

Sandy Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133619
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	360546
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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	565
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Reading
Headteacher	Elisabeth Norris
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 26 lessons taught by 20 teachers. Meetings were held with senior staff, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at some of its documentation including the school development plan, information about pupils' progress and policies and records related to safeguarding. The team also considered the views of staff, pupils and 180 parents and carers expressed in their responses to questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The reasons why pupils do consistently better in English than in mathematics in Key Stage 2. The extent to which pupils are making sufficient progress in mathematics.
- The role of leaders and governors in raising achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- The extent to which pupils learning English as an additional language and with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress than other groups.

Information about the school

Sandy Lane is a large primary school which has grown significantly since its last inspection and continues to expand. Most pupils are of White British heritage but an increasing proportion come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Many of these speak English as an additional language and some are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils joining the school at other than the usual times is higher than in most schools. About one in four pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties. Others have emotional and behavioural problems. The school has a breakfast and an after-school club which are run by a management committee and were not part of this inspection. The school has won the Green Flag award for its work on sustainability and also has a UNICEF Rights Respecting level two award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Sandy Lane is a good school. It has consolidated and built upon the strengths identified in the last inspection under the highly effective leadership of its headteacher and senior team. Even though it has grown rapidly the school has maintained its focus on the individual child and the quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils and their families is outstanding. Staff are vigilant in their care of pupils and ensure they are safeguarded extremely well. As a result, pupils thrive in this nurturing environment. They feel very safe and secure and become eager and confident learners, achieving well academically. Pupils behave well and the school is a very harmonious community, where different groups of pupils get on well together. This is recognised by parents and carers who are overwhelmingly supportive and hold the school in high regard. One commented, 'My children have been taught well. Even though this is a large school my children are known and treated as individuals.' This typified the views of many others.

From often very low starting points pupils make good progress to attain levels that are broadly average by the time they leave the school. In recent years pupils have made much better progress in Key Stage 2 in English than they have in mathematics. A variety of strategies to make mathematics more interesting and relevant to learners is beginning to pay dividends and accelerate progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very good support which enables them to become confident learners and to progress well. Leaders ensure that pupils make good progress because of effective systems to track their progress. Increasingly, this is enabling pupils who are in danger of underachieving to be identified at an earlier stage to enable plans to be put in place to help them to catch up. The school is not yet tracking the progress of groups of pupils as well as it might to identify any patterns and to ensure that all achieve equally well.

Pupils are doing well because of good teaching, although there is a residue of satisfactory practice. Teachers plan well in teams and have very good relationships with their classes. They ensure that pupils are very clear about the purpose of lessons which sets a very purposeful framework for learning. Teachers use a range of strategies to review pupils' learning and to check their understanding. Their marking is regular and supportive but does not always highlight clearly to pupils the next steps in their learning. Teachers are generally successful in meeting the needs of the wide range of pupils in their classes through a range of interesting and demanding activities. Occasionally, however, pupils do not have enough opportunity to participate actively and consolidate their ideas. As a result, the pace of learning dips and more able pupils, in particular, are not challenged as fully as they might be.

Pupils are very proud of the school and appreciative of all that it has to offer. Their enjoyment of their education and development of a wide range of skills are considerably

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enhanced by the exciting and interesting additional activities. Music is a particular strength and pupils' participation in the very popular sporting activities helps them to adopt very active and healthy lifestyles. Pupils also make a significant contribution to the school and local communities through, for example, their work on the school council and their prominent role in issues of sustainability in the local area. Their success in this area is reflected in their national award and is illustrative of the school's many partnerships which support pupils' learning and well-being very effectively.

