

Inspection of Dovecot Primary School

Grant Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L14 0LH

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy belonging to the 'Dovecot family'. They said that this makes them feel happy and cared for. Pupils told inspectors that staff help them to become independent learners.

Pupils understand and follow the school's vision and behave well. They champion each other to make sure that they can 'learn and grow together'. This makes the school a safe haven for many pupils. It is a place where pupils know that their peers and the staff will be there for them when they most need it.

Pupils have not experienced a good quality of education over time. The achievement of some pupils has been negatively affected by historically low expectations and turbulence in previous leadership. Pupils now benefit from more settled leadership. They are following new subject curriculums which reflect higher expectations for their achievement. However, these higher expectations are not embedded for all pupils in all subjects. Consequently, some pupils are still underachieving.

Pupils relish the variety of opportunities that the school offers them. They are passionate about the charity work that they do. It teaches them to be responsible citizens. They are proud of their litter picking, which was featured on a national television programme. Through roles such as school councillors and buddies, pupils contribute well to school life.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

After a period of instability, leaders and governors have worked together to prioritise attendance, behaviour and pastoral support for families. Most pupils now attend school regularly. The school works closely with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance, which for this year has significantly improved.

The school has successfully prioritised the teaching of reading. Children in the early years, including those in the pre-school class, enjoy listening to a range of songs and rhymes. From the Reception Year, children benefit from a carefully constructed phonics programme that is implemented by well-trained staff. Staff ably provide pupils with extra support with their learning in phonics if they need it. Most pupils read fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Older pupils are immersed in a range of interesting texts. This helps them to develop a love of reading. Pupils were particularly keen to point out that the new library books include diverse themes and cultures. Virtual and in-person author visits have inspired them to become writers.

The school has carefully organised the curriculum so that it is aspirational. However, there are not consistently high enough expectations of how well pupils can achieve across the curriculum. Some staff's own written communication does not reliably

help pupils to develop their own language skills. There are pupils throughout the school who are not ready for the next stage in their learning.

In some subjects, it is clear what pupils should know and when they should learn it. However, there are some subjects in which the school has not identified the most important knowledge that pupils should acquire. As a result, teachers are unclear which subject content to introduce and when they should introduce it. This has a negative impact on the depth of pupils' learning.

In some subjects, for example early reading, staff quickly address misunderstandings. However this is not the case in some subject areas. In some subjects, checks are not precise enough to identify gaps in learning. This hinders the progress that some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make through the curriculum.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. Staff work with outside professionals as well as parents to build the right educational support for pupils at the school.

Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils work conscientiously. Pupils, and many families, feel well supported by the provision that the school puts in place to help them. For example, regular coffee mornings help to form a productive bridge between home and school.

The programme to promote pupils' personal development is well thought out. Staff have carefully designed it to ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to become successful citizens of modern Britain. Pupils told inspectors that staff help them to understand and celebrate cultural diversity. They said that having pupils from different backgrounds makes their school more interesting. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities that broaden their horizons.

Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, they do not evaluate the school's curriculum well enough. This means that they do not challenge the school as effectively as they should.

Staff feel valued. They are proud to work at the school. They have welcomed the changes to the curriculum. The school takes their well-being into account when making any changes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school is not sufficiently clear about essential subject content and the order in which pupils should learn it. This prevents pupils from gaining the depth of knowledge that they should. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking from early years to Year 6 so that teachers have enough information and guidance to design learning effectively.
- The checks that the school makes on pupils' learning, including for pupils with SEND, do not identify gaps in knowledge sufficiently well. This means that some pupils move through the curriculum with ongoing gaps in learning and misconceptions. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to use assessment strategies well so that pupils' learning is secure before they introduce new concepts.
- The school does not ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve. Alongside this, some teachers do not set a good example of accurate written communication. These factors contribute to the underachievement of a significant number of pupils and their consequent lack of readiness for the next stage in their learning. The school should ensure that teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement match the ambition of the new curriculums so that all pupils reach their full academic potential.
- Governors do not evaluate the school's curriculum well enough, therefore they do not challenge the school as effectively as they should. Governors should use information that they gather about the curriculum to challenge the school appropriately. In this way they can fully support the school's actions to improve the quality of education for pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the

school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	130296
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10321385
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Nurse
Headteacher	Karen Barr
Website	www.dovecotprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Over the last six years there have been five headteachers.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses one alternative provider for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics and art and design. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. They visited

lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at the school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicky Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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