

Sandbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105003
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377159
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vida Wilson
Headteacher	Claire Temple
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson
John Evans

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of their work. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body. In addition, inspectors took account of 42 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff members. There were no comments received via the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to aid in planning the inspection. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, which included that relating to safeguarding, curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, governing body meetings, national assessment data and the school's assessments of pupils' progress.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils are White British in this smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A broadly average proportion has special educational needs and there are a very small number of disabled pupils. The school has achieved Healthy School status and has gained both the Eco-Schools and International School awards. The government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment, were not met in the previous academic year.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. However, the impact of the headteacher’s and deputy headteacher’s leadership since their appointment is bringing about good improvement. Safeguarding procedures, pupils’ attendance and punctuality, teachers’ use of assessment and their accountability for pupils’ progress are some of the improvements which are strengthening the school’s performance.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning. They make satisfactory progress and most are working within expected levels by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Currently, pupils’ attainment is average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and their achievement is satisfactory.
- Pupils behave well around the school and they feel safe. They are mindful of one another, courteous to adults and are strongly opposed to all kinds of bullying. Occasionally, in lessons, however, not all pupils are as attentive as they could be.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching is good but the school recognises that there are inconsistencies. In good lessons, expectations are high and pupils work at a good pace. Where teaching is satisfactory there is a lack of challenge and time is not always used productively.
- The curriculum satisfactorily promotes pupils’ achievement in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Opportunities for pupils to use these skills to improve their learning across all subjects are, however, not fully developed. Lesson activities planned as part of the curriculum are not always exciting enough to fully engage all pupils.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, share a clear vision for the school’s improvement and a very strong determination to succeed. Strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school’s work are good and are effectively moving the school forward.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good or better teaching throughout the school and thereby improve pupils' achievement by:
 - sharing best practice in teachers' use of assessment and marking effectively throughout the school
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are always sufficiently challenged by their work
 - improving behaviour for learning for pupils who, on a few occasions, do not listen or apply themselves as well as others in lessons
 - planning and implementing more consistent whole school strategies for the teaching of phonics.
- Provide a more exciting curriculum for pupils by:
 - enabling middle managers to more actively monitor the quality in their subjects
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their knowledge and skills across different subjects and in different ways.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are generally attentive in lessons and are eager to learn. Most work well with partners or in small groups, particularly when they see real purpose in what they do. Pupils in Year 6, for example worked with partners to assess their own writing. They applied themselves well because it gave them better understanding of their progress. Occasionally, however, groups of pupils are not as well engaged. This happens when they are not challenged enough or when indifferent attitudes to learning go unchecked. Both of these slow the pace of pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils feel valued and know that there is no loss of self-esteem in asking for help. This makes them always willing to 'have a go'.

Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 is broadly average when taken over the last three years, although there was a significant dip in 2011 to below average. Due to decisive action taken by school leaders, particularly in improving assessment systems and checking pupils' progress, this has been reversed. Pupils' work and school assessments show that pupils in Year 6 are currently on track to reach expected attainment in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils' year-on-year progress is gathering pace due to the newly introduced systems to regularly check their progress. Nevertheless, these systems are not fully embedded and there is still some unevenness in progress, which is consistent with the overall picture of teaching. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age. This progress quickens in the Reception class, where children benefit from a full day in school and more varied learning opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in the classroom. Their individual plans set clear and manageable targets for them and the additional support they receive ensures that they make their expected progress. Those disabled pupils are also

supported and cared for well. Sensitive and thoughtfully planned help means that their needs are met and they are enabled to make expected progress alongside their peers.

Attainment in reading is average at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and pupils make steady progress. Letters and the sound that they make are taught daily in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. The methods used by teachers in some of these sessions are limited and sometimes the pace is slow. There is no cohesive system which allows, for example, pupils of similar abilities across the age range, to be taught as groups, in order to challenge them more effectively. Pupils take reading books home regularly and are encouraged by parents and carers who hear them read and comment in the reading diaries. By the time pupils leave the school they are generally competent readers.

Parents and carers hold positive views about how the school helps their children to make progress and through their comments applaud particularly the individual support given to pupils.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and results in pupils' overall satisfactory progress. Some teaching is good, and this is evidence that newly introduced strategies, professional development, and a more rigorous approach to the use of assessment are raising teachers' expectations. In the good lessons, pupils learn at a good pace because they are all challenged, whatever their abilities, and know what is expected of them. Teachers monitor the work in progress effectively, questioning pupils, giving feedback and discussing their ideas. This builds good relationships and furthers the school's aim to promote 'positive mental attitudes'. Pupils are encouraged to help each other. For example, some Year 2 pupils became designated 'experts' in a literacy lesson so they could help others with their writing and spelling. Such activities make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers have positive views about the quality of teaching and are particularly pleased about the support given to individual pupils.