The headteacher is highly respected and has led the school very successfully over a number of years. She is well supported by her effective deputy headteacher and a hard-working and committed staff team. Together with the governing body, they have a clear and realistic view of the school's strengths and put in place effective plans to address any weaknesses identified. Thus the strengths in the outcomes for pupils have been maintained and strategies to improve academic achievement, for example in mathematics, are having a positive impact. This indicates that the school has good capacity to get even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good, with an increasing proportion of outstanding lessons, by July 2011 through:
 - ensuring that the pace and expectations of lessons consistently challenge all groups of learners, particularly the more able
 - ensuring that marking always shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Track the progress of groups of pupils more rigorously to ensure that they all make good or better progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy their learning and this was evident in most of the lessons seen. Pupils are highly responsive and keen to contribute their ideas. They cooperate and collaborate very well. They apply themselves diligently and show interest in a range of topics, particularly when they can see the relevance of their learning. For example, in Year 5 English lessons, pupils enjoyed using their research skills to find out information about different planets. The school's success in making mathematics more engaging was also evident in lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, more able pupils enjoyed calculating fractions of amounts and applying them to real-life situations. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress in both English and mathematics and the gap in attainment is closing.

Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well supported, enabling them to quickly acquire the language they need to make good progress. Similarly, pupils with moderate learning difficulties are helped to become confident learners and experience success. For example, in a small mathematics group in Year 6, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were bursting with enthusiasm as they explored the links between fractions and decimals. Consequently, these groups of learners are making good progress. Pupils' good achievement in the basic skills of literacy,

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numeracy and information and communication technology, together with their good attitudes to learning, indicates that they are well prepared for secondary education.

Pupils are unfailingly polite and friendly and the school is a calm and orderly place. They behave well in lessons although occasionally some lose focus when they are not fully engaged or have to sit for too long without active participation. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations and have great confidence in the adults around them. They take their responsibilities, as school councillors and eco warriors, for example, very seriously. They believe that their views are taken seriously and the Rights Respecting group, for instance, was responsible for drawing up the lunchtime charter. Pupils also take an active interest in sustainability, encouraging their parents and carers and the local community to get involved in recycling initiatives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is evident in its support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The school's commitment in this area is evident in the work of the family support partner. This has led, for example, to notable improvement in the attendance of these pupils as well as their confidence and self-esteem. There are very strong pastoral systems for any pupils experiencing difficulties and pupils and their parents and carers feel that they can confide in staff with absolute confidence.

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The school's teaching and curriculum provision enables pupils to develop very good attitudes to learning and to make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. There are a good range of programmes in place to support pupils who need a boost either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. The very strong team of teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers. For example, in an outstanding Year 1 lesson, the concept of writing instructions was introduced very effectively by the teacher as the teaching assistant modelled the making of a hedgehog. The reasons for recent improvements in mathematics were evident in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher used questions very skilfully to develop pupils' understanding of the calculation of area. They were provided with opportunities to share their ideas and consolidate their thinking. Occasionally, the teaching is not quite as engaging and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to explore their ideas in the same way. Consequently, the pace of learning slows, especially for more-able pupils.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and pupils are increasingly engaged in assessing their own work. Targets are used effectively to enable pupils to understand what they need to do to move on to the next levels. Marking is not always as effective in this respect. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is considerably enhanced through the wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. A current priority for the school is to develop further links between subjects to help pupils to see the relevance of their learning. The impact of this work is beginning to be seen in mathematics although it is not yet fully embedded.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work very effectively together and have high aspirations for the school. They galvanise the enthusiasm of staff and morale is high in consequence. They are well supported by effective leaders at all levels. Leaders monitor the progress of pupils rigorously and regular progress meetings are used productively to identify any pupils who are having difficulties. Accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics has proved challenging for leaders in recent years. They are now using a range of strategies including the monitoring and coaching of teachers and programmes such as 'every child counts' to improve provision and pupils' confidence and enjoyment of the subject. This is now leading to much better progress throughout the school.

