

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Devonshire Park Primary School

Temple Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 9JX

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Devonshire Park Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this caring and welcoming school. They know that each member of staff cares about them as individuals. Many pupils, and their parents and carers, spoke of the loving school family.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. It has fostered a supportive learning environment. The school enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed. Each specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) is an oasis of calm where pupils thrive. Pupils try their best. They achieve well from their differing starting points.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour. They are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff. They enjoy playtimes with their friends and the 'personal best' challenges that staff organise. Pupils relish the variety of opportunities that are on offer, such as attending the Zumba or judo clubs, as well as taking part in the parent-and-child art masterclass sessions.

Pupils make a positive and real contribution to the development of the school. For example, happiness heroes and staff work closely to help support pupils' mental health. The happiness heroes have introduced a pet tortoise that everyone loves. Pupils are proud of, in their words, the 'breathtaking' artwork that is displayed around school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Over the last couple of years, the school has been successful in bringing about improvements to many aspects of its provision. In recent years, the team has overhauled the curriculum, and it has now constructed it carefully and made it ambitious. The

curriculum is well designed and enriches pupils' learning across subjects. The key knowledge and skills that pupils should learn are set out in a logical order, so that teachers know what to deliver and when. Pupils excitedly shared their recent learning and felt enthused by the trips and visitors to school that have enriched their experiences. Many pupils make strong progress through the curriculum.

The school has systems in place to make sure that staff quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. The school has a good understanding of their barriers to learning. The plans in place support pupils with SEND well. In the main, they achieve well alongside their peers. Pupils in the specially resourced provision flourish because of the school's personalised and carefully considered approach.

The use of assessment is more established in the stronger areas of the curriculum. In some subjects, the school's systems for checking what pupils know and remember over time are less effective. This means that the school is unsure of what gaps pupils have in their long-term memory, and in turn, these gaps are not promptly addressed.

Early reading is at the heart of the curriculum. In the Nursery class, children learn songs and rhymes that prepare them well for learning how to read words in the Reception class. The school provides regular training and support to ensure that staff implement the phonics programme to a high standard. This sets pupils up for success as they begin the key stage 2 curriculum. However, this is not consistently replicated in terms of early writing. Some pupils are not supported well enough in relation to their pencil grip and letter formation. These weaknesses linger as they move through school. This hinders the quality of pupils' written communication.

Pupils make the most of the opportunities provided to practise reading and become competent readers. They value the wide range of literature that is available and the inspirational author visits that take place. Pupils are keen to try out books that these authors have written. Pupils are proud of their roles as 'reading ambassadors'. The school successfully promotes poetry. Pupils relish the opportunity to discuss and listen to poems. This helps them to become proficient poets in their own right.

From the youngest age, there are high expectations of children's behaviour. In the early years, children are able to sustain focus on playing, talking and learning. They share and care for each other. Adults successfully support children to develop their communication and language skills. Pupils are keen to attend school. They know why education is important. However, too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This means that these pupils develop gaps in their knowledge from missed learning opportunities.

The school prioritises the provision for pupils' wider personal development. There is a strong and meaningful emphasis on listening to pupils' views and what they care about. The school helps pupils to discuss and debate issues that are important to them. Pupils were keen to share about the debate academy and the national competitions that they have won for both mathematics, art and performance poetry.

Many staff speak very positively about the school. They praise the support that they receive for their professional development so that they can be more focused on pupils' learning. Governors use their experience and knowledge to support the school. Staff and governors are proud to be a part of this inclusive school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's expectations for pupils' early writing are not high enough. This means that some pupils have not mastered legible and accurate letter formation by the time that they leave Year 2. This hinders pupils writing fluency and communication as they go through the school. The school should ensure that there is an increased emphasis on pupils' writing skills from the start of their time in school.
- The checks that the school makes on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that some pupils move through the curriculum with ongoing gaps and misconceptions in their learning. The school should refine its assessment strategies to upskill staff so that pupils' learning is secure before introducing new concepts.
- Persistent absence rates are high. Too many pupils do not attend school often enough. This limits their achievement. The school should build on its emerging strategies to secure good attendance, so that pupils attend school regularly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	104991
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10347926
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Roberts
Headteacher	Ian Hunt
Website	www.devonshireparkprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has four specially resourced provision classes. One is designated for up to 10 pupils aged between five and seven with speech, language and communication needs. Not all of these pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan. The other three classes are designated for up to 10 pupils and together meet the needs of pupils aged four to 11 with social communication needs. The pupils in the social communication classes all have an EHC plan.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Helen Friend

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024