

Dovedale Infant School

Herondale Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 1JX

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils at the very early stages of learning English make progress at rates similar to their classmates.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team to provide for the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers use well a range of ways to support pupils learning.
- Behaviour is good both in class and around school and pupils enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are happy and feel safe in school because staff care for them well.
- The subjects on offer provide pupils with a range of memorable learning experiences and opportunities to successfully develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, specialist staff teach French and music.
- Pupils' attendance has improved to above the national average.
- The headteacher is clearly valued by parents, school leaders and staff.
- School leaders, including governors, have secured improvements in the achievement of all groups of pupils and in the quality of teaching and as a result the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of learning and teaching is not outstanding, because work provided does not always effectively challenge the most able pupils.
- There are times when adults do not check that pupils who are working independently fully understand what they are supposed to be doing.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils correct and edit their work.
- Targets set in the school's development plan and those set for teachers are not closely linked to pupils' progress or measurable enough to enable school leaders to quickly and more exactly assess the impact of their actions to improve standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons taught by teachers and a range of sessions taken by teaching assistants. The deputy headteacher joined an inspector to observe one lesson and two learning walks around the school took place.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at lunchtime. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of 66 responses to the on line questionnaire (Parent View) and a summary of the responses of parental questionnaires recently distributed by the school. They also considered 22 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is similar to that usually found.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage. Although there are up to 36 other languages spoken by pupils at the school, few are at the very early stages of learning English.
- The school shares a site and has close working relationships with the local Sure Start Centre and Dovedale Junior School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to further increase pupils' progress by making sure that teachers always:
 - plan activities that challenge the most able pupils to think hard so that they make as much progress as possible
 - check that pupils who are working independently know what they need to do
 - make sure that pupils correct and edit their work so that they can learn from their mistakes.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - targets set in the school improvement plan and those set for teachers are sharply focused on what pupils need to do to improve and have tight deadlines and clear ways of measuring success so that school leaders can check on and evaluate the impact of actions more precisely.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The experienced headteacher is highly committed to the school and enjoys the full support of parents, staff and governors. She has led the successful implementation of strategies to improve learning and teaching which confirms the school's capacity to improve still further.
- In addition to the monitoring of teaching and learning regularly undertaken by senior leaders, year group leaders are also fully involved in checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. They also make sure that transition between year groups and key stages are well managed by making sure that information about pupils is successfully shared.
- An effective training programme helps staff to improve the quality of their teaching. The recently introduced peer support system is valued by a staff confident to seek advice and support from each other.
- The progress that pupils' make is tracked against the targets set for them. School leaders make sure that highly focussed intervention activities are closely matched to the needs of pupils who need additional support; this helps them to achieve well.
- The school has a largely accurate view of how well it is doing. However, targets set within the school development plan and those set for teachers are not closely linked to pupils' progress or measurable enough to help school leaders evaluate the impact of their actions and raise standards even more quickly.
- The subjects on offer are made more exciting by the range of trips linked to topic themes. For example, pupils visit Beeston Castle to help make the 'Towers and Turrets' topic more memorable for them. One of the ways by which the school leaders make sure that parents are kept fully aware of their children's learning is through the publication of the vibrant and informative 'Dovetales' magazine.
- There is a strong commitment to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from teaching by specialist French and music teachers. Pupils at Dovedale Infant School are always encouraged to behave well and look after each other.
- The school successfully promotes exercise and healthy living. The Primary School Sport funding is used to provide additional activities taught by expert coaches, for example, tai chi. It also enables pupils to take part in sporting events with other infant schools. This encourages more pupils to want to participate in sports and is having a positive impact on their health and well-being. A specialist teacher employed at the school works with every class to help pupils develop their skills and benefit from the teacher's expertise and enthusiasm.
- The local authority responds appropriately to requests for support made by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the school, they know about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching because they receive regular reports from the headteacher and senior staff. Governors attend training so that they understand how to hold school leaders to account for standards at the school. They check that systems to manage staff performance are implemented and that teachers' pay reflects how effective they are. The governing body also checks how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact that it has on eligible pupils. They make sure that statutory requirements are met, pupils and staff are kept safe and the budget is wisely spent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show respect for each other and the adults around them. They say that they enjoy learning and coming to school.
- Pupils look smart in their uniform and the school environment is well looked after. Attractive displays of pupils' work are evident throughout school.
- The school council for this year has very recently been elected. However, they are very proud of the fact that their classmates voted them into their position. Last year the school council was instrumental in deciding what equipment would be purchased for use in the playground. The new council are confident that staff will listen to the ideas they collect from their classmates on how to make their school even better.
- Although pupils mostly have good attitudes towards their learning, there are times when activities do not challenge them appropriately or pupils working on their own are not quite sure of what they need to be

