

Dovecot Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130296
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	341017
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Fisher

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Nurse
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Jones
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including improvement plans, records of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' work in their books, and policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. The inspection team analysed 47 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those from staff and pupils.

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

- the progress made by pupils as they move through the school
- how effectively assessment information is used to drive improvement in pupils' progress and achievement
- how well the curriculum meets the needs and abilities of pupils in Year 2
- the robustness of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning by school leaders.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A tiny proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is very high. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times during Key Stages 1 and 2 is high. The school has gained awards which recognise its contribution to promoting pupils' health, cultural and physical education and it won the City of Liverpool Safeguarding Award in 2009. There is before- and after-school childcare provision which is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. From the time they enter the Nursery class, the school places a very strong and successful emphasis on children's personal development. There is a calm atmosphere throughout; pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons. Pupils' contributions to the life of the school and local community are outstanding. They have a strong influence on how the school is run and take pride in the range of jobs that they carry out, such as being playground buddies and members of the active school council.

When they start Nursery, the level of children's skills varies but, overall, it is well below what is typically expected. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment in national tests is below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Progress and attainment as reflected in test results by the end of Key Stage 2 is adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils who either join or leave the school during the key stage. Despite this, inspection findings show that attainment is rising strongly across the school.

Improvements to teaching and the good use of assessment information by school leaders and teachers are making a good contribution to this rise in standards and helping to narrow the attainment gap. A close examination of pupils' work and rates of progress in Key Stage 2 indicates that almost all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and that in some classes they are making good progress. However, work is not sufficiently challenging in some lessons and expectations are not yet consistently high enough to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress. Pupils are developing their writing skills successfully in English lessons, though opportunities for them to develop their writing skills in other subjects are less well established.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They make sensible choices when choosing their school lunches and understand the need for a balanced diet. and enjoy the range of physical activities that the school provides. They are active and play safely at break times. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have respect for adults and each other and a strong sense of right and wrong. The school's curriculum is a strength; art and design provision is outstanding and pupils produce high-quality work in this subject. Pupils enjoy a range of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Their understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain is less well developed. Leadership of the school is good. The impact of this good leadership is seen in rising attainment across the school. School leaders have a precise and accurate view of its strengths and areas for development and have detailed plans for further improvement. Its essential systems for tracking pupils' progress are well embedded and underpin the rise in pupils' attainment and progress.

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They enable school leaders to sustain the improvements taking place and ensure that pupils progress as well as they should. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and every parent and carer who responded to the inspection questionnaire said that the school keeps their children safe. All this demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and accelerate the progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that in all classes:
 - work is sufficiently challenging and enables pupils to build on their prior attainment
 - pupils have opportunities to improve their writing when working in subjects across the curriculum
 - lessons have a quick pace, with high expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve.
- Ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils throughout the school collaborate effectively in lessons when asked to work in pairs and small groups and they concentrate well when not directly supervised by an adult. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote play scripts based on the story 'Anul and the Drum' and dramatised them very effectively. The performances were enjoyed so much by pupils that they were disappointed when the activity came to an end. Most pupils work carefully and show a growing ability to understand how they can improve their work. Though there are inconsistencies, work in pupils' books is presented well and by the end of Year 6 pupils write for a range of purposes, using legible handwriting and accurate spelling and punctuation. Good examples of writing were seen in religious education in Year 6, where pupils wrote letters to try to persuade Jesus' followers to become disciples. However, pupils do not have routine opportunities to apply their writing skills effectively in their work across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points because teaching, while being satisfactory and having many good features, is not consistently well paced and challenging enough to enable them to make good progress.

Pupils are very polite and friendly. They behave well in lessons and around the school; as in the dining room for example, where pupils from different age groups mix happily. Pupils have good awareness of how to keep safe and a clear understanding of the need

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to have regard for the safety of others.

Pupils develop good social skills and enjoy their leadership roles. For example, prefects take pleasure in nominating pupils from around the school for weekly awards, such as for being kind and helpful to others. Though their speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills are not well developed, their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are broadly average. Pupils' positive attitudes to school and ability to work independently and collaboratively mean that the extent to which they are prepared for the next stages of their education is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

While teaching is satisfactory across the school, it has many good features. In the good lessons teachers plan activities that are matched well to pupils' needs and abilities, for example when pupils improve their mathematical skills in the ICT room and when some of the more able Year 4 pupils join Year 5 for literacy lessons for four days each week. Teachers use support staff effectively to work with individuals and small groups of pupils who need extra help. They make good use of assessment information to set a target for

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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improvement in reading, writing and mathematics for each of their pupils. Teachers take account of these targets when marking pupils' work and pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, are very much aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, in some lessons in both key stages work is not sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to build on their prior attainment, the lessons proceed at a slow pace and the expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve are not high enough.

