

# Aintree Davenhill Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	104868
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	324119
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter E Jones

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R G Harris
Headteacher	Ms K M Coyle
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Aintree Lane Aintree Village L10 8LE
Telephone number	0151 5261162
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and two representatives of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring and evaluation documents and pupils' work; 66 parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment, progress and learning, including in writing and for more able pupils
- the quality of pupils' learning and their engagement in lessons
- the school's curriculum and how its emphasis on key skills is seen in teaching and learning
- how well staff contribute to the school's management and planning
- the quality of the school's self-evaluation and how governors and other stakeholders effectively contribute to the process.

## Information about the school

The pupils attending this large school are virtually all of White British heritage, with approximately half living within the immediate residential area. The remainder come from adjoining districts of Liverpool and Knowsley. Taken together, they represent a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in the school's Nursery and Reception classes. The school has places for up to 10 pupils with severe physical disabilities and ensures that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. It also offers a number of extended services through a partnership with a nearby nursery and through its breakfast and after-school clubs run by a private provider. The school's facilities are used by a number of local interest groups.

The school holds a number of awards including the Artsmark and Sportsmark. It has also gained Eco School and Healthy School awards, as well as having International School status. It has recently gained the Extended School award.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2
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Capacity for sustained improvement

3
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## Main findings

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. The overall attainment of pupils is high. The effectiveness of the promotion of community cohesion by the school's leadership and management is an outstanding feature as are some aspects of pupils' personal development. The school's performance in other areas is good, other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where it is satisfactory.

Pupils are friendly and polite and behave well. They enjoy their lessons and the extra activities the school provides. They are well supported and encouraged to do well, and their relationships with staff are very good. Pupils with additional needs, including those with physical disabilities, receive further, well-targeted support and this helps them to participate fully in school life. As a result, pupils say they feel happy, safe and secure. Their awareness of health-related issues is exceptional and they are enthusiastic participants in a varied programme of sport and exercise. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They are encouraged to take on responsibility from an early age within school.

Pupils make good progress overall. They make outstanding progress in Key Stage 2. Attainment is high overall. Standards are in line with those expected for children of this age at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are slightly above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and significantly above average in national tests at the end of Year 6. The school has successfully implemented strategies to improve writing standards across the school and to raise the performance of its more able pupils. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning are good overall. However, the quality of teaching lacks consistency across the school. Learning is good or better when teachers closely match the work to the abilities of the groups of pupils within each class, but, in some lessons, this is not done as effectively, particularly for the more able pupils, and tasks are not sufficiently varied or challenging for them to make the best possible progress. The curriculum is well organised with a thematic approach, making links between different subjects that add to pupils' achievement and enjoyment. The staff know their pupils well, take good care of them and ensure there is always someone pupils can turn to should they be upset or troubled.

The headteacher and other school leaders are committed to improving the school. Their strategies have been particularly successful in further raising the high standards and achievement in Key Stage 2. However, the school had judged in its self-evaluation that it had made outstanding progress in the areas identified for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. This was not confirmed by the inspection team who judged progress to be satisfactory. Issues remain around the quality of learning activities and children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation

Stage and the consistency of the marking of pupils' work. The school's self-evaluation also overestimates its effectiveness in key areas such as pupils' achievement, teaching and learning and aspects of leadership and management. It currently lacks the sharpness to give an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness and, consequently, its capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

## What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the learning and development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - implementing rigorous systems for observation and assessment to measure accurately children's attainment on entry and their subsequent progress
  - ensuring a better balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Improve pupil achievement by:
  - improving the consistency of teaching, particularly by making sure tasks are sufficiently varied and challenging for pupils, especially the more able
  - bringing a sharper focus to the school's self-evaluation of the effectiveness of its work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils generally work hard in lessons and are keen to succeed. When lessons are exciting, well paced and tailored to the needs of pupils, their learning is at least good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well when they are receiving the specialised, specific support that they require. This is also the case for higher-attaining pupils. In some lessons these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of, because they spend too much time in whole-class teaching situations and are not given enough opportunities to work independently, or in groups, on tasks that would stretch and extend their abilities.

Pupils start Year 1 with skills and abilities that are fairly typical for five-year-olds. They make good progress in reading and mathematics and consistently reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress in writing is satisfactory, with pupils reaching average, though improving standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Since the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been high overall and progress at Key Stage 2 has been outstanding overall. Pupils' performance has been particularly strong in mathematics and science, with significantly above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Results in national tests in English fell just below the national average in 2008, but provisional results for the 2009 tests indicate a strong recovery and above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Current standards as seen in lessons and pupils' work confirm the school's provisional results.

