



Dovecot Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130296
Local Authority Liverpool
Inspection number 293619
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Grant Road
School category	Community		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside L14 0LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 2594065
Number on roll (school)	196	Fax number	0151 2594064
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Christine Nurse
		Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Jones
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	5–6 March 2007	293619

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with a Nursery. It serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are of a White British background and a few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the number entitled to a free school meal. Two pupils are in the care of the local authority and they had been in the school for two weeks. The school has Healthy Schools, Investors in People status, Artsmark Gold, Activemark and the Basic Skills awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges itself as good and it gives good value for money. This shows a significant improvement from the picture at previous inspections. In particular, there are improvements to standards, progress and the quality of teaching. The school recognises that there are still areas that require improvement because the quality of self-evaluation is good. As a result, the capacity to improve further is strong.

Pupils' personal development is good. This is because there is a rich curriculum on offer and the care of pupils is effective. Pupils clearly enjoy school and have a good understanding of the benefits of leading healthy and safe lifestyles. Their awareness, knowledge and understanding of these are raised in science, personal and social education, and through the various physical activities on offer, such as Tai Chi. Attendance remains below average and repeated absence adversely affects the progress of a small number of pupils. Nevertheless, this is a much improving picture because the school is doing everything possible to encourage all pupils to attend regularly, particularly through the effective work of the learning mentor. Pupils contribute to the smooth day-to-day running of the school by taking on responsibilities and through the work of the school council. Pupils on the council are keen to participate and their views are listened to and acted upon. The impact of their work goes beyond the school, for instance, through their charitable donations.

Pupils achieve well in their time at the school and barriers to learning are effectively lowered because of the good teaching and the rigorous guidance they receive, particularly in Years 4 to 6. Good links with outside agencies also provide good support for staff and pupils. Nevertheless, results in national tests are often below average because of the high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and make good progress. This is important because many pupils come to the school with poor basic skills and standards are well below those found typically. Children enter Year 1 with standards that are below expectations.

By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are below average. Progress is good, but uneven, with slower gains in Years 2 and 3. Writing results are not as good as reading, mainly because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write in subjects other than literacy. Moreover, higher attaining pupils do less well in mathematics. Test results in 2006 showed that the overall progress made by pupils from Years 2 to 6 was in the top 25% of schools nationally and in the top 10% in science. The good progress and strong attitudes to school and learning mean that the vast majority of pupils are well prepared for future schooling and later life.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well: she has a good knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and how the school can meet them. Governance is good and the governing body is well informed about the school's work and achievements. Careful and detailed evaluation ensures improvement planning is focused on the right priorities, but the measures of success are not detailed or clear

enough. As a result, not all staff are fully aware of the part they need to play to improve standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics.
- Improve attendance rates.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than literacy.
- Sharpen improvement planning, so that signs of success for all classes are measurable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school was very cautious in judging this aspect as satisfactory. Inspectors judge it to be good because standards have improved and pupils' make good progress. Children enter the school with poor skills and standards well below expectations. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because well-organised activities and lively teaching develop good learning habits. Standards at the end of Reception are still below expectations. Standards at the end of Year 2 fluctuate, but are often below average. Nevertheless, in 2005, pupils reached average standards. Higher attaining pupils do less well in mathematics. Girls do better than boys. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is also below average in English and mathematics but compared to pupils in similar schools, they achieve well. Progress is good overall but uneven: gains are slower in Years 2 and 3. Science is particularly strong and Year 6 standards are average. Standards in writing are not as good as other areas and the school has correctly identified this as an area for development. The effective support provided for the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, allied to rigorous monitoring of their progress, enables them to make good progress. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school and appreciate the support and help they are given. Moral and social development is particularly strong. As a result, they move safely around the school building, play sensibly in the playground and are polite and helpful to visitors. A few pupils display challenging and inappropriate behaviour that is managed well by the staff. Pupils sensitively consider the feelings of others as well as their own. Good cultural awareness is developed through multicultural displays, strong links with a school in Kenya and a range of visitors. Pupils demonstrate good young citizenship through the election and work of the school council. Typical activities include raising and allocating funds to support both local and global charities and the 'buddying' of younger pupils by older ones. This aids transition and encourages a caring attitude towards new starters to

