

Sudley Infant School

Dundonald Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L17 0AE

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress from average starting points on entry to school; by the end of Year 2, attainment is well above average.
- Standards have been consistently high for a number of years in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leave school very well equipped for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils experience outstanding teaching through a well-planned and flexible curriculum which engages them and ensures that they are well-motivated and enthusiastic learners, although very occasionally the work is too easy or too hard for groups of pupils and their progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- Teachers plan short themed units of work which are often based on the pupils' interests and which are well supported by a very wide range of visits and visitors.
- Pupils' confidence and motivation are enhanced through a variety of opportunities to develop their artistic, musical and sporting skills which are planned frequently during the year and are available to pupils of all ages. These offer all pupils the chance to experience additional success and support their outstanding achievement.
- Pupils with disabilities and other special educational needs and from other vulnerable groups are well provided for and supported effectively so that they make good and sometimes rapid progress. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals achieve particularly well.
- Behaviour and safety are excellent. Pupils set and maintain particularly high standards for themselves and are highly critical when these are not consistently met by all members of the school community.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning ensure that they want to succeed and rise to the challenges that teachers set for them.
- School leaders have maintained the high levels of achievement since the last inspection because they have remained focused on how well pupils progress and attain.
- Middle leaders who are responsible for monitoring the achievement of specific groups of pupils are highly effective so all groups make rapid progress over time and potential underachievement is swiftly identified.
- Governors have a very accurate picture of the school's performance and are very well informed about outcomes for all pupils. They make decisions about school improvement based firmly on raising achievement even further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons led by teachers. Two assemblies were observed. They listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read and inspected written work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with six members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and two groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors reviewed 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held a telephone interview with one carer of children at the school.
- Inspectors took into account the views that staff expressed in 31 completed questionnaires.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: assessment data, the school's own evaluation of its work, minutes from governing body meetings, reports from the school improvement partner, safeguarding documentation, information about how well staff are performing, monitoring records and the school's development plan.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sudley Infant School is slightly larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. (This is funding to help raise the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and children looked after by the local authority.)
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by school action or by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- One pupil attends Mab Lane Primary School part time to receive specialist learning support for four mornings every week.
- The school is currently part of a pilot with Liverpool local authority regarding the assessment of children on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that activities are always planned to meet effectively the needs of all pupils in every lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding in relation to their starting points and abilities. They make outstanding progress across the school and, as a result, attainment is consistently high at the end of Year 2.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills that are broadly expected for their age. Almost all children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are expected for their age, and many with skills that are above those expected.
- The school has effective strategies in place to identify children who may need additional support and monitors their progress closely, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so they receive the right level of support and make good progress.
- Staff provide many opportunities and excellent support for children to develop their social skills and communication and language in the Reception classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is enriched with a variety of trips to enable children to experience learning about new things first-hand.
- In 2012, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the required standards in the national check on phonics skills, which focused on their ability to identify letters and the sounds they make, was well below the national figure. In 2013, this had improved and was in line with the national figure. The proportion of pupils achieving the standard after undertaking the check again in Year 2 was high.
- The school has moved to a more effective system of teaching phonics to all pupils and this has resulted in more pupils achieving the expected standard in 2013. The success of this is also evident in the writing of children in the Reception classes and pupils in Year 1, where spelling is more secure than in Year 2.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through Key Stage 1; by the time they leave Year 2, their attainment is well above average in all areas.
- The school has recognised that attainment in writing is slightly weaker than in reading and mathematics, although it is still well above average. School leaders have identified this in the school's development plan. They have put effective strategies in place to improve standards even further and to close the small gap in achievement.
- The attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and is in line with that of other pupils in the school. The performance of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above that of pupils in this group nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows the school's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The attainment of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is well above that of pupils in this group nationally, especially in reading and mathematics, and pupils make good progress from their varied starting points.
- The most-able pupils make outstanding progress and achieve very well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, inspectors judged that their progress could be even better if work was always planned to meet their needs in every lesson.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding, ensuring that pupils make rapid progress across the school.
- Lessons are almost always planned well. In the best lessons, learning is highly effective because the pace is brisk, pupils are excited and enthused by what they are learning and the needs of all pupils are met. In the very few lessons observed where teaching was not yet good, activities

were planned that were too hard, especially for less-able pupils, or too easy for the most-able pupils; as a result, pupils' progress was not always good or better.

