

Devonshire Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102975
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	308181
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	447
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Eley
Headteacher	Mr Martin Kearsey
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Devonshire Avenue Sutton SM2 5JL
Telephone number	020 8643 1174
Fax number	020 8643 5968

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a two-form entry primary school in Sutton, with an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including Nursery and Reception classes. Approximately half of the pupils are of White British heritage and half from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Overall, around one in eight pupils are at early stages of learning English, and in the current Nursery classes this ratio stands at around one in three. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is a little above average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, mostly related to language and communication.

There is a breakfast club and after-school club on the school site, managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Devonshire Primary School describes itself as 'a caring community enthusiastic for everyone's success'. This accurately sums up this satisfactory and improving school. It cares well for its pupils and is becoming increasingly effective at promoting their academic success. Pupils enjoy their learning and make good gains in their personal and social development. Alongside this, they behave well and work hard. The school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them, and an increasing proportion are now making good progress. As a result, standards at the end of Year 2 have risen and are now average, as are standards at the end of Year 6.

The energy and enthusiasm of the new headteacher and deputy, and the hard work of staff, have won the respect of parents, who comment very positively on the school's 'happy and open atmosphere', 'many improvements' and 'can-do spirit'. Leaders and managers have rightly prioritised improvements to ensure that most pupils make good progress. Thorough tracking now shows how well individual pupils and groups of pupils are progressing. Staff set challenging targets for pupils to achieve, which are increasingly being met. However, teachers' everyday planning, target setting, and assessment of learning are not yet in a consistent format which enables day-to-day progress in all subjects to be easily identified and built upon. This means that sometimes opportunities are missed to guide and support pupils to make good progress in lessons. Staff are encouraged to make links between pupils' learning in different subjects, but this is not yet systematic enough to be consistently successful. On occasions, their learning about different subjects and their development of basic skills both slow as a result. The impact of teaching and the curriculum is therefore satisfactory. The school has rightly planned to improve both teaching and the curriculum by extending opportunities for staff who have particular responsibilities to monitor lessons and promote existing good practice. The school's good leadership and management and the shared commitment of governors, staff and parents mean that identified improvements are well within reach, and confirm the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children entering the Nursery have a range of skills and experiences. Their skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy, are generally a little below those expected for their age. For some, this is their first experience of education outside of the home, and for others it is their first experience of an English-speaking environment. Staff have very good links with parents and carers, and consequently children settle happily into the routines of the EYFS. They enjoy their time in the stimulating environment and respond well to the opportunities to learn through play and through more formal activities led by adults. Exciting role-play areas are one way that speaking and listening skills are well encouraged. This helps children who are new to learning English. A recent focus of work in Reception has been developing the children's understanding of letters and sounds. The impact can be seen in the higher proportion of children who are now reaching the expected milestones. Children are well cared for and develop good relationships with adults and with other children. Since the last inspection, the outdoor space available to children in the Reception classes has been improved, but staff have rightly identified a need to make the most of these outdoor areas. For example, planning for learning outdoors does not yet mirror the careful planning of the indoor curriculum. Despite being physically

distant from each other, the staff in the Nursery and Reception classes work well together to share information and approaches. This creates a clear and effective EYFS which enables children to make consistently good progress, so that most reach expectations for their age by the time they join Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the proportion of good or better teaching and learning by ensuring a sharper focus on assessing and enhancing pupils' day-to-day progress.
- Ensure consistent opportunities for pupils to develop skills across the curriculum.
- Extend opportunities for middle managers to monitor and observe teaching in their areas.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen to become average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also average and most pupils make expected progress overall. The school is aware that its next steps are to ensure that most pupils make good progress. Progress in English and mathematics has been a major focus of its recent work. This has already met with some success. For example, last year nearly all pupils in Year 6 made at least expected progress, and a growing proportion made good progress, including those who were working at higher levels. The school is now rightly extending its work to enhance progress in science, information and communication technology, and other subjects.

