

# Sandhill View School

Grindon Lane, Thorney Close, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4EN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Too many students, especially those supported by the pupil premium, do not make enough progress or attain well enough in mathematics. Students' achievement in this subject is inadequate.
- Levels of attainment in humanities and modern foreign languages are also low.
- The quality of teaching is not improving fast enough. Checks on the quality of teaching have not always identified precisely enough what teachers need to do to improve.
- Not all members of staff apply behaviour management policies consistently. As a consequence, students have concerns that some lessons are disrupted and that learning opportunities are lost.
- Leaders and managers have not fully addressed areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Although achievement and the quality of teaching are improving at Key Stage 3, attainment in GCSE mathematics continues to be too low.
- Strategies employed by the school to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged students have not had sufficient impact.
- In the past, governors have not been sufficiently rigorous in challenging senior leaders to address weaknesses in achievement and in the quality of teaching. Recent changes to the governing body now mean there are better systems developing for checking the work of senior leaders.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers are bringing about improvements at Key Stage 3, including in mathematics. In particular, lower-attaining students are responding well to support and are catching up quickly.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs receive very good support within a caring and inclusive school community. Students with hearing or visual impairments make particularly good progress.
- Students, particularly girls, make good progress in English and go on to attain standards in line with the national average.
- The school places a high value on students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. In particular, it plays an effective role in bringing together people of all ages and backgrounds from within the local community.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made short visits to a number of lessons, scrutinised students' books within lessons and looked at samples of students' books across the full range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a group of middle leaders, a group of teachers and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also talked to staff responsible for coordinating extra literacy and numeracy programmes and to those staff responsible for supporting students with disabilities and with special education needs. Meetings were also held with groups of students.
- The inspection team also took account of 59 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 58 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Chris Smith, Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lee Northern

Her Majesty's Inspector

Frank Cain

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Sandhill View School is a smaller-than-average 11-16 secondary school.
- There are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds or that speak English as a second language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose parents are serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is close to the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above average.
- Sandhill View School is the base for the local authority resourced provision for students with visual or hearing impairment.
- The school is also the local authority base for school returners and for young mothers.
- The school has a performing arts specialism and is part of a community learning centre. Included in its awards are Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills Quality Mark and International Schools' Award.
- Until recently a number of students attended Sunderland Futures, a vocational training centre established by the school in partnership with other local providers. A smaller number of students now accesses vocational courses at another local school.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school is working in partnership with Southmoor Academy to develop aspects of teaching and assessment.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - using assessment information more precisely so that learning challenges students to build on their existing knowledge, skills and understanding
  - ensuring that there are more frequent opportunities for students to talk to each other, discuss their ideas and develop more thoughtful responses to questions
  - ensuring that all students are given regular opportunities to respond to marking and feedback from teachers by extending the recent initiatives led by the English department.
- Improve the progress students make and raise levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that teaching in mathematics is of a consistently good or better quality, challenging students' thinking and deepening their knowledge of mathematical concepts
  - ensuring that the impact of programmes designed to accelerate the progress of some students is checked more frequently
  - making a more concerted effort to ensure that opportunities for students to use and apply

mathematics across the curriculum are embedded into programmes of study.

- Improve students' attitudes to learning, by:
  - listening more closely, and responding to, the views of students and staff about how behaviour can be improved and disruptions to learning can be minimised
  - ensuring that staff apply the school policy on behaviour management consistently
  - further raising students' awareness about the negative impact of homophobic language.
  
