

INSPECTION REPORT

SUDLEY INFANT SCHOOL

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104580

Headteacher: Ms R Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr J White
17242

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th November 2000

Inspection number: 225159

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dundonald Road Liverpool
Postcode:	L17 0AE
Telephone number:	0151 727 1139
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Doctor Val Dearn
Date of previous inspection:	8 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in the Aigburth area of Liverpool. The roll has risen since the last inspection and is now 268 (133 boys, 135 girls). Pupils are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. About ten per cent are of minority ethnic heritage, mainly of Chinese background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A below average proportion of pupils (23) are on the special educational needs register, including one with a statement. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Pupils are admitted into the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

By the age of seven standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Teaching is good overall but especially in reading and numeracy. Pupils behave well and they have positive attitudes. Leadership and management are effective and teachers' professional development is a strong feature. Parents value the school's work highly. Good value for money is provided.

What the school does well

- Reading and numeracy are taught thoroughly and high standards are achieved.
- Pupils' personal development is good; they are enthusiastic, behave well and work hard.
- The headteacher, governors and key staff are committed to achieving high standards.

What could be improved

- Although standards in writing are above average by the age of seven, they are not as high as in reading and numeracy.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not systematic enough.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996 and was judged to be an effective school. Improvement has been good and the last inspection's key issues have been successfully addressed. Teaching styles have been continuously developed and the proportion of good or better teaching is higher. School development planning and financial planning are well linked and procedures for financial delegation are clear. Priorities for developing the curriculum are appropriate. The school's discipline policy is monitored well. The average class size has been reduced. High standards in national tests have been sustained.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D
Writing	B	B	B	A	

Mathematics	A	C	A	A	well below average E
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The test results indicate that, compared with the national average, standards are well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Pupils' results are well above average in comparison with similar schools. The unvalidated results for the year 2000 indicate that standards overall continue to be high. Although standards in writing are not as high as in reading and mathematics, they have improved over time.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop their independence well and relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is average.

Pupils work well together and also enjoy being responsible.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Ninety-three per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better and 29 per cent is very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Reading and numeracy are taught thoroughly and this helps pupils to achieve high standards. Most lessons are well structured and basic skills are taught well. Generally, the range of pupils' needs is met but expectations for their writing are too variable. Key features of the effective teaching are high expectations throughout the lesson, brisk pace when teaching the whole class, effective questioning and good use of precise subject terminology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for.
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Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively. The headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff know the pupils well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities and are supportive of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Generally good but there is room for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Overall resources are used well to improve standards of teaching and learning.

The headteacher, governors and key staff are committed to achieving high standards. The continuing development of teachers' knowledge and skills is a strong feature of the school's leadership.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and works closely with parents. • Behaviour is good and children are helped to become responsible. 	

The inspection's findings endorse parents' views. Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education. For example, they regularly help with their children's reading.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Reading and numeracy are taught thoroughly and high standards are achieved.

- 1 Pupils' results in the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds were well above the average for all and similar schools. Taking the four years 1996-1999 together, results show that standards have remained high. Pupils' performance in the unvalidated tests for the year 2000 indicates that standards are being maintained and this is confirmed by the inspection's findings. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- 2 High priority is given to the development of pupils' reading to help them become independent readers. They are heard to read regularly and take their books home each day so that parents can help them. Pupils talk confidently about how adults help them and parents' comments in their reading diaries are often supportive and evaluative. Pupils' skills and pleasure in reading are promoted from the time they first enter school when they are given their first book. Classrooms and communal areas are also well displayed with books and captions to capture pupils' interest. Fiction and non-fiction books are well organised.
- 3 Thorough teaching of basic skills in reading begins in the reception year. In a good lesson the teacher regularly re-inforced children's knowledge and understanding of letter sounds when they talked about "The Hairy Bear" story book. The children were also encouraged to join in reading the text and to spot familiar words. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher began with a very clear revision of a particular blend of letter sounds and gave pupils chance to share their knowledge of rhymes. Very brisk pace in the teaching quickly got pupils in the mood for learning. They then shared a story book and moved onto identifying a different blend. Pupils had to predict the rhyming words that were covered up by the teacher. They made good progress and also showed good understanding of the content and structure of the story. Teachers are well aware of the importance of pupils developing their knowledge of letter sounds and key words and they keep records of their progress.
- 4 The teaching at the start of literacy lessons is invariably well focused and has good pace. Questions are used well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils sharing a "big book" with the teacher were asked "why is a full stop used here?" and "what's special about this letter?" As a consequence pupils improved their understanding of basic punctuation and the importance of sentences. In the very effective teaching good questioning promotes pupils' knowledge of higher order skills such as inference, prediction and contextual understanding. A small group of Year 2 pupils studied and talked about a newspaper. When looking at the front page the teacher asked "why is the text laid out in this way?" This challenging question led to a good discussion and helped pupils to improve their understanding of how information can be presented in different ways. They responded very well and were enthusiastic. Plenaries at the end of literacy lessons are also often used well especially when the teacher and pupils discuss what has been learned.
- 5 Pupils heard to read during the inspection read well in relation to their prior attainment. In a lesson in Year 1 pupils accurately indicated a book's author, title and illustrator and most read much of the text confidently. Pupils often self-correct well. For example, pupils reading the newspaper managed to read "decline" and "atrocious" at the second attempt. High attaining pupils in Year 2 read fluently with very good understanding.

They predict what might happen in a story and confidently express their likes and dislikes. They read with expression and pay good attention to punctuation. Those of average prior attainment also read fluently and know how to find information in a non-fiction book. Low attaining pupils are enthusiastic and make good use of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and their confidence increases as they become older.

- 6 In the effective numeracy lessons objectives for learning are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lessons and then regularly re-inforced. In a very good lesson in Year 1 pupils working with coins were often reminded by the teacher of how much time they had to complete a task. This kept them on their toes and injected pace into the learning. At the end of a very successful lesson in Year 2 pupils were encouraged to talk about how much they had learned in counting forwards and backwards in a range of different numbers. The teacher then imaginatively deepened their understanding by involving the whole class in making a "human" number line. In the most effective mental work pupils are encouraged to explain their methods of calculation. One child explaining how he calculated $9+7$ quickly and accurately said "if you say 9 is 10 you have to take one away from 17".
- 7 Pupils achieve well in numeracy lessons. Pupils in Year 1 show good understanding of simple money operations and count accurately in twos including from a given point. They work confidently with numbers to 10 and in one lesson about half the class added accurately to 20. In Year 2 pupils count forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens and in a very good lesson soon grasped how to count in threes because of high expectations in the teaching. Year 2 pupils also identify odd and even numbers accurately. High attaining pupils add and subtract numbers with two digits. Numeracy lessons are usually well structured and work is set at different levels of challenge. Teachers use appropriate mathematical terminology with words such as "value", "amount" and "total" helping to extend pupils' vocabulary.
- 8 Invariably in literacy and numeracy lessons teachers' discipline is effective. In the good or better teaching discipline is calm and purposeful and tinged with humour.

Pupils' personal development is good; they are enthusiastic, behave well and work hard.

- 9 Pupils are expected to work hard and they respond accordingly. Expectations of good behaviour begin in the reception year and these youngest children are encouraged to listen attentively, co-operate together and to become more independent. For example, children learning about different homes worked well together when building a "house" and "hotel" using constructional equipment. When the expectations in the teaching are high pupils' response is particularly positive. Pupils discussing the newspaper were fired with enthusiasm. In a very good numeracy lesson Year 2 pupils worked very diligently with sustained concentration and as a result made discernible progress in their speed of counting and addition. Generally, pupils use equipment confidently and sensibly select and clear away resources. Classrooms are well organised to help them do this. A good range of opportunities promotes pupils' personal development. In each class all pupils have the chance to be "monitors" and responsibilities in the general life of the school include looking after new pupils. Pupils are involved in devising rules of conduct in classrooms. In discussion with inspectors, pupils indicated how happy they were in the school. They enjoyed their lessons and liked their teachers. They especially enjoyed taking on responsibilities and being praised for their efforts, for example, by the "person of the week" system. The headteacher and staff work hard to promote pupils' independence. A very good example of the strategies

used is the system which enables pupils to leave their classroom without waiting for the teachers' permission. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 use a card containing their photograph to indicate that they have left the room to go to the toilet or to fetch a book. This system works very well. Pupils behaved well throughout the inspection.

The headteacher, governors and key staff are committed to achieving high standards.