Staff pay very close attention to ensuring that there are no material differences between the achievement of different groups, and effective systems are in place to support pupils at risk of underachieving. One successful innovation has been to provide focused teaching or programmes for pupils who have similar needs - for example, in writing, in comprehension, or because they are at earlier stages of learning English as an additional language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good gains in their personal well-being and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They enjoy their time in school and settle well to their work, and behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and are very aware that they should go to an adult if they need help. They appreciate differences and similarities between people, and develop an understanding that 'everyone is special'. Pupils contribute well to the school community, for example by looking after younger pupils or helping at lunchtimes. One councillor explained the role of the conscientious school council in these terms: 'We like to think of things to make the school better. We ask our class and then discuss it at meetings.' They are proud of their work and their contributions to school life. Such responsibilities help pupils develop personal skills which, along with their basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives, but they are not yet given consistent responsibility for their own learning. Pupils have a good understanding of being healthy and what this means. They take good advantage of the many opportunities they are given to develop their physical fitness, and are becoming increasingly aware of food and its link to healthy lifestyles. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. This

is the result of the school's firmer stance on the importance of full attendance becoming more widely appreciated.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils respond well to praise and encouragement, and relationships are very good. Teachers use a good range of resources and approaches to interest pupils. This means that pupils work hard and enjoy lessons. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to achieve in lessons, and explain this well to pupils. Small group teaching and additional support is generally used well to enhance pupils' progress and learning. For example, the support for higher-attaining pupils is frequently good. Although some good teaching was observed during the inspection, the impact of teaching is satisfactory overall. This is because not all teaching is well enough linked to the progress that pupils need to make. Some planning is detailed and well structured. However, some does not include evidence of how the learning will be supported or progress monitored. This means that, on occasions, there is a lack of challenge in work set. Also, opportunities are missed to provide good feedback to pupils through assessment in lessons and marking. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is varied, and special days and themes add interest to pupils' learning. For example, a celebration day provides them with opportunities to experience other cultures and religions. The school provides a wide range of school clubs and out-of-school activities, and has been selected to be one of six flagship schools in the London area for a national project to develop food awareness. School trips link well to, and extend, pupils' learning. Peripatetic music teachers offer a variety of instrumental tuition. French is available as a school club activity and will be taught in the school next year. The school has successfully addressed some weaker areas of the curriculum, including recent foci on writing and investigations in science. Some themes are used well to link learning across different subjects. For example, a trip to the British Museum linked pupils' literacy skills well to their historical understanding about Egypt. However, there is more to be done to ensure that such approaches are consistent and develop pupils' basic skills alongside their skills in specific subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good systems to care for and support pupils. Child protection arrangements, recruitment and selection procedures are extremely thorough, and effective systems are in place to support pupils at risk of underachieving. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well established and monitored, and the school makes very good use of its extensive links with outside agencies. Systems for guidance are good in regard to behaviour and attitudes. Guidance on how pupils can improve is let down by inconsistent approaches to using assessment and providing feedback in lessons. Parents are regularly informed about how well their child is doing in school, but opportunities to share levels and target levels with them are missed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy have been in post for just over a year. In this time they have provided enthusiastic and focused leadership which is clearly aimed at improving the school's performance against national standards. Monitoring systems are in place, allowing the senior leaders to have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Detailed information from test results, parents' views, and information from different subject areas, together form a clear picture of the school's performance and that of individual pupils. This enables leaders to set and achieve some challenging targets for improvement. Together with staff and governors they carry shared improvement plans forward and keep parents fully informed and involved. As a result, parents are very positive and have great confidence in the changes being made. The large senior team shares a commitment to improvement and carry out its roles and responsibilities well in the time available. The school has rightly planned to extend opportunities for these staff to be more involved in monitoring and accounting for standards and progress in their subjects, although these are not yet fully in place. Governors contribute a good deal to the school. They celebrate its emerging strengths and probe its weaknesses well. Pupils have a good understanding of the school and its place in the local and wider communities. As a result, community cohesion, and pupils' understanding of their social responsibilities, are good.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Devonshire Primary School, Sutton, SM2 5JL

Thank you so much for helping us with the inspection of your school. We were really interested to meet so many of you and to hear all about your school. We agree with the staff and governors at your school that the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

As you know, your school motto is 'a caring community enthusiastic for everyone's success'. We think that this sums up the school really well. The adults at Devonshire take good care of you. As a result, you develop into mature young people ready to move on to your secondary schools. Nearly all of you make the progress you should, but your teachers want you all to make good or excellent progress. They are working hard on this, and have already made a difference to the progress you make in English and mathematics. They keep a lot of information about you to check that you are doing well. We have asked them to make the most of opportunities in lessons to check if you are taking the next steps in your learning and to see how they can help you. We have also asked them to ensure that they make good links between your learning in different subjects. They are planning to make sure that teachers who lead particular areas can share their best ideas and advice through spending more time in other teachers' classrooms. This is a good idea, so look forward to having different visitors in your lessons.

We enjoyed seeing how well your building work was progressing as we looked at all the photographs on your website. We are sure you are looking forward to your new classrooms just as much as your teachers are, and we know you will enjoy learning in them.

Yours faithfully

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector