

Dovedale Junior School

Herondale Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L18 1JX

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well from their starting points in Year 3. This is because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
- The headteacher has successfully improved teaching by inspiring staff and pupils to follow the motto of the school 'Imagine, Believe, Achieve'. As a result, attainment is above average and continues to rise.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes contribute well to their successful learning. Pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary.
- The school shows a strong and successful commitment to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils are very respectful towards each other.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their sporting achievements, and some say that physical education is 'the best lesson ever!'
- Parents are highly positive about the school's work, and particularly about the level of care it provides.
- Governors know and support the school well. They check closely that school leaders use available funds wisely to ensure the school has what it needs to achieve the best for all its pupils. As a result, it continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall.
- Occasionally, the work that teachers plan is not precisely matched to how well pupils are doing in their learning.
- Recently appointed middle leaders have not had time to ensure pupils have enough planned opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 16 lessons across a range of subjects. This included one that was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work from the current year and from the previous school year were analysed.
- An inspector listened to a few pupils reading and talked with them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading in lessons, looked at samples of their work and discussed their learning with them.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors.
- The lead inspector had a telephone discussion with the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in 31 questionnaires.
- Inspectors took account of the 70 responses to Parent View, the online survey of parents, and also spoke to a number of parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including: the school's own views of how well it is doing; its plans for the future; information on pupils' attainment and progress; reports from the school improvement adviser; safeguarding information; records relating to behaviour and safety; attendance information and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Deana Aldred, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector
Clare Henderson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average and has increased since the previous inspection.
- Few pupils are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and is deployed by the local authority and the National College to support improvement in other schools.
- He is chair of local networks of primary and secondary schools.
- The school shares a breakfast club facility with Dovedale Infant School. This facility is housed in the infant school building and was not inspected during this inspection. The school has an after-school club which is run by an outside provider.
- The school has recently been accredited with Dyslexia Friendly status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring teachers plan work that is always precisely matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils make the best possible progress.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring middle leaders check systematically that pupils have enough opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills through work in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start Year 3 with broadly average attainment. They make good progress over time in each year group. As a result, attainment is rising and is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement is not outstanding because pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. This is because, in some lessons, teachers set tasks that are too easy for some and too difficult for others and, as a result, pupils do not always make their best progress in these lessons.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and read widely. For example, in lessons planned to celebrate 'Black History Week' pupils used stories and poems to learn more about the rights and responsibilities of individuals within different societies. In an art lesson, pupils made sculptures to represent freedom, based on the poem of Maya Angelou 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings'.
- These opportunities for pupils to read, discuss and reflect upon their learning are well planned and are successful in helping them to improve the quality of their writing.
- Mathematics is taught well throughout the school, in whole-class lessons and in small group work. There is a clear focus on improving pupils' skills of mental calculation and this is helping them to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. Some make rapid progress because of the very effective specialist support they receive.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress because the school uses the funding it receives for these pupils effectively to bring their attainment up to the levels they are capable of achieving. In 2012, their attainment was about six months behind other pupils in English and mathematics. As a result of the good teaching and additional support they receive, these gaps in attainment are closing steadily for pupils in all year groups.
- The most-able pupils make at least good progress over time and some make outstanding progress. In 2013, more pupils than in the previous year reached level 6 in the national tests.
- Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including minority ethnic groups, make equally good progress. This demonstrates the school's successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good quality teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils make good progress from their different starting points. The quality of relationships is very strong, teachers expect the best of pupils and pupils are keen to reach the highest standards.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy learning because their teachers make lessons interesting. This view was supported by parents who say that the teachers' dedication makes this school such a good place for their children.
- Teaching successfully promotes creativity, through well planned teaching, such as during 'Black History Week'. Pupils used a range of skills from subjects across the curriculum in lessons that inspired them - they used skills of communication, drama, art, history and personal and social education to great effect.
- In a few lessons, there are not enough well-planned opportunities to apply and develop the skills of reading, writing and mathematics, and in these lessons this prevents pupils from achieving the very best from their learning.
- In the best lessons, teachers use well-chosen questions to make pupils think carefully, so that they learn to think things through for themselves. They are taught to share their thoughts and opinions, and to listen respectfully and carefully to each other. In a Year 6 lesson on the life of Nelson Mandela, the teacher used questioning expertly to find out what pupils had understood

from the information they had been given, to find out what they felt about some of the incidents in Nelson Mandela's life, and then gave them time to write and ask their own questions. The responses of all pupils were of the highest quality and showed that they are taught these skills exceptionally well.

- Teaching is generally based on what teachers learn from marking pupils' work and, in the best lessons, activities are skilfully adapted by teachers and teaching assistants in response to how well pupils are doing. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils make at least good progress within lessons and over time.
- Pupils told inspectors that they like homework because, 'It helps us to practise!'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They say that their teachers make learning interesting and fun, and they enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above average and this helps them to achieve well.
- They have high levels of respect for adults and for each other. Because of this their behaviour is often exemplary, and is nearly always good.
- Pupils understand how their good behaviour makes their time in school more successful and enjoyable. They like the rewards they receive and they respect the consequences on the few occasions when behaviour is less than good. The learning mentor works very effectively with pupils and families who might need support.
- Pupils have a good shared understanding of what is meant by bullying and they say that it does not happen in their school. They say they are well taught about how to keep themselves safe, for example while using the internet.
- The school's successful commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that pupils respect and value each other. They have an extremely good understanding that discrimination of any kind is wrong.
- Parents, staff and governors are highly positive about the behaviour of pupils and the way in which the school successfully promotes high standards.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, through his determined and inspirational vision of what pupils can achieve, has secured the commitment of all staff, pupils and governors to continually improving the quality of education the school provides.
- School leadership has accurately prioritised, within the school-improvement plan and performance management, the actions that will improve the school further. The deputy headteacher is now taking a lead role in further improving the quality of teaching to outstanding.
- The governing body has recently appointed middle leaders to plan and monitor the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across other curriculum subjects. These leaders have not yet had the time to engage in this work.
- The local authority and the school improvement adviser provide an appropriate level of support. They recognise the overall improvements since the previous inspection and the impact that current leaders are having on improving teaching.
- The school has a highly successful commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all. This is central to the curriculum which inspires learning through creativity. The displays around school celebrate the many achievements of pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils are very proud of their sporting achievements, especially qualifying to play at Anfield, the home ground of Liverpool Football Club. The Breakfast Sport club is one of the many ways in which the school successfully promotes exercise and healthy food.
- Pupils benefit from excellent partnerships in which other schools work closely to support each

other. This is improving teaching, particularly for pupils with identified special educational needs.

The governance of the school:

- Governors know and support the school well. They make many visits to school and these provide them with good quality information about how well pupils are doing in their learning. They speak with pupils, parents and staff, as well as attending regular meetings. Individual governors work closely with middle and senior leaders, so that they can monitor the progress that pupils are making in their learning. School leaders provide them with regular monitoring reports on the quality of teaching. Together with data provided by the school, these have given governors a good understanding of the improvements in overall performance. Governors support the headteacher well in making decisions about staffing and training based on performance management. They have made good decisions about the spending of pupil premium funding to raise achievement and the new primary school sports funding to give pupils even greater access than before to sporting activities. Through its successful commitment to sport, the school has increased the participation of pupils, particularly in competitive sport, by means of the Liverpool School Sport Partnership.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104533
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	426215

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 of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bedford
Headteacher	Nik Smith
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2008
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