

Sandwich Junior School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	118548
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312985
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Humphrey-Woodward
Headteacher	Eleanor Hutchings
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	St Bartholomew's Road Sandwich CT13 0AS
Telephone number	01304 612227
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Age group	7-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils in this average-sized school are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is in line with the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and some pupils hold statements of special educational need. More pupils join the school after the normal time of entry than is usual for most schools, with a fewer number leaving before the end of Year 6. Currently the school is led by an acting headteacher prior to a new headteacher taking up post in April 2008. The school holds a number of awards including the Activemark Gold, Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills Mark, Travel Plan Platinum and FLAIR Gold awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sandwich Junior is a good school. Pupils achieve well and their personal development and well-being are good. Parents' confidence in the school is reflected in the positive responses in questionnaires. Parents appreciate that staff recognise diversity and have children's best interests at heart. Some parents rightly praise the rich range of activities enjoyed by their children. A few parents express concern that their views are not fully taken into account. The school is aware of this and has begun to provide more informative newsletters and curriculum information to keep parents informed, but recognises that more needs to be done.

The key to the school's success is the importance it places on pupils' personal development, giving them self-confidence and supporting their academic achievement. Pupils are well cared for and given good guidance and support. The school is a happy, harmonious place where pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and believe that 'school is fun'. The school ethos is very good, with pupils' opinions and ideas being well received and valued by staff, either individually or through more formal structures such as the school council. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are extremely polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Pupils have good teamwork skills, which prepare them well for secondary education and their future world of work. They have an outstanding understanding of health-related issues and are very clear about what constitutes a healthy diet. They take full advantage of many opportunities for exercise.

Effective teaching and a rich curriculum underpin pupils' good learning and achievement. Teachers make lessons interesting, helping all groups of pupils to make good progress through the school. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national averages. Improvements in the teaching of mathematics over the last two years have brought about a significant improvement. Staff are aware of the need to speed up pupils' progress further and to raise standards in English. They are rightly strengthening the structure of the opportunities to improve the quality of their writing. Teachers assess pupils' progress and mark their work regularly. However they realise that they do not yet use this information well enough to set work that is accurately and consistently matched to pupils' abilities. This leads occasionally to time being wasted because some work is too easy or too hard. Recent initiatives, such as pupils' involvement in evaluating the quality of their own work and setting targets, are giving pupils a stronger sense of the progress they are making.

Leadership and management are also good. The acting headteacher is providing strong leadership so that the school continues its work with a clear sense of direction. The accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is an important factor in the success of recent developments, for example in improving pupils' standards in mathematics, whilst retaining a broad range of other opportunities for pupils to enjoy and enrich their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that the new strategies are effectively and consistently introduced throughout the school.
- Use the information from pupils' work and assessments to set work to match their needs more closely.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' starting points on entry vary considerably from year to year. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is generally a little below average. Following a few years where pupils made only average rates of progress through the school, they are now achieving well across a broad curriculum. Standards in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 national tests in 2007 are in line with national averages. Progress across the school is now particularly good in mathematics because this was a specific area of focus throughout the school last year.

Achievement in English has been more variable and the quality of pupils' writing is not as good as their reading. Teachers have reviewed and changed their approach to teaching writing and are giving literacy a higher profile in lessons and classroom display. This initiative is showing good signs of improvement, but English standards are still below those in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils know that they attend a good school where they are safe and free from bullying. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe themselves and understand that there is always an adult on hand who will listen to their problems. Because they feel secure, they have very good attitudes to school in general and to their work in particular. Their relationships with other pupils and with adults are of a particularly high quality and as a result, their moral and social development is good. Attendance is above the national average and has been for some time. Many older pupils enthusiastically take on responsibilities as house or games captains and playground buddies. Pupils contribute well to the local and extended communities by taking part in local events and raising money for local, national and international charities. Pupils participate in many school activities and clubs, including music, dance and drama. This gives them excellent cultural experiences and understanding. They have a good knowledge of European cultures and more recently have developed a greater awareness of African culture through a direct link with a school in South Africa. The school recognises that, whilst pupils gain much from religious education and assemblies, there are still missed opportunities within poetry and art where, for example, the spiritual dimension could be discussed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and supports learning very well. Planning is good and teaching assistants are well briefed. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Adults have good relationships with pupils, who in turn respond well to their teachers' high expectations of them. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards, capturing pupils' interest and providing motivation for them. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the interactive whiteboard was used exceptionally well to provide pupils with a fun start to the lesson and then to develop their arithmetic skills when individuals demonstrated their solutions to the rest of the class. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching. In some lessons, the pace is fast and carries pupils along in their learning, but sometimes whole class sessions are overly long or resources not readily available, which causes some pupils to become a little bored. Generally pupils' tasks

