

# Sandhill View School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108867
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	377836
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jacqueline Rothery

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

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<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>	877
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kath Tuddenham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Bain
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Grindon Lane Thorney Close Sunderland SR3 4EN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5536060
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5536063
<b>Email address</b>	sandhillview@sunderlandlearning.net

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Jacqueline Rothery  
Lynne Horton  
Frank Cain  
David Griffiths

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 36 lessons taught by 35 teachers and one instructor. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with senior members of staff. A further 11 short observations were conducted to evaluate the quality of provision for targeted groups of students. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students. They also analysed the questionnaires returned by 130 parents and carers, 144 pupils and 57 staff. The on line questionnaire (Parent View) was not used in the planning of the inspection as no comments had been registered. Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documentation, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, performance data, minutes of the governing body meetings, and safeguarding records.

## Information about the school

Sandhill View School is a secondary school of average size. There are very few students who speak English as an additional language and almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average and the proportion of disabled students and those with special educational need is above average. Sandhill View School is the base for the local authority resourced provision for those students with hearing or visual impairment. 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. The school has a high level of stability and meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- Sandhill View School is a satisfactory school. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children feel safe at the school. The school provides particularly well for disabled students and those with special educational needs. The school is not good because expected levels of performance, particularly in mathematics, do not exceed those set nationally; not enough teaching is good or outstanding; and there is insufficient rigour in how the school’s information systems are used to identify and target any underperformance of individuals or groups.
- Students’ achievement is satisfactory. From low starting points on entry to the school, they make good progress in English to reach average attainment, but only satisfactory progress in mathematics. Consequently, attainment overall is average and achievement is satisfactory rather than good.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good and outstanding teaching where students are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Many such opportunities are missed, however, and planning and feedback are not fully matched to students’ needs.
- Students’ behaviour is good. Discussion and questionnaire responses indicate overwhelmingly that students feel safe. Their good conduct around school and their behaviour in lessons make a strong contribution to the positive climate for learning. Attendance is at least average over time and improving.
- The headteacher and senior staff know well what needs to be implemented to further improve teaching and to accelerate increases in attainment, particularly in mathematics. Restructuring of the senior leadership team has provided more cohesion and improvements. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory.

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?

- Ensure that students make good progress to reach at least average attainment, particularly in mathematics, by
  - evaluating fully, and building on, the most successful elements of existing intervention programmes in subsequent years
  - ensuring that there are carefully planned opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding by:
  - ensuring that teachers make effective use of assessment information when planning lessons so that all students' needs, but particularly those with higher ability, are effectively met
  - ensuring that there are routine opportunities for students to demonstrate greater independence in their work
  - ensuring that good quality marking and feedback is used consistently across the school.
- Improve the rigour with which the school's information systems are developed and used to identify and target any underperformance of individuals or groups of students.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Students' attainment when they start at the school in Year 7 is well below average. There is evidence of improvement in students' attainment by the end of Key stage 4. For example, the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, at 50%, is moving close to national average. The rate at which improvements are being made is slowed, however, by weaker progress and attainment in mathematics. Measures are in place which are beginning to accelerate achievement in mathematics. Current school assessment data show that some improvements in students' achievements have already been gained and further improvements are on track to be secured by the end of this year. This is confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work during this inspection.

Evidence from lessons seen during the inspection and analysis of students' books indicate that students' achievement is satisfactory. Although there is still some variation in performance between English and mathematics, gaps for all groups of students are closing and in some lessons good progress is being seen in mathematics. Progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs, as observed in lessons, varies, but is never less than satisfactory. For example in a design and technology lesson exceptional progress was seen for a deaf student with a statement of educational need; challenging practical problems were set in project work, with targeted support and a range of highly individualised tasks.

Good examples were seen of teachers' promotion and development of literacy, for example through 'World Book Day' and through excellent use of display, carefully chosen by students with headings such as 'We read, therefore we learn'. This is uneven across the curriculum,

however, and there is little evidence of a coordinated approach to the promotion and development of numeracy, although the school does have plans to address this.

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed confidence in the school's provision and considered their child to be making good progress. Inspectors do not fully agree. Although this is the case in many subject areas, progress is not consistently good in all subjects and particularly in mathematics.

### **Quality of teaching**

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey say that their children are taught well. The quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall, though examples of both outstanding and inadequate teaching were seen. Students know their targets in all subjects. In the most effective lessons, these targets are challenging and they help pupils to understand what they need to do to progress further. This is not always consistent, however, for higher ability students. In the best lessons, work is marked regularly and the guidance students are provided with helps them to know how they are doing and how to improve. This was seen in English, for example, with the use of stamps and detailed feedback providing students with the information they needed to progress. Students are complimentary about how this supports them. This is not consistent across the school, however, and during the inspection books were seen that had only been infrequently marked or where the comments were either affirmation or corrected technical skills.

