

Devonshire Primary School

Devonshire Avenue, Sutton, SM2 5JL

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, there has been a successful drive to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- They are well supported by other senior leaders, staff and governors. Consequently, the dip in pupils' performance which occurred after the last inspection has been successfully addressed.
- Pupils make good progress from their well below average starting points. By Year 6, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now above average.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well with an increasing number making rapid progress in response to stimulating teaching. Improvement is particularly evident in writing which has, rightly, been a focus for development.
- A very careful watch is kept on the progress of all pupils. Any pupils falling behind because they find learning difficult are quickly given extra help.
- Provision and children's progress in the Nursery is outstanding. Exciting learning opportunities encourage children to enjoy learning. Good progress in Reception ensures children get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good. There are good systems to develop it further. Staff value the support provided by school leaders to help them improve their teaching.
- School leaders have robust systems for promoting safeguarding. Pupils say they feel safe and are kept safe. They have good attitudes to learning and most behave well both in and out of the classroom. Most parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Governors give good levels of challenge to school leaders. They have a very detailed knowledge of the school and share everyone's ambitions for continuous improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few lower-attaining children in Reception are not helped well enough to develop their early phonics skills (the sounds that letters make).
- Some teachers do not ensure activities are challenging enough, including for the most-able pupils.
- A few pupils have too many absences, which affects the consistency of their progress.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out in response to two complaints made to Ofsted. The complaints were deemed to be qualifying complaints and Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an inspection should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the response to pupils presenting challenging behaviour
 - suitable adjustments are made to behaviour management procedures according to the pupils’ needs and disabilities
 - staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support when required
 - leaders and the governing body are effective in safeguarding pupils and promoting their good behaviour.
- The inspection team observed learning and looked at pupils’ work. Inspectors observed 25 lessons. Approximately one third of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They listened to a sample of pupils read in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors observed one assembly and pupils’ behaviour was also observed in lessons and during lunch and break times. They met with groups of pupils to gain their views of the school and spoke informally to them at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including policies, records and guidance relating to safeguarding and behaviour, and at the school’s improvement and self-evaluation documents. They examined attendance figures, records of behaviour and other incidents, and the school’s website.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders to discuss systems for promoting good behaviour, for keeping pupils safe and to discuss the progress groups of pupils make. They met with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. They examined records of the local authority’s involvement with the school and met with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered parents’ and carers’ views of the school through informal discussions before school, the 60 responses to the Ofsted on line questionnaire (Parent View) and the few letters sent by parents. The team spoke to staff during the inspection and took account of the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Marina Coleman	Additional inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Devonshire Primary is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has grown year-on-year in response to the need to increase school places. Admissions in Reception have risen to 90. There are now three parallel classes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 3, four in Year 2 and two in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Children in the early years are in Nursery or Reception classes. There is one Nursery class which children attend part time, mornings or afternoons. Approximately half of the children entering Reception have not attended the school's Nursery. Children attend Reception full time.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from many different backgrounds, although the largest group is White British.
- The proportion supported through pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a little above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Two new posts for assistant headteachers have recently been created. An assistant headteacher with responsibility for Key Stage 2 started in September 2014, while an assistant headteacher with responsibility for the early years and Key Stage 1 is due to begin at the start of the summer term.
- There has been considerable work during recent years to meet the needs of an expanding school.
- Pupils may attend the A–Z Club, which is a breakfast and after-school club. It is on the same site as the school but this is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection. The report for this provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further by:
 - in Reception classes, improve lower-attaining children's progress in phonics by ensuring staff help children to pronounce words accurately and increase opportunities for them to break simple words into their component sounds
 - ensuring teachers provide consistently challenging learning activities, including for the most-able pupils.
- Improve attendance by working directly with those parents who keep their children off school without good reason.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher has set a clear direction and ensured management systems are in keeping with an expanding school. The impact of good leadership is evident in the way the whole-school community shares senior leaders' drive to improve pupils' achievement.
- School leaders, including governors, have established clear responsibilities at all levels of leadership. The creation of two new assistant headteacher posts has strengthened leadership capacity. Senior leaders and middle leaders understand what is required of them and are held to account for pupils' achievement.
- School leaders acted decisively to tackle the dip in pupils' achievement in 2012 through improving teaching. As a result, standards have improved and continued to accelerate. Pupils' work and school data seen during the inspection show that pupils are making good progress throughout the school.
- Leaders have a good understanding of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching. There are robust systems for checking pupils' assessments, observing lessons and examining pupils' work. A very regular programme of pupils' progress meetings is implemented. This involves teachers and senior leaders evaluating the impact of teaching on groups and individual pupils.