- 10 High overall standards in the national tests have been maintained over time despite changes in staffing and the rise in the school population. The headteacher was absent during the last academic year because of illness and the deputy head was acting headteacher. The governors' remit to sustain standards without instigating major changes during this time was highly appropriate. Evidence from the inspection and parents' comments indicate that the school was well managed during this period. A key commitment in the governors' expenditure has been to maintain a below average pupil-teacher ratio and the average class size has reduced since the last inspection. Strategies to maintain high standards include the teaching of high attaining pupils in small groups withdrawn from their classes. The headteacher has a clear vision for the continuous professional development of teachers. Teachers have good opportunities to develop and refresh their skills including time away from full-time class teaching. The headteacher also ensures that they do not always teach the same year group each year. The individual needs of teachers and the corporate needs of the school are identified and met well. Teachers who joined the school when they were newly qualified speak enthusiastically of how well they have been supported. The headteacher's observations of lessons resulted in the provision of guidance to staff on daily teaching routines and many of these features were apparent during the inspection. The headteacher also teaches regularly and gives feedback to teachers on her observations. Leadership of literacy and numeracy has been good and has contributed to the standards achieved.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although standards in writing are above average by the age of seven, they are not as high as in reading and numeracy.

- 11 In the national tests since 1996 pupils' results in writing have been above the average for all schools and have steadily improved. Results compare well with the average for similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils achieving better than the average National Curriculum level is not as high as it could be and this has the effect of reducing the school's average points score. Standards are not as high as in reading and mathematics. Standards observed during the inspection were average overall.
- 12 In two of the three literacy lessons observed in Year 2 pupils' writing was mainly of an average standard and they could have made better progress. For example, in the middle part of one of the lessons a group of pupils were encouraged to write freely and they did so with reasonable confidence. However, they did not take enough care with their handwriting and spelling and although they were asked to check their own work they were very uncertain how to do this. Also, they were not given enough guidance on how to make best use of the teaching of full stops and capital letters at the beginning of the lesson. In another lesson a lack of stimulus and support for pupils' writing in addition to low expectations resulted in unsatisfactory learning.
- 13 The inspection's scrutiny of a representative sample of Year 2 pupils' work and writing displayed in classrooms and around the school shows that pupils have satisfactory opportunities to write independently and with teachers' help. For example, all classes

have “writing areas” and pupils can also write as part of role-play activities. The range of pupils’ writing includes poems, simple narratives, and descriptive and reportive writing. Pupils have also published their writing in the “Sudley News”. Pupils write in their “own writing book” but there is little evidence of systematic progress in planning and reviewing their writing. High attainers use punctuation well, including capital letters, full stops and occasional speech and question marks. Their sentences are generally logically sequenced. Despite some interesting phrases, for example, “got up to mischief” their use and range of vocabulary are less interesting than might be expected. Their spelling of common words is generally accurate. Standards of handwriting should be better particularly for pupils of average ability. Letters are often not formed clearly enough. High attaining pupils’ handwriting is legible but not joined. The marking of pupils’ work is not thorough enough and does not include targets to help them improve. The school has recognised the need to raise standards in writing and has begun to especially focus on pupils who show potential for achieving above the average National Curriculum level. A useful anthology of assessed writing helps teachers in their awareness of National Curriculum levels.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not systematic enough.

- 14 A number of strategies are used to monitor the school’s work. The headteacher, deputy head, and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have observed lessons and scrutinised samples of pupils’ work. Informal feedback from the observations is given to the teachers. The observations have often been followed by some action being taken. For example, the literacy co-ordinator’s observations resulted in more focus being given to guided reading. The headteacher regularly hears pupils read. The school development plan usefully indicates what procedures are used for monitoring but it does not include specific targets for achieving this or prioritise its objectives. For example, although the school is concerned to raise standards in writing, no clear timetable is outlined for monitoring and evaluating what progress is made. Also, the current development plan includes no reference to the outcomes of previous monitoring so it is difficult to see how the plan’s targets have built on any strengths and weaknesses that were identified. A more clearly focused development plan with more precise and fewer targets would help the school to shape a more rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 15 The governors and headteacher should:
- (1) Improve standards in writing by:
 - setting targets for individual pupils’ progress;
 - raising expectations of pupils’ handwriting;
 - helping pupils to acquire a wider range of vocabulary;
 - ensuring that marking, where appropriate, helps pupils to improve.(Paragraphs: 11-13)
 - (2) Monitor teaching and learning more systematically and ensure that outcomes influence the school’s planning. (Paragraph: 14)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	28.6	35.7	28.6	7.1	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	268
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	35	38	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	34	34
	Girls	37	37	38
	Total	70	71	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (97)	97 (97)	99 (90)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	35	35
	Girls	37	38	38
	Total	71	73	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (95)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	7
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	11
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	-	-
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.75
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	435,062
Total expenditure	432,841
Expenditure per pupil	1,698
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,752
Balance carried forward to next year	48,973

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	261
Number of questionnaires returned	92

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	26	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	24	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	40	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	38	11	0	4
The teaching is good.	77	18	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	48	7	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	22	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	61	33	3	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	23	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	25	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	36	15	2	13