the school. Pupils eat healthily and enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to take regular exercise. Good academic progress and strong attitudes to school and work mean that the vast majority of pupils look forward to their future schooling and later life with confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching is characterised by good classroom management. Pupils are well directed and know what they have to do and how to do it. As a result, behaviour is good in most lessons, but in some, a minority cause low level problems that waste other pupils' time. Learning is good because the tasks and activities set for pupils are well related to how each individual learns best. Teachers and teaching assistants use this information well to give effective support which is especially significant in enabling those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. This support was well expressed by one pupil who said, 'we get a lot of encouragement from our teachers'. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well both as a tool for teaching via interactive white boards and for individual research. The marking of pupils' work is mostly good. Nevertheless, inconsistent practice slows progress, as in Year 2. At its best, it is regular, thorough and contains clear points for improvement for each pupil to follow. Homework is set regularly and is enabling pupils to develop skills as independent learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich curriculum. Pupils' varied learning needs are met through an effective emphasis on developing basic academic skills, a significant emphasis on the arts and linking subjects together. This approach makes lessons enjoyable for the pupils and they are increasingly becoming independent learners. Reading, numeracy and ICT are adequately used and developed in other subjects, but writing is much less so used and is an area for further development which the school is beginning to address. This work is showing some early success in Years 5 and 6. Pupils benefit from a good range of after school clubs, the work of external providers, visits and visitors. These all effectively enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning and good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils and their families well. The learning mentor is effective and makes a significant contribution to the development of relationships with parents and pupils. This good work promotes improved attendance and behaviour and, through effective work with the school council, pupils have more say in whole-school decision-making.

There are robust procedures and practices for all aspects of child protection and health and safety. Parents and pupils are satisfied that the school is a secure and safe place to be. Arrangements for children starting in Reception are good and result in children settling quickly. Pupils with extra learning needs are well supported and effective communication between staff, parents and external agencies ensures these pupils receive appropriate support. Good procedures monitor and track pupils' achievements. These are effective in identifying the learning needs of individual pupils and in informing teachers' planning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection due to the strong and clear leadership of the headteacher who is committed to giving every pupil the opportunity to succeed. Good, and mostly accurate, self-evaluation is at the heart of this improvement. Teaching and learning are well monitored as is the progress made by pupils. This enables the school to have a good picture of its progress and to institute changes that improve provision. As a result, standards have improved and pupils make good progress. Behaviour has also improved due to the behaviour policies that have been put into place. Exclusions are used appropriately to ensure that the learning of the majority of pupils is not adversely affected. The school improvement plan, although having a good focus on appropriate issues, is not rigorous enough in measuring the outcomes and linking these to each year group. The staff work well together and the headteacher enjoys the support of a hardworking leadership team. The governors are supportive of the headteacher and are well informed. They each have links with particular areas of the school and actively work in these. Financial arrangements are secure.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
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

Mr Allison and I are most grateful for the kindness, cooperation and welcome received when we visited your good school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, hearing your views about the school and seeing you work hard in lessons. I will share with you in this letter the main judgements about your school.

What we really liked about your school:

- the good progress made by children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the ones learning English as an additional language
- your good attitudes, behaviour and the relationships you develop
- the way you learn to play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy
- the important contribution that you make to the running of the school and the way that you help the needy through donations to charity
- the good teaching and the skilful way you progress in art
- the strong leadership and management of the headteacher.

There are some improvements needed and these will be best achieved if all the children can give their full support to them. You need to improve your writing and mathematics. You must always do your best work and follow the advice and guidance given to you by your teachers. I have asked your teachers to ensure that you have many more opportunities to write in all your subjects. I have also asked your teachers to be clearer in the school improvement plan about how successful they want you to be in all the classes.

Finally, a small number of you have a lot of time away from school and so do not make the progress you should. We have asked your teachers to improve this situation further. You can be a great help by encouraging your parents always to send you to school unless you are too ill to attend.

Good luck for the future.