- Middle leadership is developing well, although some more recently appointed subject leaders are still receiving training to enable them to evaluate pupils' learning in lessons across the whole school. The school has provided high-quality training for subject leaders and teachers, coupled with programmes of coaching, and this is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors manage the performance of the headteacher effectively. They also support the headteacher in ensuring that other teachers' progression along the pay scales is focused on improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders and staff have high expectations for every pupil and are fully committed to equality of opportunity. They are fully aware that there is more to be done to secure the consistency of good progress for some potentially most-able pupils in a few lessons. There are very good systems to foster good relationships and tackle any possible discrimination.
- Additional funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They make good progress, similar to their classmates, because of the extra help they are given to improve basic literacy, numeracy and reading skills.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding of pupils is given the highest priority. Staff checks are very thorough. Child protection is good because the school provides robust staff training and works effectively with other services and families to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff are clear about who can provide help if needed and any child protection concerns are dealt with promptly.
- Adults have received good guidance on how to address the social and emotional needs of the small minority of pupils with complex special educational needs. Senior leaders, including the special educational needs leader, ensure prompt and effective actions are taken to resolve problems.
- The curriculum has been overhauled and meets pupils' needs well. It is vibrant, inspires pupils to learn, and fully meets the new National Curriculum requirements. Exciting half-termly topics ensure pupils are able to develop their academic, creative and sporting skills. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematics across a range of subjects.
- Curriculum opportunities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They help pupils to gain a good understanding of different cultures and ways of life, and their place in modern Britain.
- There is a strong emphasis on British values, which give pupils an awareness of the importance of democracy. For example, curriculum themes such as the 'Second World War' include thought-provoking ideas such as the quest for freedom. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy as they vote for pupils to represent them on their school council and through visits from a local MP.
- The use of additional sports funding is increasing pupils' skills and their enjoyment of sporting activities. It has been used to pay for specialist coaches to teach a wider variety of sports and to develop teachers' skills. It has also helped to update resources and to increase opportunities for taking part in sports tournaments with other schools.
- The local authority has given good support, which includes providing teachers with subject training and prompting close links with an outstanding school. The school has made good use of this support. The local authority has confidence in the leaders' ability to continue to make improvements and has recently reduced the level of support.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well and have high expectations of staff and pupils. They operate as a team and organise their work efficiently to make full use of their available expertise. They use a good range of information to ensure they know how well the school performs. They have a clear understanding about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This helps them to challenge and question school leaders and to hold them to account for their actions. Governors have enriched their skills by taking part in training, including for understanding pupils' assessment data and safety. Safeguarding is given high priority. Requirements are met and regularly and meticulously checked. Governors receive detailed up-to-date information about school performance from senior and middle leaders and visit the school regularly to see the work of the school for themselves. They work closely with the headteacher to ensure any underperformance of staff and pupils is quickly tackled and rectified. They ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium and primary sports funding, are used effectively to raise pupils' achievements. They frequently check that funds are having maximum impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Governors have played a significant part in ensuring the substantial expansions to the school have caused minimum disruption.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils from diverse backgrounds get on extremely well together. This is because the school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught and understand right from wrong, for example through learning about the Ten Commandments.
- Behaviour policies are well thought out and applied consistently. Pupils are polite and respectful in lessons and around the school.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View, those spoken to or who wrote to inspectors agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils play happily together in the playground and supervision is good in the dining hall and in the playground. Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour and visual displays remind them of the requirements for good behaviour and the consequences if they misbehave.
- A few pupils enter school with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. These pupils are very well supported so that disruption to learning is rare. Staff are well trained to help them and, where needed, outside specialist support is provided. The impact of the school's help for these pupils can be seen by their excellent behaviour and adjustment to school by Year 6.
- Pupils are keen to learn because they enjoy exploring the interesting topics in the new curriculum. They settle quickly to their work and pupils are engrossed in what they are learning. Nonetheless, on occasions, some pupils lose focus because they are not challenged at the right level.
- Pupils value opportunities to contribute to the school community. They believe that roles such as membership of the school council and acting as school monitors make their school a happier and safer place.
- The staff have robust procedures to encourage good attendance. The outcome of this is that attendance is improving, though still a little below national average.
- The school is working very closely with the few families who do not ensure their children attend as regularly as they should. However, in a few cases, the school has yet to have an impact as these families still keep their children away from school without acceptable reasons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents are confident that they are safe and adults look after them well.
- Pupils can identify who they would confide in should they have any concerns or personal worries.
- Any pupil requiring first aid is cared for quickly by staff and the accident is recorded.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of keeping themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- They have a secure understanding of different types of bullying. They say that incidents do not happen often but, if they do, they trust adults to deal with issues quickly. Pupils understand school rules well and think adults apply these fairly and, as one Year 1 pupil told an inspector, 'People respect other people in this school.'
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View and those spoken to feel that their

