good mastery of the early reading skills. They achieved levels similar to those of other pupils nationally in the test to assess their understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and have good strategies for reading difficult words.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in 2014 is now much closer to the national average in all subjects.
- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils now achieve well. Pupils are much better prepared for the next stage of their education than previously. Whilst attainment is still below average, it is rapidly improving in all subjects.
- Pupils who are eligible for support funded by the pupil premium make good progress similar to that of other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are about one term behind other pupils in English, but similar in mathematics and the attainment gap is closing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good as a result of well-targeted support. These pupils are taught well by support staff who have been trained to teach the daily programme to improve reading.
- Achievement in lessons is consistently good across the school. Lessons are carefully matched to the different ability of pupils. The most-able pupils make extremely good progress, especially in mathematics, where they are expected to solve complex problems and use a range of strategies to find solutions.
- The high numbers of pupils who enter the school at different times settle very quickly and make progress similar to that of other pupils.
- Senior leaders regularly check the progress of each pupil. This information is used very effectively to identify those pupils who require additional support. As a result, the school provides excellent equality of opportunity and ensures pupils' good achievement in both English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school and there is some evidence of outstanding teaching. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. This is reflected in pupils' books and displays around the school.
- The school day begins with all pupils practising their basic skills in both English and mathematics. These sessions are very productive, with activities which are matched well to the different ability of pupils. The skills acquired during these sessions help the pupils to make rapid progress; for example, multiplication facts learnt during this time are then used to solve problems in the mathematics lesson later in the day.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Exciting learning opportunities are provided both inside and outside the classroom. The children learn about their world by digging in the garden, playing with water or undertaking learning with the teacher and other adults. They learn about numbers by playing a game where they have to add up the total scored. Children explained to the inspector how they put the biggest number in their head and count on from there.
- New initiatives to improve pupils' oracy have been introduced this year. These are having a

positive impact, especially enhancing pupils' writing skills. Teachers do, however, miss opportunities to further improve pupils' vocabulary.

- National data on pupils' performance in the reading tests do not reflect the standards currently seen across the school. Reading is taught well and pupils' reading journals show good progress in their responses to questions about the books they are reading.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. Pupils enter the school with writing skills well below those typical for their age and they quickly acquire a love of writing. This is further developed throughout the school by teachers using exciting themes and topics to stimulate high quality writing; for example, Year 6 pupils wrote about whether a second road bridge should be built across the River Mersey.
- Mathematics teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Pupils' books show that pupils have many opportunities to apply their basic skills in problem-solving situations. Pupils confidently discuss the strategies they use with each other and with adults. Pupils explained to the inspector how they felt very challenged in mathematics lessons.
- Support staff provide good support, in particular to those pupils with social and emotional difficulties, thus enabling these pupils to take a fuller part in lessons.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their exercise books, which show work which is very neat and well organised. Marking is of a high quality and rightly used by the local authority as an example of good practice. Teachers provide pupils with clear instructions on how they can improve their work and pupils fully appreciate the support they are given.
- Visitors to the school cannot fail to be impressed with the quality of displays in the main entrance. This is continued around the school and in classrooms where teachers use displays effectively to support learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers consistently remind pupils of the importance of accepting responsibility. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and even the younger pupils can work on their own or with a partner for sustained periods.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move about in an orderly manner and school is a calm place. The behaviour logs show that any misbehaviour is managed well and that incidents of bullying are rare.
- At breaks and lunchtimes the pupils are looked after very well. The adults are keen to engage with the children and ensure that they have an enjoyable time. In the canteen, teachers and other adults encourage the children to eat properly and behave well. The extensive grounds and activities enable this to be a very positive time for all pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There is a lot of evidence which shows how proactive the school is in ensuring that pupils are safe. Pupils and parents agree that school is a safe place. One Year 5 pupil explained to the inspector how a recent visitor had instructed them about the potential dangers of the railway lines. Members of the school council made a presentation on anti-smoking at a local authority event.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the Internet. The whole school took part in the National Safer Internet Day.
- Attendance is much improved and is now average. The proportion of persistent absentees has significantly reduced. The Pupil and Family Support Worker makes a significant contribution to the pastoral work of the school and in encouraging good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership has brought about a significant improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Seniors leaders have successfully raised the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics, but not to the detriment of other subjects.

Pupils at Dovecot enjoy a broad and exciting curriculum.

- Leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate and rigorous. All staff have a clear understanding of what is required to become an outstanding school and consequently the school has the capacity to continue to improve.
- Middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. The special educational needs coordinator observes support staff teaching individual programmes. All provide bespoke feedback about what needs to be done to improve.
- Staff are very positive about how training has improved the quality of their teaching and the opportunities they have to become leaders. They are beginning to share their best practice with each other and with other schools. This has not yet, however, brought about consistently outstanding teaching.
- The curriculum provides many exciting opportunities for pupils and they talk enthusiastically about their work. On the first day of the inspection, Year 6 went skiing, but not before they had continued with knitting their mufflers for the soldiers in the First World War. The whole school has also recently taken part in a project with local industry. Engineers worked with the older pupils, building bridges and investigating how to make materials stronger. This is one of many ways in which the school makes learning interesting and relevant.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. In Year 2, pupils have explored a wide range of probing questions such as 'What does being different mean?' and 'What makes us unique?' and this is typical of the work going on throughout the school and is evident in the special class books.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively. Teachers have been trained well by working alongside qualified coaches. Pupils have had more opportunities to compete against other schools and take part in a wide range of clubs after school. The school is also keen to provide new sporting opportunities to pupils, such as fencing and archery.
- The school received intensive support from the local authority following the last inspection. This is no longer necessary. The school now receives termly visits to support teaching, leadership and management.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. They have undertaken checks of the pupils' exercise books, lessons and the classrooms. Governors have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and how standards are improving. This has enabled them to make effective decisions with regard to pupil premium funding and generally manage the budget well. With regard to pay progression, the governors triangulate evidence against the Teachers' Standards to ensure that there are secure links between teachers' performance and any increases in salary. The governing body is well trained.

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	130296
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	442401

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Nurse
Headteacher	Mrs A Whittaker
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2012
Telephone number	0151 2594065
Fax number	0151 2594064
Email address	dovecot-ht@dovecot.liverpool.sch.uk

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