

Sandwich Infant School

School Road, Sandwich, Kent, CT13 9HT

Inspection dates 24–25 April 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.

- This is a good and improving school. Leadership has a clear vision for future development and there is a strong sense of purpose and teamwork within the staff team.
- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of Year 2, they reach above average standards in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding. Teachers plan carefully to meet the individual needs of all pupils.
- Almost all parents and carers who voiced their views agreed that their children were happy, safe and well cared at the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and behave well. Attendance has steadily improved over the last three years and is now in line with national averages.
- The school is improving because leaders and governors have ambitious plans for the school based on an accurate and detailed knowledge of its performance. They are effective in identifying what needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' skills in writing are not always developed effectively so standards are not as high as those seen in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly but does not always show in detail how they can improve their own work.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that every pupil makes rapid progress in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons and parts of lessons. Three of these were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Pupils' work in books was scrutinised and a representative sample of pupils was heard to read.
- Records and logs about pupils' safety, attendance and behaviour were examined.
- Information and data about the performance of pupils in national tests and work completed in classrooms were analysed.
- The school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, together with minutes of governors' meetings and reports made by representatives of the local authority were considered.
- The inspector heard the views of parents, carers, pupils and staff. Twenty-eight parents and carers responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a further eight spoke to the inspector at the school gate. Discussions were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, school leaders, staff members and a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Richard Potts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sandwich Infant School is a smaller than average size primary school, serving its local community.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly in line with the national average. Those receiving support at school action plus and who have a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average but has more than doubled in the last two years.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who are of ethnic minority heritage or who speak English as an additional language is well below that found nationally.
- There are more girls than boys at the school than is found typically.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing, particularly boys' writing, so that attainment is in line with that in reading and mathematics, by providing more opportunities for pupils to write at greater length across all subjects.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that better marking gives pupils greater opportunity to learn from their mistakes and that they all know the next steps in their learning and how to achieve them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding broadly in line with those nationally expected for their age. The school's own assessment information, together with evidence from lessons and in pupils' books, confirms that progress in reading and mathematics is accelerating so that attainment is above average.
- Children in Reception make a good start in their learning. Carefully planned learning opportunities that encourage independence and exploration ensure that children are well prepared for the next stages in their learning.
- Pupils read well because they have a good understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and are encouraged to read widely.
- While pupils make good progress from their starting points overall, they do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to write extensively in all subjects.
- The school's data indicate that the gap in performance between girls and boys is closing rapidly.
- The school has well-developed systems to identify pupils' learning needs, so that appropriate support programmes can be put in place quickly. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is improving sharply, so that the gap between their attainment and that of the others is closing. This is because the extra support they get is well targeted and effective.
- A large majority of parents and carers agree that their children make good progress in their learning while at school. As one wrote, 'The learning atmosphere of this school marks it out as exceptional. My children are so much more interested in everything around them since starting here.'

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching over time is good and some of it is outstanding. During the inspection, no inadequate lessons were seen.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand how to promote pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- On the basis of observations and records held by the school, teaching is improving. Teachers plan lessons which pupils enjoy and which support the differing needs of each individual. High expectations in most lessons lead to work that is challenging and teachers make sure that learning proceeds briskly.
- In the small minority of lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers' explanations are too long and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Most teachers maintain a careful check on pupils' progress as the lesson proceeds, using skilful questioning to judge levels of understanding and to encourage deeper thinking.
- Lesson planning is generally detailed and learning targets are clearly identified both for individuals and for groups of pupils. While assessment is used effectively to chart pupils' progress, it is not always used consistently well as a basis for discussions with pupils about their learning. As a result, pupils do not always know how well they are doing in aspects of their work and how they can improve it.
- Relationships throughout the school are characterised by respect and trust. Pupils respond well to instruction and the school is a very positive place to learn.
- The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the children in Reception were immensely interested and excited at the animals

brought in for 'Pets' Day'. Comments, like: 'I'll be the mummy for this one because it's very small' and 'It moves because it's alive', indicate that the children are thinking deeply and beginning to appreciate the world around them.

- Effective teaching assistants support learning well, so that gaps in performance are closing. For example, in a lesson where a teaching assistant was helping pupils to prepare 'Mr Greenhead' using grass seed and compost, skilful questioning added to pupils' understanding and effectively extended their vocabulary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has worked closely with parents and carers over time to improve attendance. As a result, rates of attendance have improved steadily over three years and are now in line with the national average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and that the teachers make their learning fun. Very few pupils arrive late each day.
- The school has well-developed and effective systems of rewards and sanctions. Carefully maintained logs indicate that poor behaviour and racist incidents are exceptionally rare. Repeated indiscipline is dealt with swiftly and robustly and the rate of exclusion is very low.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are a strong feature of the school. They show commitment and a determination to succeed. Even on the few occasions where teaching is less than good, pupils maintain concentration and behave well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs that have an impact on the way they behave are well supported and expectations of them are no different to any of the others. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work contribute strongly to the good progress they make in their learning.
- The school works well with parents and carers to help improve pupils' behaviour over time. Close partnership with other support agencies, providing help for parents and carers, adds to the effectiveness of the school's work.
- A large majority of parents and carers believe that the few incidents of bullying are promptly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding, for their age, of the different types of bullying and say they feel safe and well protected. They express complete trust and confidence in the staff and believe that any issues are handled sensitively and quickly.
- Pupils express pride in their school. All groups of pupils are helpful, tolerant and thoughtful towards each other and polite towards adults. One pupil's comment, typical of others, was, 'We are really good at making friends here. You don't have to be a Playground Buddy to be nice and to care for each other.'

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a strong commitment to excellence and has assembled a workforce that shares her vision to create an outstanding school over time.
- Well supported by capable and knowledgeable senior leaders, the headteacher has acted swiftly and decisively to reverse an historical decline in performance.
- The leadership of the school carefully monitors the work of the teachers and other staff. As a result, plans to improve the school's effectiveness reflect a detailed and accurate judgement of its performance.
- The school's leadership works well in making sure a close eye is kept on how well pupils are doing and that any extra support is deployed effectively. The school's resources are used appropriately to support learning and since every pupil has an equal opportunity to make good progress, the school provides good value for money.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is well matched to pupils' learning needs, promoting both good achievement and the development of basic skills. A wide range of enrichment activities,

including after-school clubs, trips and visits and the 'Inspire Day', complements work in the classroom and contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Setting targets for teachers to improve their work is effective because it is focused strongly on the impact adults have on meeting the needs of the pupils and on supporting their progress. There is a close link between teachers' range of duties, their effectiveness and their pay.
- The school works well with external agencies, in particular with those helping individual pupils and their families. At the time of the inspection, all appropriate safeguarding arrangements were in place.
- The school is well supported by the local authority. Through careful monitoring and well-directed support, the local authority has made a telling contribution to the school's improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide strong support for the work of the school. Their energy and insight contribute positively to its strategic drive for improvement. They make decisions based on a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their monitoring work, coupled with the good-quality training they have undertaken, means that governors have a good knowledge of the school's performance. This allows them to hold the school robustly to account for its improvement and to ensure that performance is closely matched to pay progression. They keep a close eye on how the school deploys its resources. As a result, they make well-informed decisions about the use of pupil premium funds and recognise that this is helping to narrow the gaps in performance between groups and individual pupils. Improved governance has been a key factor underpinning the school's improvement.

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	118547
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	412493

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol-Anne Whittaker
Headteacher	Elizabeth Wood
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2009
Telephone number	01304 612228
Fax number	01304 613358
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