Many governors are very experienced and knowledgeable about the school. They take a strategic view of the school's development and have risen to the many challenges presented by its rapid growth. They hold leaders to account for performance of the school effectively. They are going through a period of transition and some governors are still

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developing their understanding of their roles. Governors and the school's business manager effectively oversee the school's extremely robust procedures for safeguarding pupils. This aspect of the school's work is afforded the highest priority by staff at all levels and awareness of issues related to the protection and safety of pupils permeates its life. The school is a very inclusive and harmonious community, which reflects its successful commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and eradicating discrimination. As a consequence, all groups of pupils are achieving well although leaders are not routinely analysing the progress of different groups of learners. The school works extremely closely in partnership with parents and carers and a range of agencies to support pupils' welfare and learning effectively. It promotes the local and global dimensions of community cohesion well but its strategy at the national level is not as well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the school children's skills and understanding are often much lower than expected, particularly in their social and communication and language skills. Children settle quickly into the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the Nursery and Reception classes at whatever point they join and a fruitful partnership is established with parents and carers. They quickly become eager and confident learners and make good progress, notably in their social skills. Staff plan a range of exciting activities to develop children's skills in all areas of their learning. These provide ample opportunities for children to explore their environment for themselves as well as more directed activities which develop their early literacy and numeracy skills in particular. The outside areas are not covered and the Reception area is in the early stages of development. This limits its use in developing the full range of pupils' learning, although it is used well. Assessment is used effectively to plan the next steps in every child's development. A particular strength is the way staff use questions to develop the children's speaking and listening and reasoning skills.

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In spite of their good progress from their starting points children's attainment remains below average at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, although they do particularly well in aspects of their personal and social development and early literacy and numeracy skills. Staff work very closely and productively as a team with effective oversight from the deputy headteacher. A new leader is due to take up her post in January and the school has a number of ideas to take the provision forward even further, particularly in relation to outdoor learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Nearly one in three parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The responses were overwhelmingly positive with the majority strongly agreeing with every statement. There were very few negative responses. Many parents and carers added positive comments. Most of these praised the warm and welcoming ethos in the school, the quality of teaching and the strength of the leadership. Remarks such as, 'we are really impressed with the teaching, the way the school is run and how friendly the atmosphere is throughout the whole school' were typical of these responses. Inspectors found strengths in all these areas. A very few responses highlighted concerns but these tended to be isolated strands. A very few parents and carers indicated that they are not well enough informed about their children's progress. Inspectors found the engagement with parents and carers to be outstanding and communication about progress to be strong.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sandy Lane Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 565 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	111	62	63	35	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	120	67	59	33	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	89	49	79	44	9	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	93	52	81	45	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	102	57	76	42	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	52	82	46	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	89	49	88	49	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	76	42	90	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	45	94	52	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	40	94	52	3	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	75	42	95	53	4	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	115	64	60	33	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	113	63	64	36	2	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandy Lane Primary School, Bracknell RG12 2JG

You may remember that I visited your school recently with three other inspectors. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We really enjoyed our two days at Sandy Lane. I am sure you would like to know what we found out.

You and your parents and carers are rightly proud of your school because it gives you a good education. You told us how much you enjoy your learning and we saw this in lessons. You told us how safe you feel because all the adults look after you extremely well. We were impressed with your politeness and good behaviour. You really appreciate all the extra activities you have to do, particularly in music and various sports, which help you to stay fit and healthy.

You make good progress in your learning because the teaching is good and teachers make lessons interesting and mostly challenging. Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and she gets lots of support from the other senior leaders, governors and all members of staff. They are keen to make the school even better for you and we have asked them to do two things that will help:

- We have asked the teachers to make sure that the work is just right for you, not too hard but not too easy. Some of you told us that you are not clear about how to improve your work. We have also asked the teachers to make sure that their marking points you to the next steps in your learning. You can help by telling your teachers when you find the work is too easy or too hard for you.
- The school keeps good records to check how well each of you is doing in your learning. We have asked it to keep a check on different groups of you to make sure that you are all doing equally well.

With very best wishes

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead inspector

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