- Increase the impact of school leaders at all levels on raising achievement, by:
  - ensuring that priorities identified by the school are sharply focused on improving teaching and raising achievement, with shorter timescales for evaluating their success
  - using a wider range of evidence when making checks on the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that strategies to raise the attainment of students supported by the pupil premium have greater impact
  - broadening the range of checks undertaken by governors so that they are fully aware of the impact of strategies to narrow attainment gaps and to support lower-attaining students in Years 7 and 8.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because students have not made enough progress or attained well enough in mathematics across the last three years. Although standards are now rising at Key Stage 3, the school's own assessment information does not show the same improvement at Key Stage 4. Achievement is also not good enough in a range of other subjects including humanities and modern foreign languages.
- More-able students are not always challenged or extended sufficiently, and consequently the proportion of students achieving the top grades in GCSE mathematics, geography, French and drama is low.
- Students enter the school with levels of attainment in English and mathematics that are below the national average. They make good progress in English and go on to achieve standards in examinations that are similar to those of other students nationally. In contrast, the quality of provision in mathematics has been weak and students have consistently underachieved. Programmes to help students who fall behind in mathematics have had some impact, but have not been sufficiently effective to fill gaps in learning that have built up over time. The school is now focusing on improving the quality of provision from the start of Key Stage 3 and recent assessments show students in Years 7 and 8 are making much more progress.
- The school is making effective use of additional funding to help lower-attaining students catch up when they start secondary education. Programmes are well-planned and more than three-quarters of students on these programmes show rapid gains in literacy and numeracy.
- Students' literacy skills develop faster than their skills in numeracy. This is partly because there are more planned opportunities for students to apply literacy skills across the curriculum, although opportunities for students to write at length are too few. Recent staff training to increase the impact of numeracy across the curriculum has yet to have an impact.
- The attainment of students supported by the pupil premium lags behind that of their peers by nearly a full GCSE grade in both English and mathematics. The school's own tracking data show that the gaps between students supported by the pupil premium and their peers are now narrowing in English, but less so in mathematics.
- In the past, the school followed a policy of entering students early for the GCSE examination in mathematics. The policy was not in the best interests of students as they were not given sufficient time to develop a mature understanding of mathematical concepts. The school has now changed this policy and will, in future, enter students for examination in the summer of Year 11.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs receive good support and make good progress. Students with hearing or visual impairments achieve particularly well and go on to achieve notable success in GCSE examinations.
- Students that attended Sunderland Futures achieved good outcomes on a range of vocational courses. However, with the closure of this facility in August 2013, fewer students now access alternative provision. Those that do so benefit from good provision and achieve well.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Not all students have benefited from good or better teaching over time, especially in mathematics. Overall, more than half of the teaching observed during the inspection was judged to require improvement; no outstanding or inadequate teaching were seen. Generally, the quality of teaching and the achievement of students were good in those subjects where 2013 GCSE results were close to or above the national average for A\*-C grades, such as English, art and design, German and design and technology.
- Where teaching requires improvement, particularly in mathematics, the work provided is too easy and students are not sufficiently challenged to think for themselves. Teachers of

mathematics often teach a method, rather than helping students to understand the concepts that underpin the mathematics. More widely, there are not enough opportunities for students to talk to one another and develop their ideas. Consequently, some students lack confidence and their responses to questions from the teacher are often short and underdeveloped. In some lessons, the pace is too slow to extend more-able students.

- In the better lessons, good relationships between the teacher and the students allow more discussion, debate and opinion. Teachers ask questions that require students to think more deeply and develop their ideas. Students have opportunities to apply their learning to new problems and different contexts in a way that deepens their understanding. In a good Year 11 art lesson students explored individual themes and could talk in detail about the decisions they were making and about how their sculpture was influenced by artists they had studied.
- Support from teaching assistants is usually good and inspectors saw examples of students with special educational needs being supported very effectively. The support for students with hearing or visual impairments is very effective and ensures that students are fully integrated in all classroom activities.
- Opportunities for students to develop and apply literacy skills across the curriculum are inconsistent. In some subjects, such as history and religious education there are good opportunities for students to write at length, but opportunities in some other subjects are less well developed. In science for example, students are given many worksheets requiring short answers and there are few opportunities to write detailed accounts of experiments. In response to recent staff training, some departments now conscientiously mark students' grammar, punctuation and spelling, but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Inspectors saw some good examples of marking, particularly by English teachers. The English department is supporting a number of other departments to develop their practice and students say they find the feedback they receive is getting better.
- Parents that responded to the Parent View questionnaire had few concerns about the quality of teaching, but the students themselves were clear that some lessons are not engaging enough to keep everyone's interest.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Students report that some lessons are interrupted because of poor behaviour. They also reported that teachers do not all manage behaviour in the same way. Around a fifth of the staff that completed a questionnaire did not think behaviour was good in the school and some felt school policies are not applied consistently.
- Inspectors saw few examples of poor behaviour in lessons, but recognised that students' attitudes to learning were variable. Where teaching was good, students showed positive attitudes, cooperated well with one another and were keen to learn. Where teaching was weaker, students sometimes lost interest and began to distract one another.
- The vast majority of students are polite and courteous around the school. They behave well when they move around the site and in social areas such as the dining hall.
- The school has an inclusive approach and works hard to find solutions for students that exhibit challenging behaviour. Consequently, very few students have been excluded from the school. Pastoral assistants know students' individual characters well and are skilled in helping them to manage their behaviour.
- Levels of absence have been a concern in the past, but the work of the attendance team has had a positive impact and attendance rates this year are in line with the national average. The proportion of students that are persistently absent is also falling. The school is working creatively in partnership with local surgeries and this is helping to reduce the amount of time lost when students attend medical appointments. Punctuality to lessons is usually good, and when lateness does occur, teachers check the reasons why students have been late.
- Students generally understand the different forms that bullying can take, but they report that homophobic language is quite commonplace around school. The school is tackling this issue as