This good practice is not evident throughout the school. Where teaching is satisfactory, it does not enable pupils to make their best progress. In these lessons, time is not used productively to motivate pupils and move their learning on. Indifferent attitudes to learning from a few pupils are not challenged promptly enough, and planned work does not take enough account of what higher-attaining pupils might be capable of. A recent survey, which was followed up by a school council meeting, resulted in a clear message from pupils to teachers that they wanted 'more hands-on and more excitement' in some of their lessons. This has resulted in teachers identifying the need for a more creative approach to curriculum planning as one of their priorities. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the quality is inconsistent. Much of the marking celebrates what pupils achieve but does not say how they can improve. Homework is done regularly and boosts pupils' acquisition of basic skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful towards one another. They typically behave well around the school. The vast majority work diligently in class. A very small number lack the necessary listening skills needed in lessons and are too easily distracted from their work. Pupils are proud to be Sandbrook pupils and contribute increasingly to the school's daily life. The school council is active in giving all pupils a say in school matters. Its members are

watchful guardians over school lunches to ensure healthy choices are available. There are already plans for school council members to write a play designed to promote sensible diets. Friendly links have been fostered with pupils from a nearby special school. A recently shared residential visit successfully improved pupils' understanding of others' needs and aspects of their spiritual moral social and cultural development. Through their International Schools work, communications with pupils in Germany are underway and developing links with a school in Liverpool also provide opportunities for pupils to compare cultural backgrounds and lifestyles.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They are adamant that there is no bullying and that any kind of name-calling is rare. Pupils are fully confident that help is available from adults when it is needed. Parents and carers unanimously support their children's views about care and safety and consider behaviour in the school to be good. The headteacher very quickly changed some routines for the start of the school day, which have improved pupils' safety as well as their punctuality and attendance, which is average and improving steadily. Pupils have good awareness of potentially dangerous situations outside school and know how to keep themselves safe by avoiding pressure from others to make the wrong choices, for instance, on the internet and on the roads.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's leadership has had considerable impact on aspects of the school's work in need of improvement. Parents and carers have commented on the positive effect that the changes are having on their children's progress. With support from a knowledgeable and effective deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, self-evaluation has been swift, incisive and accurate. The leadership team has gained the full support of all staff members and, with the governing body, they work with drive and determination to build a successful school. The governing body acts upon good quality information from the school. Its clear ambition for the school's future drives its improved support and challenge, and its strong determination to hold the school to account. Given the success of measures already taken to halt the decline in attainment and bring about improvement, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Leaders have set high standards with regard to teaching and learning. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is rigorous and, although further improvement is needed, the resulting professional development is beginning to show impact in classrooms. Teachers with responsibility for subjects other than English and mathematics understand their subjects' strengths and weaknesses. They do not, however, actively monitor the quality of learning, or promote improvements that would add interest and depth to the curriculum. The curriculum satisfactorily promotes pupils' achievement in literacy, numeracy and ICT. A relative weakness is the limited opportunities for pupils to use these skills to improve their learning across all subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. While there are stronger elements, for example, in pupils' relationships and behaviour towards others, they do not gain a real sense of wonder from their learning. The school challenges all forms of discrimination and monitors progress and provision for pupils carefully to ensure that all have the opportunities they need to achieve their best. The governing body gives high priority to safeguarding pupils. The suitability of those who work in the school is appropriately checked and the safety of pupils and staff is an agenda item for all full governing body meetings. A member of the governing body who has appropriate experience oversees safeguarding matters.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandbrook Primary School, Wirral, CH46 9PS

Thank you very much for making us feel so much 'at home' when we came to inspect your school recently. Your friendliness and willingness to help were very pleasing and helped to make our visit enjoyable. We were impressed by your good behaviour, politeness and good manners. We learned a lot from the way you talked sensibly to us about your school. We also found that most of you get to school on time and, after a bit of a dip, your attendance is now back to average and improving. Well done! That is very important so do keep it up.

Sandbrook is a satisfactory school. Some important things have improved recently but there are still things that need to be done. Your progress is improving and the standards you reach in English and mathematics are average. Your teachers are working hard to help you to achieve your best and your school leaders have some good ideas about how to improve your school further. The grown-ups in school take good care of you and help you to feel safe. Your parents and carers are very supportive of Sandbrook. They, and your teachers and school governors, would like to see it improve further. The inspectors have asked for the following things to help that to happen. We have asked teachers to make every lesson as good as the very best by:

- using assessment and marking equally well in every class to challenge you in your work, especially those of you who are capable of higher levels
- making sure that all of you listen and work as hard as you can in every lesson
- working together so the best teaching methods are shared
- organising the lessons on letters and sounds so that pupils are challenged at their right level.

In addition, we have asked subject leaders to plan more ways for your learning to be more exciting, as you requested in your school survey, and for you to practise and improve your skills in different subjects and to check that this is working well.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead Inspector

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