Pupils have a well-developed sense of the importance of helping others and many hold positions of responsibility. The school council has considerable influence on the work of the school and along with other pupils, has made significant contributions to the design of the new school building planned for next year. The older pupils are given opportunities to work and play with the younger children. This fosters the atmosphere of tolerance and kindness, and the family-feel of the school. This is a considerable achievement given the scale and size of the existing school site and

building. Pupils' personal development is further enhanced by the school's outstanding commitment to ecology and sustainability education. The school is seen as a leader in this field. The opportunities pupils gain from strong local and international links further enhance their outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils' behaviour is good. The school strives to develop self-discipline in all its pupils and establish good behaviour patterns, including for some who need constant reinforcement. Pupils' high standards in basic skills and the opportunities they are given to experience commercial and enterprise activities strongly enhance the skills they need to succeed in later life. Attendance remains in line with the national average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers generally use praise well and pupils' success is celebrated. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, teachers work well with teaching assistants and lessons are well planned and resourced. Computers and electronic whiteboards enliven the teaching and lessons have appropriate pace and high expectations. This was most certainly the case in a mathematics lesson observed in Year 6 which challenged and engaged pupils of all abilities, with the result that they all thoroughly enjoyed their learning and made excellent progress. In a Year 3 science lesson, part of a special science day, pupils became totally absorbed in their investigations into light and shadows. This extremely well-planned lesson combined a variety of stimulating learning styles and challenging tasks that enhanced the knowledge and progress of all pupils. However, in some lessons, not enough use is made of what pupils have already learned to take them further. This means that some pupils, particularly the more able, are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils' work is generally assessed well and they are given good opportunities to assess their own learning. Teachers mark work conscientiously, but there are inconsistencies in some classes in the regularity and quality of the advice and guidance pupils are given about what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum makes a good impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. There is appropriate attention to basic skills, and the school is

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

emphasising thinking and investigative skills through its thematic approach. The school is successfully working to make learning more exciting and relevant for groups and individuals. Teachers' planning does not always reflect this aim and at times there is a preponderance of worksheet-based learning in a minority of classes.

Pupils are well cared for and those who need additional help are given the specialist support they require. There are very good links with a range of external agencies including educational psychology, parenting and welfare services. The small numbers of pupils with physical disabilities are fully integrated with this inclusive school. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that any disagreements are quickly resolved, often by themselves.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's restructured leadership team have identified areas for development with the aim of ensuring pupils achieve their academic potential and produce well-rounded individuals. They have been particularly successful in improving the high standards and progress of the school's older pupils and areas of all pupils' personal development. Staff have taken advantage of a strong programme of professional development that has helped to improve writing standards in Key Stages 1 and 2. The leadership copes extremely well in managing the demands placed upon the school's work by the sprawling, high-maintenance, 1950s building. The school's strategic planning is detailed and practical, but its self-evaluation of the effectiveness of its work has been less effective in measuring the impact of its actions and the overall quality in key areas. This places some limits on its capacity to improve. The school's steps to safeguard its pupils are good and meet current local and national requirements. The ways in which equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination is tackled are good, although the inconsistencies in matching work to ability in all lessons prevent this from being outstanding. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. There are extremely good links with the local community. Local interest groups are encouraged to use the school facilities and pupils have a high profile in the community. Examples are the recent performance of an extremely well-received play for local people and the hugely enjoyable grandparents' tea party held in school during the inspection. The school has excellent relationships with other schools abroad. It is also developing links with a school in another local authority that is further improving pupils' awareness and understanding of different ethnic groups in both schools. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school and bring a range of experience and expertise to their work. The school manages its budget well and, given the quality of the outcomes for its pupils, it provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a satisfactory start to their schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter the Nursery with skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations. They make satisfactory progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, their standards are in line with national averages. They make the best progress in mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of the world, with their physical development being below average. The space and resources available for all children have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, the quality of teaching remains satisfactory. Children appear happy and are willing to join in the activities on offer. However, they have limited opportunities to initiate their own learning as most of the tasks and activities are led by adults. This places some restrictions on their independent learning and development. Children are reminded to keep safe and can explain why it is important to follow basic hygiene routines such as hand washing. Their behaviour is satisfactory overall, but when activities lack interest and challenge, a minority display inappropriate behaviour that at times compromises their safety, particularly in the outdoor areas.

Leadership and management are satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff work together to plan activities, but systems for assessing children's levels of attainment on entry and their subsequent progress are insufficiently rigorous.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Most questionnaires returned by parents were positive. Many parents took the time to add comments such as, 'My children have been encouraged to work hard and enjoy themselves.' A minority raised a variety of concerns, for example, about behaviour. These issues were investigated during the inspection and the findings are commented on in the report where appropriate.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aintree Davenhill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

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The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 350 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	20	4	1

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aintree Davenhill Primary School, Aintree Village, L10 8LE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and particularly appreciated the time you spent with us discussing Aintree Davenhill. You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school, with some outstanding features. Thanks to your hard work and the good teaching you receive, you reach high standards in your work and make good progress. Your behaviour is good and you enjoy your lessons and work well together. You told us that you really like the excellent meals your school provides and you impressed us with your awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and taking exercise. You told us that the school keeps you safe and happy. You make an excellent contribution to the life of the school in many ways, such as being a school councillor, helping with eco-projects or working with the younger children. Your fundraising for the school and charity, the recent play you performed, and your links with schools abroad are examples of your super work for your local area and beyond.

We have asked your school to do three things to make your learning even better. These are to:

- find better ways of seeing how well children are doing in the Nursery and Reception classes
- make sure the children in the Nursery and Reception classes have the right balance between taking part in their own learning activities and those led by adults
- make teaching at least good or better in all areas of the school and, particularly, make sure that those of you who learn quicker always receive work that makes you think really hard.

You can help by continuing to work hard and looking after each other.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter E Jones  
Lead inspector  
(on behalf of the inspection team)

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