



# Devonshire Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103943  
**Local Authority** Sandwell  
**Inspection number** 286815  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Martin Cole

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Auckland Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Smethwick
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7		B67 7AT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5581652
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	354	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 558 8335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mike Ustainowski
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Pamela Rosamond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 3–7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21–22 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 286815
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large infant school is situated in an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. Pupils start at the school with attainment that is well below average. The great majority of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and about 70% of pupils have English as an additional language. Around 30% of pupils starting at the school are at an early stage of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The many strengths of the school are the result of the good leadership and management. Through the very good leadership of the headteacher the strong team of staff are united in their commitment and determination to meet the pupils' many needs. Senior staff and governors keep a close check on the school's performance. As a result they know their school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. By planning and working very closely together, the staff achieve a consistently effective approach to teaching and caring for the pupils. Excellent links with parents, who have high regard for the school, are giving very good support to pupils. The school is a very harmonious community in which adults and children of very varied backgrounds make caring and respectful relationships that provide an excellent basis for pupils' learning.

The quality of the care, support and guidance of pupils is outstanding. It helps them to make exceptional progress in developing very positive attitudes to school, to learning, to each other and to the adults who help them. Pupils grow enormously in self-confidence, feel very happy and safe at school and find a great deal of enjoyment in their time there. They are very keen to learn, try hard and behave extremely well. Pupils' growing confidence and responsible attitudes are preparing them well for their future education and adult lives. Pupils' outstanding personal development and feeling of well-being mean that they are able to take full advantage of the good teaching and curriculum provided for them and thus achieve well. A good, stimulating and imaginative curriculum for Foundation Stage pupils helps them to achieve well and get off to a good start. From a very low starting point on entering school, pupils make good progress to reach average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. There is good progress in writing, too, but overall standards here are a little below average, mainly because relatively few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.

Amongst many strengths of the teaching is teachers' very sensitive and skilful management of the pupils. They make sure lessons are interesting and fun and they give plenty of encouragement and help. Pupils are given work well matched to their abilities and needs. The teaching is both challenging and very supportive but does not always enable pupils to use their initiative and imagination in their work. Good extra help is given to pupils who find learning difficult and there are extra challenges for those finding it more easy. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are also given successful extra support. A particular strength of the curriculum is the very good range of optional activities at lunchtime and after-school, including many good opportunities for physical exercise. The curriculum gives overall good support to pupils' personal and social skills, but opportunities for pupils to take initiatives in school life are not as well promoted.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Enable more pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment in writing.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, show imagination and take initiatives in their work and in the life of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well because of the thorough teaching and support they receive and because of their excellent attitudes and behaviour. Although still below average, the children's attainment when they end the Reception Year is significantly higher than when they start school. This reflects the good progress they make right from the start of their education. With further good progress in Years 1 and 2, pupils' attainment is broadly similar to the national average in reading and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Progress is especially good in mathematics. Good progress is made in writing, for the majority of pupils. However, in 2006, few pupils reached the higher level of attainment in writing recognised nationally as achievable at their age. The school has already begun to provide extra support to help more pupils reach this higher standard.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils love their school and are very interested in their lessons and this contributes greatly to their good achievement. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It leads to extremely good behaviour and respect for each others' feelings, opinions and beliefs. All pupils work and play together in harmony. The school's ethnic diversity is celebrated very well, for example through major festivals, and helps pupils to develop a good understanding of the society in which they live. Pupils are very aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and they take very good advantage of healthy eating and exercise opportunities. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community by taking part in fund raising events and by caring for their local environment. Good progress in literacy and numeracy and the development of enterprise awareness means that pupils are well prepared for their economic well-being. However, decision-making skills do not develop quite so well as other skills. Rigorous procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance have led to much improved attendance levels in recent years.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Close staff teamwork, together with effective checks and strong support by senior staff, result in practice that is of consistently good quality. The deployment of both teachers and the many classroom assistants is very effectively organised. The school's many classroom assistants give much effective extra help to pupils who need it. Teachers plan lessons closely together in year-group teams to take full advantage of the expertise of each one. By sharing ideas and resources, teachers ensure that lessons capture pupils' interest and guide them successfully towards well defined targets for

their learning. Regular, systematic assessments of pupils' progress are well used to match the tasks and support given to pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils in need of extra help or extra challenges are carefully identified and thorough additional support is given. Pupils' very co-operative response to adult direction is a great support to their learning. However, lessons give fewer opportunities than they might for pupils to show imagination or initiative in work they do by themselves.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

In both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, a good curriculum enables the pupils to make good progress. Work in subjects and programmes of extra support are well planned to meet the wide range of pupils' needs, especially in language. Pupils at early stages of learning English receive specific, targeted assistance and so make good progress. Effective links in learning across different subjects allow pupils to apply and further develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Progress in ICT skills is much helped by the keenly attended lunchtime computer club operating three times each week. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education remains a significant strength. The school has increased opportunities for pupils to practise problem-solving but opportunities for pupils to be creative and try out their own ideas are a little limited. There is challenge and encouragement for pupils identified with specific gifts and talents through work in lessons and from expert guidance in school clubs. A wide range of clubs and educational visits greatly enlivens learning and successfully promotes enjoyment and healthy lifestyles.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent relationships between staff and pupils underpin the outstanding care, support and guidance given to pupils. Staff pay rigorous attention to making sure pupils are safe, well looked after and feel secure. Procedures for child protection and risk assessment are very thorough. Strong links with outside agencies help staff to provide very good support for vulnerable pupils. High quality links with parents enable them to be very effective partners in their children's education. This plays a key part in promoting pupils' will to succeed and their good progress, regardless of their backgrounds and starting points. Strong personal and academic guidance result in most pupils reaching the expected standards in English and mathematics, despite many beginning school at an educational disadvantage. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is very closely monitored. Teachers' thorough, helpful marking and the setting of targets for pupils enable them to understand what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management are reflected in the breadth of good quality in the work of the school. The encouragement of strong staff teamwork, very positive pupil attitudes and very good parental support for learning have created a very constructive framework in which pupils can thrive both academically and personally. Careful checks on the school's performance have led to a focus on bringing academic achievement up to the same high standard as the personal development by, for example, raising achievement in writing. The headteacher and senior staff work closely together in meticulous planning of every aspect of school life. As a result there has been good improvement since the previous inspection and there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Devonshire Infant School is a very well organised school. Very good use is made of sources of expertise within a wide range of partner schools and organizations to support school improvement. Governors are supportive, keep a good watch over the school and help to ensure all statutory requirements are met.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The inspectors who visited your school recently would like to thank all of you for your friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting and talking to you.

We were pleased when you told us how much you enjoy school. We could see that you have a lot of fun. It is a very happy school. We also think your behaviour is excellent and that you get on very well with each other and with the adults. We saw that your teachers give you good lessons and lots of help and encouragement. They plan interesting work for you to do. This is helping you to make good progress in your work.

All the adults look after you really well and do their very best to make sure you are happy at school. You have lots of things you can choose to do after lessons, like games and the computer club.

We were glad to see that you know what you need to do to stay healthy. We were pleased to find that many of you are trying to eat healthily and that you join in physical exercise keenly.

We have said that your school is giving you a good education. The adults in charge of it are doing a good job and they are trying hard to make the school still better. We have suggested some ways that the school could give you still more help:

- by giving you more help to do the best writing you possibly can
- by giving you more opportunities to have your own ideas and use your imagination in your lessons and in other things you do at school.

We wish you all the best for the future.