doing. As a result some pupils can occasionally become distracted from their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe because they know that adults will keep them safe in school. Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They agree that bullying is rare and effectively dealt with by adults if it does take place; this view is confirmed by school records.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire believe that their children are kept safe and the vast majority believe that their children are well looked after and happy.
- The school has worked well with parents and external agencies to improve attendance which is now above the national average and reflects how keen pupils are to come into school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching reading, writing and mathematics is good across the school. This is confirmed by the school's records of pupils' progress, work seen in pupils' books and lesson observations.
- Writing is taught well, pupils are encouraged to talk about the topic before they embark on their writing and often enjoy taking part in practical experiences that act as prompts for writing. For example Year 2 pupils made a 'brown betty' dessert and this helped them to sequence their instructions when they were writing the recipe during the literacy lesson which followed.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved because staff have introduced a range of interventions that meet the learning needs of specific groups of pupils. Teachers have also developed a new policy for calculation that enables pupils to build on their basic mathematical skills year on year. Practical equipment is well used in each lesson and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers question pupils to check their level of understanding and deepen learning. They also encourage pupils to assess their own learning by colouring in a smiley face or a sad face depending how well pupils believe they have done with their work.
- Most pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers usually explain what they expect pupils to achieve. Pupils are then encouraged to use the array of ways to support their learning displayed on the walls around them, to share their ideas and to learn from each other. Sometimes however, when pupils are working independently, they are not entirely sure about what to do and as a result learning slows. A quick word from an adult to remind them would help them to get on, complete their task and learn as much as possible.
- School leaders have put systems in place to improve the impact of teachers' marking. However, teachers do not always check that pupils complete their corrections and learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants usually work well together as a team to provide a good level of support for all pupils including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English. However, more could be put into place to challenge the most able pupils.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Following a good start in the early years, pupils are eager and ready to learn in Key Stage 1.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in matching letters to the sounds that they make is in-line with national levels. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they enjoyed reading and felt that there was a good range of books available to them in school.
- At the end of 2013 the overall attainment of pupils was significantly above other pupils nationally. At the end of 2014 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to the previous year confirming continued good progress across Key Stage 1.
- Last year the school started teaching mathematics to pupils in ability sets once each week. This was intended to make sure that the most able pupils were encouraged to aim high. School leaders feel that this was successful and are extending the practice to include literacy teaching this year.
- There are times however, in lessons that take place at other times of the week when the most able pupils are not so effectively challenged. For example, pupils who conclude their tasks early may complete work remaining unfinished from other lessons or play a number game rather than extending their knowledge and experience of the learning they are immediately engaged with.

- Good support from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make good progress. For example, the school works closely with the special educational needs worker based at the Children's Centre. This means that additional needs are often identified before children start school and appropriate support is in place from day one.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, has narrowed significantly this year. Eligible pupils now attain and achieve in line with their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 2. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well met as and when they arise. This demonstrates the school's commitment to making sure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed.

The early years provision

is good

- Having very recently started in the Reception Class, children comfortably leave their parents and settle on the carpet with their new friends to begin the school day. Strong links between home and school help children to adapt quickly to school routines.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that vary year on year. Most have skills and knowledge typical for their age though there are some children with skills that are significantly below those expected, particularly in the areas of communication, language and personal and social development.
- Adults skilfully question children to encourage them to think carefully and share their ideas, reminding them to listen to each other before starting to speak themselves. The strong emphasis on activities to promote social and communication skills supports children to make good progress from their relative starting points in all of the areas of learning. For example, children are asked to talk to their parents at home about topics that they then discuss at school. Children are then armed with a bank of ideas that they can excitedly call upon when developing their emergent writing skills.
- The early years environment is very well resourced both indoors and out. The outdoor area provides space and equipment to help children to develop their physical skills. Moreover, there are opportunities provided to encourage children to investigate and explore. For example, children use magnifying glasses to look hard at everything that surrounds them; they are able to notice and talk about new things every day.
- Effective communication with parents is a priority for staff. Parents are able to speak with staff at the start and end of each day so that everyone can share any relevant information. Staff deliver a number of workshops to share with parents how to best support their child's reading, writing and number work. The active partnership between home and school helps children to achieve well.
- 'Learning journeys' provide a record of the achievements made by individuals during the early years. Those used at Dovedale Infants are informative for parents and staff, building a comprehensive picture of progress and supporting staff to determine what each child needs to do next to move forward with their learning.
- The early years team is well led and managed and the staff work very well together, quickly getting to know the children and planning activities to match their interests. As a result most children reach a good level of development and are well prepared for the next stage in their 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	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.
		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.

School details

Unique reference number	104534
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	448255

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucretia Ray
Headteacher	Jane Noble
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2010
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