The curriculum provides well-organised, imaginative and effective opportunities to promote pupils' learning. It promotes practical and collaborative work and develops pupils' wider interests through good-quality music provision and visits linked to each half-term's topic. Art and design provision is outstanding. Pupils use a wide range of media and processes to produce high-quality paintings, prints, photographs and sculptures, many of which are impressively displayed inside the building and in the school grounds.

Pupils benefit from the high-quality care, guidance and support that they receive. Staff know the pupils very well, encourage them to take responsibility and expect them to look after themselves and each other. A number of pupils who join the school have troubled lives; using its own resources and by working effectively with a range of partners, the school ensures that these pupils settle well and develop their self-confidence, social and academic skills appropriately. Well-structured intervention programmes help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are properly cared for and make satisfactory progress. The school's arrangements for the admission of children to the Early Years Foundation Stage and for their transfer to local secondary schools are effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: 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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Close monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders has resulted in significant improvement to teaching, with clear guidance and good support provided to ensure that the improvement can be sustained. Termly meetings between senior leaders and each class teacher are held to assess the progress of each pupil and set targets for improvement for them. Clear guidelines are in place for teachers to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed systematically. The school has also recently appointed an additional teacher to provide extra support for pupils who are not making

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the expected progress. Subject leaders produce effective improvement plans for their subjects and there are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress. The Key Stage 1 curriculum has been reviewed and revised to meet pupils' needs and learning styles. Self-evaluation is accurate and essential systems are well embedded to enable the school to continue to improve attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The governing body has ensured that all statutory duties are met and that pupils are securely safeguarded and the school's health and safety policies and procedures are highly effective. Governors understand the challenges that the school faces and are involved in setting priorities for improvement. They are, for example, beginning to receive subject leaders' reports. Relationships with parents and carers are good and they comment very positively about the school. Partnerships with other schools, local authority agencies and voluntary organisations are good and make a positive contribution to the well-being of pupils. For example, half-termly, multi-agency meetings are held at the school. These are attended by the child protection governor and a range of professionals including health, social services, police and housing representatives. The school tackles all forms of discrimination effectively and all pupils in the school have an equal opportunity to develop their talents. The school is a very cohesive community, though the promotion of pupils' understanding of diversity beyond the school is less well-developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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 equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Children make good progress in each area of learning and in their personal, social and emotional development in particular. They are cared for well and feel happy and secure as a result. Children enjoy school, readily follow instructions from adults, cooperate and play with each other very well and their behaviour is good. This enables them to focus well on the tasks that they are given and those that they choose for themselves.

Children show a good ability to listen to stories and to choose books to read independently. Although their speaking skills are not well developed, children willingly 'have a go' and have good recall of the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. They readily talk about what they are doing, for example when talking about small animals such as spiders and about how caterpillars eventually become butterflies.

Staff provide a calm, nurturing and stimulating environment with established routines that enable children to develop their self-confidence. Both indoors and outside, there is a good balance of activities led by adults and those for children to choose for themselves. Staff ensure that there is targeted teaching of groups of children to build on what they already know and to develop specific skills. Staff keep clear records of who they have been working with and make informal assessments of children's achievement via observations. Formal assessment arrangements for each child are securely in place.

Arrangements for the admission of children include home visits and an information pack for parents and carers. Staff make concerted efforts to involve parents and carers in their children's education, including 'stay and play' sessions and interest books to show 'work' done at home. Staff in Nursery and Reception plan together to ensure that policies and assessment procedures are implemented consistently, that children are kept safe and that they have equal access to the full range of experiences that the setting provides. Although individual tracking is detailed and thorough, there is not a comprehensive system to show progress across Nursery and Reception for cohorts in all areas of learning. This is an area that the school acknowledges is to be developed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of families responded to the questionnaires for parents and carers. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. They were particularly positive in saying that their children enjoy school and feel safe there. Inspection findings support these views. A small number of parents and carers believed that behaviour was not well managed. Inspectors discussed these issues with the school and were satisfied

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that the school manages pupils' behaviour well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dovecot Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	52	24	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	52	21	42	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	52	22	44	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	48	26	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	46	26	52	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	42	28	56	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	40	25	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	42	25	50	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	32	28	56	6	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	36	30	60	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	40	28	56	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	46	24	48	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dovecot Primary School, Liverpool, L14 0LH

Thank you very much for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your positive attitudes in lessons, your polite and friendly behaviour and your impressive art work. It was obvious to us that you like your school and carrying out your all your responsibilities, such as being playground buddies and school council members.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory. This means that you and your school do some things well but that some important aspects are not as good as they should be.

Here are some of the reasons why we have judged your school to be satisfactory.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start and make good progress.
- You make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 but need to continue to improve your reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- You behave well and know how to keep safe and healthy.
- You make good contributions to the life of the school.
- The school's staff look after you extremely well.

I have asked your teachers and governors to make some changes to improve your school further. These are:

- to ensure that the work that your teachers give you is challenging enough to allow you all to make faster progress
- to give you more opportunities to develop your writing skills in different subjects
- to ensure that you have a good understanding of the different backgrounds and cultures of people in Britain.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Fisher

Lead Inspector

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