

# Devonshire Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103942
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	308465
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	353
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	V Blount
<b>Headteacher</b>	Harbaksh Phull
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 April 2005
<b>School address</b>	Auckland Road Smethwick B67 7AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01215 581654
<b>Fax number</b>	01215 555135

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Although in this larger than average school the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities is broadly average, the number of those with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Thirteen different nationalities are represented within the school, with the largest proportion, approximately one half, being of Asian or Asian British origin. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is well above average. Following two years of unsettled leadership, the current headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

The school has Active Mark gold and Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education and there are clear indications that it can improve further. Although only recently appointed, the headteacher has identified quickly what is necessary to improve this school; and the draft school action plan provides a useful tool for doing so. The headteacher knows that monitoring and evaluation has been insufficiently rigorous in the past, and consequently staff do not have an accurate picture of the quality of school provision. Teaching has not been evaluated in terms of its effect on learning, and governors and staff with leadership responsibilities are not well enough involved in ensuring that all pupils progress as well as they should. Even so, achievement overall is satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils are attaining broadly average standards in mathematics and science, but in English, standards are below average and writing standards are not high enough. Pupils' limited spoken language skills slow down their progress in this subject, and the leadership has identified the need to extend opportunities for speaking and listening. Below average literacy skills mean that, despite good personal development and satisfactory numeracy skills, pupils are only satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

A strength of the school is the good pastoral care, guidance and support available for pupils. The outcome of this can be seen in pupils' positive attitudes towards school. 'We love school and there is nothing we would change,' said one group of pupils. They behave well, are polite, enjoy learning and work well together. They know how to keep healthy and make sensible eating choices at lunchtimes. Many are keen to take part in the extensive range of sporting activities that is provided. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They take pleasure in helping others, eagerly taking responsibility, for example, as playground friends, school councillors or taking part in fundraising activities.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the very good range of clubs, the visits they make, and of the many visitors who come into school. Opportunities for music, art, drama and sport are very good and many pupils comment on how much they enjoy these subjects. The majority of parents are also appreciative of these opportunities, and one parent summoned up the views of many by saying, 'My child enjoys school, particularly the performances, which are brilliant.' However, this creativity is not as evident in English, mathematics and science lessons. Assessment information is not used well enough to plan activities that match pupils' learning needs, in order to accelerate their progress to a better than satisfactory rate. All teachers make sure pupils are clear about the intended learning of the lesson. There is some good practice in writing, in providing pupils with clear guidance about how to achieve success in their work. However, pupils are not consistently aware of how to attain higher standards, and the setting of learning targets is just beginning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are not fluent in English make satisfactory progress and are carefully supported by teaching assistants. However, the way that they are withdrawn from the main classroom during literacy lessons is inappropriate. Planned work does not link closely enough to that which is being taught to the majority of pupils, and sometimes pupils miss valuable parts of the lesson because of this withdrawal strategy.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly in writing, by maximizing speaking and listening opportunities.

- Use assessment information effectively so that activities match pupils' needs and pupils are provided with clear guidance about how to attain higher standards.
- Develop a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation that ensures that all with leadership responsibilities make a greater contribution to improving pupils' progress.
- Ensure pupils with learning difficulties and those who are not fluent in speaking English have access to all parts of English lessons.

A small proportion of 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**

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 3 is broadly average. However, the skills of the current Year 6 pupils were below average when they first started at this school. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in mathematics and science. In English, however, standards are below average, and notably so in writing. Pupils' limited spoken language skills are negatively affecting their progress in this subject. Extending opportunities for speaking and listening is identified as a key priority in raising standards in English.

Although there is extensive assessment information available, it is not analysed and used carefully enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. For example, over the last two years, pupils of Pakistani origin have not achieved as well as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who are not fluent in speaking English make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy, cheerful and polite and have good relationships with adults in school. Behaviour is good and pupils want to learn. They feel safe, saying that any issues of bullying are managed effectively, leading to a harmonious school where everyone mixes well. As one pupil typically said, 'This is a happy school where we all get on well together.' Even so, attendance is below the national average. Although the majority of pupils attend regularly, some pupils' extended holidays abroad disrupt their education.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and of taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe, understanding the dangers of drugs and smoking. Fundraising activities, for example, Children In Need, demonstrate how pupils are willing to help others less fortunate than themselves. The school council provides a good forum for pupils to be involved in improvement. Council members speak proudly about how they are purchasing equipment to improve playtime facilities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Throughout the school, good relationships mean that pupils want to learn and are eager to ask and answer questions. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to demonstrate new ideas. Pupils consistently have information about what they are expected to learn in lessons, and, in

writing, very clear advice is given about how to achieve this learning. In some classrooms, the strategy of 'talk partners' contributes well to extending pupils' language skills.

The use of assessment information is improving but it does not consistently ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are not fluent in English make mainly satisfactory progress, the practice of withdrawing them during literacy lessons to work with teaching assistants inhibits their progress. This is because pupils are often withdrawn at badly chosen times, for example, missing the end of a lesson when the review of learning is taking place.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The extensive range of enrichment activities very successfully broadens pupils' experiences and promotes their enjoyment of school. Before and after school clubs, field trips, educational visits and visitors further fuel pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Music, art and sport are notable strengths, and the work that has been done with artists in residence is reflected well in the stimulating learning environment. Information and communication technology is used imaginatively as a resource, with equipment such as cameras and interactive whiteboards used effectively in lessons. Although a creative approach to learning is evident in the arts in particular, this creativity is less apparent in English, mathematics and science. Lessons are not planned well enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff know pupils well and relationships are good. This means pupils feel safe and are confident that their worries and concerns will be dealt with sympathetically. All procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are firmly established. Although there is a wealth of assessment information available within school, it is not used rigorously enough to ensure pupils' good progress and achievement. Pupils do not receive sufficiently clear advice in the form of targets about how to attain higher standards. Marking, however, has improved since the previous inspection, and there are good examples of feedback to pupils about the strengths and development areas of their work. In writing, in particular, pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to achieve success in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Monitoring and evaluation has not been rigorous enough in the past and staff have not received sufficiently accurate information about what is working well in the school and what needs to be improved. Staff with leadership responsibilities have not been sufficiently involved in ensuring that pupils make adequate progress. The school's self-evaluation document does not realistically evaluate provision, and neither does it accurately reflect the agreed views of the local authority and the former acting headteacher. However, following a time of two years' unsettled leadership, the newly appointed headteacher is very clear about what is necessary to move this school forward. A good draft action plan is in place and performance management targets have been agreed with all teachers. The governing body provides satisfactory support but it does not do enough to challenge school leaders. Even so, improvement since the previous inspection is

satisfactory. The good links with outside providers, including other local schools, effectively promote pupils' enjoyment of school. Parents, although supportive of the school, are not involved enough in knowing how to help their children with their work.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	3

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 the 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?	3

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

17 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Devonshire Junior School, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7AT

Thank you for making us so welcome and telling us your thoughts about your school when we came to visit. You helped us to learn a lot about what you do. Your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that there are some good things in the school, but also some things that need to be improved.

It is clear you enjoy school as you told us about the many clubs, sports and extra activities you do to make learning more interesting. We think your music and art work is very good and the singing of the choir we thought was wonderful. You behave well and are so polite. Thank you for the way in which you opened doors for us. We think you have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and it is good to know you enjoy taking exercise. It is also good that you know how to keep safe and very sensibly told us not to smoke or take drugs. You should be proud of the way you help others and I hope you raised lots of money for Children In Need!

We think your new headteacher has very quickly found out what is needed to make your school better. Although you are doing quite well in mathematics and science we think you could do better in English, especially in writing. To help with this we think you need lots more opportunities to speak to each other and listen to what your friends have to say. We have asked that each one of you has really challenging work to do all the time. This is so that you can make faster progress in your work. We have also asked that teachers make sure that you understand what you need to do next to reach higher standards. The staff are helping Mrs Phull to make the school even better and we would like staff who look after different subjects, and governors, to do more to check that you are all learning as well as you can. We also think that the school should make sure that those of you who are taken out of lessons for extra help don't miss out on what is happening in the classroom.

Thank you again for your help. Keep on working hard and enjoying school.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness Lead inspector

17 November 2007



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