Where teaching is good or better, as in some mathematics and English lessons seen, teachers' skills and enthusiasm for the subject give students a sense of enjoyment and challenge. For example, in an English lesson, students made rapid progress as a result of the teacher's high expectations, careful planning and ability to ensure confidence and high levels of engagement. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well so that lessons have well planned curricular content and a good range of interesting activities to ensure that students can progress well from their starting points. Good quality feedback leaves students in no doubt as to how well they are doing. Teachers' good use of questioning probes and challenges understanding. Peer and self-assessment is a strength in these lessons. This is less consistent in satisfactory lessons and, in particular, students are not always clear about what they need to do to achieve the next level. In satisfactory lessons there are limited opportunities for students to work collaboratively and to develop independent research and tasks are overly teacher directed.

Mathematics skills are taught inconsistently across the curriculum. Opportunities are missed in many subjects to practise and develop these skills in meaningful contexts. Effective teaching was seen to contribute to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example in a religious education lesson where compassion, sensitivity and intolerance of racism were being explored through studying the holocaust. Elsewhere, a love of music was seen to be fostered.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The majority of parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively by members of staff. Students agree and in discussions report that they have no concerns about bullying. They understand different types of bullying such as cyber bullying and Internet safety. Students have a keen understanding of

how to keep themselves safe, showing good awareness of risks and hazards. For example, in an enrichment activity making stained glass windows, one student was observed to pick up and use her safety goggles without prompting; another was very carefully using a soldering iron.

In response to the inspection questionnaire, some concerns were expressed by parents and carers and by students about disruption in lessons. Inspectors' observations indicate that such disruption is rare; most students behave well in lessons and show high levels of engagement, especially when work is well planned to meet their learning needs and abilities. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that this is the case over time too.

Since the previous inspection, the school has secured improvements in attendance and reductions in persistent absence. Attendance is now broadly average and for some groups of students, including those disabled and those with special educational needs, better than national averages for similar groups. The school has also been successful in reducing the number of external exclusions, adopting internal, inclusive strategies for addressing any poor behaviour.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and his recently restructured leadership team have a clear understanding of those aspects of the school's work in need of further improvement. The school's evaluation of the impact of its work is accurate and actions taken to secure improvements in areas of underperformance are beginning to bear fruit. Middle leaders are aware of what actions need to be taken. In mathematics, English and science, their management of monitoring data and implementation of appropriate interventions is ensuring that historic trends of underperformance in mathematics and science are being addressed. Assessments are frequent and provide accurate data on progress, which is then used proactively to draw up personalised plans to ensure that students are successfully on track. A wealth of data and information is now being produced, though there are some variations in its application, availability and use by leaders at all levels. Capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Senior leaders recognise that the next step includes development of the leadership of teaching and learning, so that best practice becomes consistent across the school. The headteacher and his deputies are ambitious in their vision for the school, their drive is to ensure that 'pockets of excellence' become 'coordinated', for their weakest areas to become their best and the school to lead within its local context.

Partnerships are well developed. The school works closely with the local authority and uses advice and guidance in drawing up its plans. Collaboration is strong and the school makes a valuable contribution to its local community, especially in vocational provision. Students' social, moral and cultural development is good. The school's specialism in the performing and creative arts ensures a breadth of activities and visits for students and as an International School a wealth of links with other countries have been established. An inclusive approach ensures that the curriculum is satisfactory and, overall, ensures equality of opportunity. Recent outcomes, however, have led to some adjustments being made, for example in an increase of time being made available in mathematics and science, to ensure that the curriculum is matched to students' needs. Similarly, though not yet fully embedded, plans have been made to promote the development of skills in numeracy and literacy in

order to provide a firm basis for improving achievement, not just in English and mathematics, but across the whole curriculum.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body works in partnership with the school and is involved in and supportive of its plans. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.



## 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](http://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.

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## 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.**



9 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Sandhill View School, Sunderland, SR3 4EN**

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited you recently and, in particular, our thanks go to those students who met with us in meetings and around the school.

We found that Sandhill View is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. We were very pleased to observe your good behaviour, the respect you show towards one another and your willingness to learn. You tell us you feel safe in school and we can see clearly how much your good behaviour contributes to that.

While your achievement is broadly average, when compared to all schools nationally, it is clear that the school is working hard to make sure that improvements are made in any areas where you might be underperforming. We have asked senior leaders to focus on a number of priorities. These include: further raising your attainment, particularly in mathematics; further improving the quality of teaching so that more of it is good or outstanding; and making sure that the school's systems are rigorous in targeting any underperformance.

You can all play your part in these improvements by working as hard as you do now and continuing to fully support your school's ambitions for you.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Rothery  
Lead inspector

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