

Sudley Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104596
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308631
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Madeley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Thornhill
Headteacher	Miss M Underwood
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Aigburth Road Liverpool Merseyside L17 6BH
Telephone number	0151 4272941
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and standards; their personal development and well-being; the quality of teaching and learning; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's records of pupils' progress. Policies, attendance and financial data were reviewed and observation of the school at work as well as interviews with the chair of governors, staff and pupils were also undertaken. The views of the parents were canvassed through a questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is very popular with parents and there are regularly more applications for places than are available for entry into Year 3. Most pupils live in the immediate area of the school in mainly owner-occupied housing. Pupils are principally of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is broadly average and very few of them speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with a diagnosed learning difficulty and/or disability is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the views of senior managers, parents and pupils that this is a good school in which pupils mature into exceptionally well behaved and caring individuals. Indeed, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, is outstanding. Good teaching helps them achieve well and reach standards which are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In this context, standards in mathematics are a relative weakness compared to English and science. This is because teachers' planning is not quite sharp enough. For example, in one year group, pupils were given a good idea of the usefulness of 'tallying' as a method of gathering data, but in another the example used did not extend pupils' knowledge of this aspect of mathematics. Strong leadership from the headteacher and good governing body, coupled with effective management, has improved the school significantly. Issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and significantly above average standards have been maintained for the last five years. Senior managers know their school well, check pupils' progress rigorously and make exceptionally good use of learning targets to drive up standards. These factors indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. It is also seen in their keenness to learn and their excellent behaviour in class. These attitudes have been fostered by staff, who use rewards very effectively and who present lessons in a lively and stimulating way to maintain pupils' interest. The good curriculum, which is broad and balanced, also plays its part. The 'themed' approach to parts of the curriculum brings subjects together in an exciting way, such as dance, music and history in a Second World War dance lesson. However, as this work started this term, it is as yet too early to see its impact on learning. Additionally, the school offers pupils a huge range of clubs, many of which help them stay active, and a good range of visits to places of educational interest. The exciting and challenging work undertaken in music, in class as well as in clubs and individual instrument lessons, further adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. For example, few schools have worked with the English National Ballet and have a choir which performs regularly at major venues around the city.

The school has recently achieved Healthy School status and it is clear from the pupils that they know how to look after themselves, for example, the importance of drinking water regularly and of making fruit and vegetables part of their regular diet. New meal arrangements at lunchtimes are playing their part, with pupils often making healthy choices from the menu. Play-times are active. Pupils look forward to physical education lessons and after school clubs in order to exercise further. They have an excellent understanding of what is not good for them and use scientific vocabulary to describe this, for example, 'Too many carbohydrates are bad for you.' and 'Smoking causes lung cancer'.

Pupils' very positive relationships with each other contribute towards their feeling of being safe in school. Teachers encourage them to work together, for example, in a Year 6 lesson, in groups of 4, pupils solved a tricky number puzzle and confidently explained their method to the class. The pupils and parents describe the staff as 'kind', 'helpful' and 'sensitive'. This reflects good care, guidance and support. Safeguarding procedures are in place and training updates are shared with all staff on a regular basis. Pupils know their learning targets and strive to reach them.

The school makes good use of external agencies to improve the learning of all pupils but especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents fully support the school in almost all respects. However, a small but significant minority have some justified concerns about the school not listening to their views and not providing feedback about decision making. Pupils' views are heard through the very effective school council. Members are elected and run meetings by themselves, which demonstrates how capable these pupils are. Other pupils take on key roles around the school, such as prefects and 'buddies' to the new Year 3 pupils. Parents praise this initiative because it helps their children settle into a new school very quickly. All pupils take great care of their environment. Litter is put into bins, cloakrooms are tidy and displays of work are admired and very well looked after. The choir and other groups often go out into the community to help others whilst the community is welcomed into school: for instance, older relatives share their experiences of the Second World War. The pupils also do a great deal of fund-raising for people less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next school. They have the English, mathematics and computing skills needed to make the most of secondary school. They also have the confidence and maturity to flourish in new surroundings. They have visited the local secondary schools, met with teachers and made extensive use of the specialist facilities, so little is new to them. They have even developed their marketing skills to raise money for charity by selling cakes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson planning in mathematics fully meets the needs of all pupils.
- Improve the ways in which the school communicates with parents, seeking their views, taking account of their suggestions and concerns and providing them with feedback on outcomes.

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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?	2
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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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.

Annex A

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Inspection of Sudley Junior School, Liverpool, L17 6BH

Thank you for the warm welcome I received when I came to inspect your school. I listened carefully to what you had to say about the school and took your views into account when coming to my judgements. You, and your parents, told me that your school was really good and I agree. Your teachers help you make good progress in your studies and standards in English, mathematics and science are significantly above average. You speak highly of your headteacher and she, along with other senior managers and the governing body, challenges you to do your best in every aspect of school life. Your enthusiasm for school shines through. You thoroughly enjoy lessons and really appreciate the extra things the school offers, like the huge range of clubs and two residential visits. The dance work connected to the Second World War and also with the English National Ballet is exceptional. Your behaviour around the school is excellent, especially considering how often you have to change classes. You have a wide knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy and I agree that the healthy options at lunchtime are a very good idea. The way you work sensibly with each other in class and the fund-raising you do for others are excellent.

Your headteacher and her staff have a good understanding of where the school is now and they all agree that they want it to be even better in the future. I have asked them to do two things which will improve your learning further:

- improve lesson planning in mathematics
- listen to, and take into account, the views of your parents.

You can play your part by continuing to work hard towards your learning targets. I hope that you are proud of all that your headteacher, staff and governing body have achieved for you. To all those who spoke to me, thank you once again for being so well spoken, polite and sensible. It was a great pleasure to be with you.

I wish you and the school well for the future.