children are kept safe in school

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving. The standard of work in pupils' books, rapidly improving rates of progress and lesson observations show that teaching is typically good.
- Teachers promote reading well. Phonics lessons are very regular and taught well in Key Stages 1 and 2. Staff also skilfully encourage pupils to apply their understanding of sounds and letters when reading and spelling in lessons in other subjects, such as science.
- Daily guided reading sessions are of good quality. All groups of readers, including those working with the teacher or independently, learn well. For example, all groups in different classes in Year 1 reading sessions made good progress. This was accomplished through the teachers' careful planning to ensure all activities focused on reading and built well on pupils' existing reading skills.
- There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to read to an adult on an individual basis in school. Good-quality reading books and literature, and use of the school library, also promote pupils' good progress and enjoyment of reading.
- Senior leaders have rightly focused on improving the teaching of writing. There is a systematic approach across the school and across year groups to ensuring pupils are given enough opportunities for writing at length in different subjects, for example in science and history, as well as in literacy lessons.
- Teachers use a consistent approach across the school to enable pupils to develop good handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. They ensure all pupils see the relevance of these activities. For example, lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 quickly grasped how to put indirect speech into direct speech when using speech bubbles in cartoons.
- Subject training in mathematics has enhanced teachers' subject knowledge. This has enabled them to build pupils' skills well and to usually provide good levels of challenge for the most-able pupils. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their mathematics skills to real-life situations.
- Information about how pupils are progressing is usually used well to ensure activities are planned so they build well on existing skills. However, there are a few occasions when pupils' learning slows because teachers do not move them on rapidly to more challenging tasks. This includes the most-able pupils when they complete tasks quickly.
- Committed learning support staff skilfully assist disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, especially in reading and writing. High-quality support from the earliest days in school for those at early stages of learning English as an additional language helps these pupils to get off to a good start.
- Teachers mark work well and give pupils good opportunities to learn from their mistakes.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in the Nursery or directly into Reception with skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in language, social and personal development. The majority of children are at early stages of learning English when they start school. A few children begin with very low-level communication and language skills and/or personal development.
- Pupils' progress in early years and Key Stage 1 is good, and by Year 2, their attainment is a little above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Year 1 national phonics checks showed pupils' attainment was slightly below average in 2014. Inspection shows that most pupils are progressing well in phonics and over three quarters of pupils are on course to achieve the expected standard in phonics in Year 1.
- Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups, including those of White British heritage, make good progress from their average starting points on entry to Key Stage 2. Action by senior leaders ensured the dip in pupils' achievement, which happened soon after the previous inspection, has been reversed. Better use of assessment and staff training have helped to improve pupils' progress.
- Standards rose in 2014 with pupils attaining just above the national average. Pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics. However, while pupils made the expected progress in writing, not enough middle-attaining pupils made rapid enough progress. Consequently, fewer pupils reached higher levels in writing compared with national figures and in reading and mathematics.
- Increased opportunities to write at length have improved standards. Pupils now learn to write well for different purposes in many curriculum areas. Their handwriting, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction develop well throughout the school and this reflects their good attainment in these aspects in