- In an outstanding physical education (PE) lesson where pupils were developing their rolling and catching skills, progress was rapid for all groups because activities were planned to support and extend learning. The teacher used skilful questioning throughout to ensure that pupils fully understood what was expected of them and the pupils were excited and enthusiastic about what they were learning. This lesson also illustrated the high level of care that children show to one another, as when one pupil demonstrated immediate concern for his friend's well-being after he was accidentally hit in the face by a soft ball during the session.
- Pupils in a Year 1 literacy lesson made very rapid progress when learning to write 'golden' sentences because they listened well, engaged in a very detailed dialogue with each other about the activity and clearly knew what was expected as an outcome of the lesson. Additional staff were used very effectively in this lesson to provide a small group of less-able pupils with very personalised support, and alternative methods of recording their progress were used to monitor learning, including photographs.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that highly effective teaching over time ensures that pupils consistently make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils know what their targets for learning are and can talk about their next steps in detail. Marking is almost always effective and verbal feedback to pupils in lessons is good at helping them to progress rapidly.
- Pupils and staff have trusting, positive relationships, and staff know their pupils very well indeed. This ensures that pupils are open to teachers' advice and know that comments and questions from staff are very important in helping them to make excellent progress.
- The school places great importance on the teaching of reading skills to pupils without an over-reliance on phonics as a single important strategy. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 who read to inspectors demonstrated skills that were above average, and in the case of the most-able pupils, very high. Pupils of average and above-average ability demonstrated skills that were excellent and their capacity to discuss the texts they were reading was very impressive. The lower-ability pupils who read to inspectors were not as confident or as capable because there were a few weaknesses in their reading skills and the books that they were reading were too challenging.
- In mathematics, pupils are challenged in almost every lesson, especially pupils who are most able. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and tasks are planned well to meet the needs of all learners. The subject knowledge of staff is very good and pupils are given excellent opportunities to work independently so that they practise and consolidate their skills and knowledge effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. They feel very safe and secure in school and have very high expectations of their own and others' behaviour. Pupils are highly critical of poor behaviour and reported some very minor incidents as being of concern to them when talking to inspectors. This reflects the pupils' own high standards of behaviour and the way that they monitor and judge the behaviour of others within the school.
- Pupils can talk about the school's behaviour management strategies in detail and understand the systems of sanctions and rewards that are consistently applied in all classes.
- Pupils reported that they felt they were treated fairly and with respect by school staff and that they were confident that adults in school would address any concerns or worries they had promptly and effectively.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the school and expressed their confidence in the school to promote good behaviour and care for pupils well. They said that the school had a 'good reputation in the local community'.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, said that their children feel safe at school, are well cared for and that the school makes sure that its pupils are well

behaved. The majority of parents felt that the school deals well with bullying.

- In the vast majority of lessons observed, pupils demonstrated high levels of engagement with the activities planned for them and were well prepared to learn. Because of this, they made rapid progress in their learning and achieved well.
- In the very few lessons where activities were not planned well enough to meet the needs of all groups, pupils occasionally became distracted because they could not attempt the tasks they were presented with, or because the work was too easy and did not challenge them sufficiently.
- Attendance is consistently high, even for those pupils below statutory school age in the Reception classes. The school monitors punctuality rigorously and challenges families that are not always on time for school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- School leaders drive improvement with commitment and enthusiasm and ensure that achievement is outstanding for all pupils. Leaders have plans for improvement focused on improving the already high standards that exist for all pupils, especially in writing and mathematics.
 - Senior and middle leaders make an especially effective contribution because their responsibilities are clearly defined and they are now taking an active role in monitoring the quality of teaching through a structured programme of lesson observations and checking pupils' work in books. Assistant headteachers have responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage, monitoring the achievement of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and for assessment across the school. They work effectively together, especially when their responsibilities overlap.
 - The teacher who is responsible for organising the delivery of the new primary school sport funding demonstrates exceptional leadership and has extensive and well-informed plans for activities that have already had a positive impact on the high levels of engagement in school sport and extra-curricular activities. Currently pupils are taking part in basketball, football, street dance and martial arts sessions either before or after school, and judo and basketball training as part of their PE provision. The strategies for monitoring levels of engagement and the impact on pupils' well-being are sophisticated and extensive.
 - Staff monitor pupils' attainment every term and have a good awareness of the performance of different groups of pupils across the school.
 - The school has a large amount of information about pupils' attainment and progress. The staff are currently amending the way that the school uses this information to review how teachers set targets for individuals and to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged even when they are making rapid progress.
 - Previously, target setting for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs has been too ambitious; as a result, these pupils have not always achieved the challenging targets set for them. The school has now reviewed this and has put in place a more effective system based on the needs and abilities of individual pupils rather than the whole group.
 - The system to check the performance of teachers is clearly linked to pupil performance, and staff are effectively held to account for the achievement of their pupils. Professional development and training are used very well to support and develop teachers' skills and to raise already high standards even further.
 - The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and well informed. Leaders at all levels, including governors, contribute to school improvement and development planning.
 - The curriculum is very well planned to meet the needs of pupils and is delivered in short units of work that are themed according to the pupils' interests. Links between subjects are made explicitly and pupils have many opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects which engage and excite them. Through a wide range of enrichment activities, pupils discover a wealth of new experiences, including learning a number of modern foreign languages, which supports their outstanding achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a very well-informed and detailed overview of the school's performance and take regular opportunities throughout the year to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They meet regularly with senior leaders and staff with specific responsibilities to discuss progress, learning and the standards that pupils attain. They understand the impact of arrangements to check the performance of staff on improving the quality of teaching and achievement. The governing body ensures that the pupil premium is spent wisely and has challenged the school previously about how it has had an impact on the achievement of the pupils that are supported by this funding. Governors monitor the achievement of all groups of pupils every term and challenge the school about any areas of underperformance. Governors carry out their statutory duties very well; they ensure that equal opportunities are promoted and that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. They also make sure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements.

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	104580
Inspection number	426282

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Milan
Headteacher	Ruth Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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