part of its work on equalities, and students say that most teachers do challenge inappropriate comments. However, not all students understand the negative impact of such language.

## **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have not been addressed with sufficient urgency. In particular, too few students have made good enough progress in mathematics. There was a small improvement in GCSE mathematics results in 2013 but standards in the subject remain low. Achievement in mathematics is now rising at Key Stage 3 and lower-attaining students in Years 7 and 8 are catching up quickly.
- There is still too much teaching that requires improvement. However, the performance of teachers is now managed effectively. Teachers do not receive salary increases unless their teaching is good enough. The feedback that teachers receive is still not precise enough, but those receiving support are responding well and improving their practice. Any inadequate teaching has been tackled effectively.
- Senior leaders have an honest and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have recognised the limitations of management approaches used in the past. They have changed emphasis and re-focused their efforts on ensuring that students make better progress in Key Stage 3. Senior leaders are checking the quality of provision more regularly and the progress made by younger students in the school is accelerating. The strategies senior leaders have adopted, together with the management systems they have put in place, are improving teaching in Key Stage 3 and helping students to make increased progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. This indicates that senior leaders have the capacity to bring about further improvement.
- The quality of professional development is improving. Teachers speak enthusiastically about recent training on literacy and the impact of this work is beginning to be seen in classroom practice. Staff training on numeracy across the curriculum has also been well received. A partnership with a local academy has helped to strengthen the accuracy of assessment.
- Senior leaders are more challenging of colleagues they line-manage, but the impact of middle leaders remains inconsistent. In the most effective departments, middle leaders are clear about the challenges they face and are taking appropriate steps to improve the quality of provision. Leaders and managers are having a positive impact in mathematics and standards in the subject are rising in Key Stage 3.
- The school has a strongly inclusive approach and the curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities that ensure that students' social, moral and cultural development is catered for well. Students and staff play an important role within the local community and links with partner organisations are strong. The school plans to give more time to the teaching of mathematics for some students in Key Stage 4 and is re-structuring the curriculum to accommodate this.
- At the time of the inspection, arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has taken steps to strengthen the governing body and its membership is now much more experienced than in the past. The local authority has also provided training to support the governing body strengthen its 'challenge' role. The local authority's brokerage of support from a local academy has helped to improve the quality of assessment.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In the past, governors did not hold senior leaders to account sufficiently and areas of underperformance were allowed to continue for too long. However, recent changes to the governing body have addressed this and there is now a greater sense of urgency.
  - With the support of the local authority, governors are clear about the challenges facing the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are managing the performance of teachers effectively. They have begun to establish stronger systems for challenging aspects of the school's performance.
  - Governors are not yet clear enough about the impact of specific funding to support

disadvantaged students or those in Years 7 and 8 with lower levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Checks are not sufficiently systematic to ensure that the money allocated is used specifically for supporting the students to whom it is allocated, and not on more general provision.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108867
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	429984

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	827
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Hennessey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Bain
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 561 6060
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5536063
<b>Email address</b>	sandhillview@sunderlandlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