the Year 6 2014 national tests.

- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. Pupils' assessments, work and classroom observations show improvement. This is particularly so in mathematics, where the proportion reaching much higher standards than expected is rising. In the current Year 6, one quarter of pupils are on track to reach Level 6 while two thirds are on track to reach Level 5.
- The most-able pupils are also performing well in writing. There are many good examples of their well-written work where they express both ideas and facts very well. Currently, a half of pupils are on track to reach Level 5. However, there are a few instances in Key Stages 1 and 2 where the most-able pupils' progress slows because pupils are not stretched sufficiently in writing or in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by additional government funding benefit from well-organised and effective additional support. Consequently, they make as much progress as other pupils. The gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are closing rapidly.
- School checks on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 show they are attaining at a similar level to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with other pupils nationally in 2014, they were one term below in reading and writing, and two terms in mathematics. This represents a substantial improvement compared with their attainment in 2012 when the gaps were three times greater.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Their understanding of what is being taught is checked at an early stage and enables teachers to tailor activities to their specific needs.
- Pupils read enthusiastically and regularly at school. They enjoy books and make good use of the school library and computers to read for pleasure and to find information for their topics. Pupils, including the youngest lower attainers in Key Stage 1, use phonics to confidently read new words. However, in Reception, the lowest-attaining children do not always make rapid progress in pronouncing individual words clearly or in learning how to break words into their sounds.

The early years provision

is good

- Early years provision for children in the Nursery and Reception is well led. School leaders ensure that learning resources are stimulating and used effectively to ensure children achieve well.
- All staff implement the school's safeguarding policies and procedures very effectively. As a result, the children are kept safe and secure and are extremely well cared for.
- Children's progress is exceptional in the Nursery and good in Reception. Their progress is good overall. This begins to lift their attainment although, by the time they leave Reception, the proportion reaching a good level of development is still a little below that found in most schools, including in communication and language, literacy and numeracy.
- Provision in the Nursery is outstanding. Rich learning activities enable children to develop their communication, language, personal, social and physical skills extremely well. Very attractive activities encourage children to talk about their experiences and to develop their vocabulary extremely well. Children make rapid strides in developing their early literacy and numeracy because these are seamlessly woven into imaginative play, for example when children develop their early writing and counting skills by taking food orders in their 'Chinese New Year Café'.
- In Reception, teaching is good. Adults' effective management of children's behaviour, for example when children learn together in a large group or during free-choice activities, sustains their attention. Adults provide an effective balance of adult-led and supported learning experiences alongside interesting opportunities to choose activities for themselves. For example, children play and learn meaningfully when creating scenarios with model dinosaurs and eagerly find out more about them by looking at books.
- Most Reception children make good progress in learning their sounds and letters. Adults show children how to form letters clearly and help them to apply their understanding of sounds and letters when attempting to read and write simple words. However, lower-attaining children are not always given enough opportunities to pronounce words accurately and break simple words into their component sounds, which restricts their progress.
- In both Nursery and Reception, high-quality help for those at early stages of learning English as an additional language enables children to make an excellent start in learning this language. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are nurtured well and make progress in line with others. Carefully targeted activities make sure the most able realise their potential.
- Adults keep detailed information about individual children's progress and use similar approaches across

Nursery and Reception. The school is currently streamlining electronic tracking systems.

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	102975
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	454774

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	587
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Eley
Headteacher	Martin Kearsey
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2011
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