provide them with good opportunities to learn new skills and develop their understanding, but sometimes they are not well enough adapted to provide all pupils with the right amount of challenge. Marking is regular and reinforces what pupils have achieved but does not always provide them with enough information about how they might make further progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features, for which the school has won a number of awards, including the FLAIR award linked to its provision of a modern foreign language for all pupils. The school works well with local secondary schools to improve its provision, for example in science, technology and physical education. The school actively promotes links between subjects and is developing basic skills well in English, mathematics and science. Themed curriculum weeks are used well to interest pupils and raise their enthusiasm, which add to the enjoyment of their work. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties but planning for some pupils is not matched precisely enough to their identified needs. Good use is made of some specialist teaching and grouping of pupils for English and mathematics. The range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment is excellent, including a residential visit to France and 'hands on' visits to places of interest. Attendance at clubs is high and supports pupils' achievements in music, sport and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high level of care and support for pupils contributes significantly to their eagerness to learn. Pupils are well known and cared for by adults. Pupils' personal development is served well by the school's good programme of personal, social and health education. The overwhelming majority of parents praised this aspect of the school's work in their responses to the questionnaire. Well established routines help to create an orderly and safe community, appreciated by pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and embedded well in school practice. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are rigorous, but some are new and teachers are not yet using the information to its full potential in planning work for their pupils. The information however is used well to identify any pupil in danger of falling behind and a range of additional programmes are in place to help pupils catch up.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strength of the leadership of the school is seen in the school's capacity to retain its sense of direction successfully during a period of significant change. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and staff share a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The acting headteacher, closely supported by staff, governors and the local authority, has effectively established a momentum for raising achievement and has made necessary changes to some systems in order to achieve immediate improvements in the management of the school. This has given the school a good capacity for further improvement. There is a strong collegiate approach across the school, with staff enthusiastically responding to their new responsibilities and confident to face further change. Developments since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years, have brought about an improvement in pupils' achievements and enabled the school to meet its targets. The school improvement plan does not fully reflect the school's

current priorities, but the steps taken this term are ensuring that no time is lost, particularly in bringing about improvements in writing. Liaison with the infant school at staff and governor level has resulted in useful initiatives to ensure that consistent approaches are adopted in both schools, for example in the teaching of numeracy and literacy, and these are helping pupils to make a smooth transition. The governing body is closely involved in school life. This gives members a thorough understanding of the school's performance which they use well to support and challenge decision making. They have managed the budget effectively to secure ongoing financial viability during a time of falling rolls in the area.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

31 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Sandwich Junior School, Sandwich CT13 0AS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and I write on behalf of the team to tell you what we found out.

We agree with you that Sandwich Junior is a good school.

- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- You get on well with each other and make sure that everyone is happy and included at playtimes, which helps to make the school a safe and friendly place.
- You work hard in lessons and it is good that you find work interesting and know that you are well taught.
- You make good progress so that you reach standards similar to those of other pupils of your age.
- Adults take good care of you so that you are secure in school and they help you to sort out problems well when they occur.
- Many of you enjoy the exceptionally wide range of clubs and the sports activities that help you to keep fit and healthy.
- The acting headteacher and the staff think very carefully about how well the school is doing and take action quickly if they think something needs improving.

We agree with the plans your teachers have to help you make your work even better, so we recommend that they go ahead with their plans to:

- give you more opportunities to help you to improve your writing
- use the information from your work and assessments to give you work that is not too easy for some of you and not too hard for others.

You can help by doing your best, particularly by concentrating on your writing.

Please thank your parents for returning their questionnaires. We enjoyed reading their comments. We wish everyone at Sandwich Junior every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector