

# Devonshire Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104991
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	377154
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	413
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Kearney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jillian Billinge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Temple Road Birkenhead CH42 9JX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 20 lessons in all classes taught by 18 teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 64 parents and carers, 94 pupils and 22 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement in mathematics.
- How challenging teaching is, especially for the more-able pupils.
- How well the newly-appointed subject leaders monitor the school's performance and devise suitable plans for driving forward improvement.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this larger-than-average-sized primary school are White British, with very few who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, especially those with a statement of special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is within three specialist resource bases for language and communication and for behaviour, which also take pupils from other local schools. The school operates its own before- and after-school club. The school has seen significant staffing changes over the last two years. The school has a number of awards, including National Healthy School Status, the Basic Skills Award and the Activemark.

**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?** 2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement** 2

### Main findings

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and makes a considerable difference to the lives of the young people in its care. It has maintained its excellent partnership working since the last inspection and improved its levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils to be outstanding. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were highly supportive of all aspects of its work.

Despite significant changes in staffing, the school has moved forward strongly since the last inspection. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good teaching, leadership, curriculum and care. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 also make good progress from their starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those within the specialist resource bases. Considerable work has been undertaken to improve attainment in mathematics, and for boys, with noticeable success. Pupils' attainment overall when they leave Year 6 is broadly average but rising strongly and securely. Achievement is therefore good.

Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding, especially in the use of assessment to devise suitable activities to meet pupils' needs. There are very few weaker lessons which, while satisfactory, do not always give pupils sufficient challenge, particularly the more able. In these lessons teachers do not take every opportunity to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills or their independent learning. The curriculum is good, especially in its promotion of pupils' understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pastoral support for all groups of pupils is excellent, reflecting the levels of care across the school. Most pupils clearly enjoy their time in school, behaviour is good and pupils say they feel valued and safe.

The senior leaders and managers provide good direction for the school and are well informed by their self-evaluation practices about its strengths and weaknesses. Due to recent staffing changes the monitoring role of subject leaders is not yet fully developed and the sharpness of their improvement planning varies. The governing body is active in challenging the school and supporting its drive for improvement. Actions to overcome weakness in the school's provision have been concerted and effective and, as such, its capacity for sustained improvement and its value for money are both good.

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

- Improve attainment and achievement in all areas of learning by ensuring that the quality of teaching is at least consistently good in all lessons, by:
  - further developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, especially in lower Key Stage 2, so that pupils are able to learn effectively from adults and each other
  - providing sufficient challenge within lessons, especially for the more-able pupils
  - limiting the amount of teacher direction within lessons and promoting more effective independent learning by allowing pupils to demonstrate their understanding without adult support.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that newly-appointed subject leaders are fully supported in their training and able to monitor the quality of provision in their areas as effectively as possible
  - sharpening the focus of development planning to make clear what needs to be done and how it will be measured accurately to bring about improvement.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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Achievement and enjoyment is good. Children enter the school with low levels of basic skills compared with those typical for their age, especially in language. Learning is good in the majority of lessons, with pupils fully engaged as a result of good and, sometimes, outstanding teaching. Most pupils acquire new knowledge, develop their understanding and learn new skills well. Pupils clearly enjoy the vast majority of their learning, as where, for example, group work within one English lesson produced animated, humorous and high level responses from the pupils as they explained how to construct their factual writing.

Attainment on leaving the school in Year 6 has varied in the past, with standards in English being stronger than in mathematics. Boys have sometimes performed less well than girls. These differences have been significantly reduced over the last year as staffing has been stabilised, a focused programme of support and challenge put in place and aspects of the curriculum revised. Attainment is now securely broadly average across the school. The vast majority of pupils now make at least good progress from their starting points, with many making accelerated progress in upper Key Stage 2, especially in English. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the additional support they receive. Some of these pupils make very good progress, notably those in the specialist resource-based provision.

The school is a warm and harmonious community. Behaviour is often excellent in the best lessons but is good overall due to some low-level unrest in a few other lessons. Attendance is broadly average but improving strongly. The progress pupils make in developing the key skills in literacy and numeracy is good, often from low starting

points. Pupils' knowledge and use of information and communication technology is above average. Pupils make a good contribution to the daily running of the school, reflecting the school's considerable work currently towards an award for respecting pupils' rights. There is an active school council, many pupils act as trained playground buddies to support each other. Involvement in the local community is strong, particularly through links with the local church. The school makes considerable efforts to promote pupils' wider understanding of the world through the curriculum and to develop their personal qualities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, being especially strong in the arts and sport. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

In the better lessons, good planning, well-informed by assessment data, ensures that varied and often practical activities are provided that meet the needs of most pupils. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are used well in these lessons to support pupils' learning. Individual learning targets are used with all pupils to help them focus upon what needs to be done to achieve well. These are regularly reviewed and updated and are contributing to raised expectations and better support for pupils in the better lessons. In the few weaker lessons, assessment has not been used well enough to provide sufficient challenge, especially for the more-able pupils. Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills or to work independently and to demonstrate their understanding without adult support.

The school has been involved in a creative curriculum project for some years, with a specific focus upon both literacy and numeracy skills, but also upon the development of pupils' understanding of the wider world. This understanding comes through well-planned themed units of work which make learning interesting and relevant. This approach makes very good use of information and communication technology to link

<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

pupils to other schools around the country and extend their learning. A major review of curriculum provision within mathematics and in support of boys' learning has begun to improve these areas. A good programme of visits and visitors enriches pupils' experiences and there is a good range of additional clubs and activities that are well supported by all groups of pupils.

The success of the school's care, guidance and support is seen in the often excellent progress pupils make in developing their personal skills by the time they leave the school. The school works extremely well at all levels with families, pupils and a wide range of outside agencies to identify and then sustain the often complex learning needs of its pupils. The good provision within the resource-based classes then ensures that these needs are well met. An extensive programme of family learning is also provided to meet the needs of parents and carers and the local community. Transition arrangements into and out of the school are of a high quality, reflecting the excellent partnership working of the school. The before- and after-school club is well attended and extends the pupils' learning very well through structured activity sessions. Attendance is monitored very well and is improving rapidly, with the levels of persistent absenteeism now less than half that of similar schools. Support for pupils on long-term absence is also considerable and helps minimise the disruption to their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The experienced headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is driving forward improvement with energy and skill. She is supported by an enthusiastic and hard-working staff. Due to changes in staffing many of the current subject leaders are newly in post, and the school has identified that it still has work to do in consolidating the monitoring role of this group and sharpening their individual plans for improvement. Nevertheless, the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and good whole-school plans in place for driving further improvement. The effective governing body has a good understanding of the school and is active in providing it with both support and challenge. Governor links to classes and subject areas are currently being further developed.

Safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school demonstrates good practice in site security and staff training. Engagement with parents and carers is good, often making effective use of the school's website and links with local children's centres. The school's partnership working is excellent, bringing capacity to the school it would not otherwise have, for example, in the arts, for gifted and able pupils and in supporting pupils who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. The school has

carried out an audit of its social, ethnic and religious context and has in place a good range of planned actions to support community cohesion. This is good overall, being well supported by links to cultures and ways of life of a very different kind to that of the school, for example, schools in Eastern Europe. The promotion of equal opportunities is good, with gaps in pupils' performance rapidly closing. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with very well.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Adults ensure that children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome to the school. Children settle happily in the safe and stimulating environment. There is a strong focus upon developing language skills and the establishment of clear routines and expectations that help children's learning and personal development. Children's learning is well recorded and this information used to inform the next stage in their learning. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress and interests. Children make good progress across all areas of learning because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching in an environment which caters well for their needs. Some children make outstanding progress, especially in their social development. Behaviour is good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the additional support they receive. A real strength of the school's provision is the way teachers plan a very good range of activities to meet children's needs. There is a very good balance between activities that teachers direct and those chosen by the children. The outdoor area is somewhat restricted due to site limitations but is used well by the school to support children's learning.

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed leader is building a talented team which is providing good, and in some cases, exemplary provision for the children in its care. Further developments of the assessment practices are currently being made to better record children's progress across all areas of learning. Staff training is up to date, welfare requirements are fully met and there are good plans in place for bringing about further improvement.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was much lower than that normally seen. Those who returned the inspection questionnaire are very happy with most aspects of the school's work. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Devonshire Park 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 413 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	63	23	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	66	21	33	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	55	26	41	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	58	25	39	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	69	18	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	66	19	30	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	53	28	44	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)	30	47	28	44	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	64	21	33	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	58	23	36	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	55	23	36	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	69	16	25	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	75	12	19	1	2	1	2

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Devonshire Park Primary School, Birkenhead, CH42 9JX**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. You were very friendly and polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

Devonshire Park is a good school. It has some outstanding features. You make good progress throughout the school as a result of the good teaching and the subjects that you cover in lessons. Those of you who find learning difficult also make good progress because of the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the school, especially in the specialist small classes. Your behaviour is good and you are involved well in the daily life of the school. Well done! You say you feel safe and highly valued within the school. You have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and you take plenty of exercise. The school works extremely well with outside partners to provide lots of sport for you to enjoy. Your attendance is average, but improving strongly. To help the school to improve we have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- improve the small number of satisfactory lessons so that all the teaching is at least good
- ensure that staff in new positions within the school are fully supported and that their planning to help move the school forward is sufficiently detailed.

You can all help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if your work is too hard or too easy. Also, please make sure you all come to school as often as possible. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Lead inspector

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