

Sandhills Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123027
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380574
Inspection dates	23–24 April 2012
Lead inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisle Scott
Headteacher	Stephanie Lovett
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	23–24 April 201223–24 April 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 24 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at questionnaires from 106 parents and carers, 25 members of staff and 105 pupils. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The inspectors heard pupils read, looked at pupils' books, information on their progress, safeguarding information and other documents presented by the school.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British, with other pupils coming from a range of other heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has an average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs including those who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. There is a privately run breakfast club at the school. This is inspected separately and was not part of this inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

In the last three years, there have been considerable changes in staffing including senior leaders as well as high mobility of pupils in and out of the school. The school has a third more pupils than at the time of the last inspection, taught in three additional classes up to and including Year 3.

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. It is improving quickly following a rapid expansion in pupil numbers and staffing changes. It is not yet good because pupils do not always do well in writing. Teaching is motivating, but it is not consistently good. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always write well across the curriculum, making avoidable errors in spelling and punctuation. Teachers provide encouraging guidance through marking, but individual targets are insufficiently precise to help pupils know what to concentrate on improving next.
- Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make a rapid start to their education. From Years 1 to 6, teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities, relevant to pupils' needs, but do not always make sure that pupils work fast enough. They make good use of resources to engage the pupils' interest but do not ensure that all pupils join in with whole-class discussions.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and feel safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through the school's 'values education'. They have good attitudes towards learning and are keen to help each other.
- Leaders, including the governing body, understand what the school does well and how it needs to develop to become good. They track pupils' progress carefully and the few remaining pockets of underachievement are being tackled robustly. The leadership of teaching through the management of performance is adequate. Leaders provide clear guidance and monitor teaching carefully, but middle leaders and managers do not all have a clear understanding of

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performance information and do not ensure that teaching always has a good impact on learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in writing in Years 3 to 6, by December 2012, by:
 - providing greater opportunities for purposeful writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring pupils check the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation, and consistently produce writing of a high enough standard.
- Improve the impact of teaching on learning, by December 2012, by:
 - ensuring pupils' individual targets are specific and are used to monitor and move progress forward swiftly
 - involving all pupils during whole-class discussions
 - making sure that no time is wasted and that pupils work quickly throughout each lesson.
- Expand the role of middle leaders and managers, by September 2012, by:
 - ensuring that their monitoring of lessons focuses on learning
 - enabling them to evaluate information on progress across the school more sharply so that help, support and guidance can be provided where it is needed most to raise standards.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

The majority of children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make good progress and so their attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. They enjoy a wide variety of interesting activities and learn particularly well in reading. For example, children enjoyed singing songs that helped them to remember letter sounds and were keen to point to objects on the interactive whiteboard that included the sound 'oa'.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils' rates of progress are satisfactory and improving. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6, including in reading. Pupils are making good progress in learning early reading skills and this is starting to have a positive impact on improving their literacy skills. For example, in Year 2, a good range of activities and the judicious use of praise supported pupils well as they learnt how to add 'ing' to several words. In writing, attainment is rising by Year 2 because a story-writing project is helping to motivate pupils well. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are not consistently expected to produce writing of a high enough standard and it sometimes includes avoidable spelling and punctuation errors that are not quickly rectified.

While parents and carers believe that their children achieve well, inspection evidence

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found that pupils' achievement is satisfactory because the quality of learning and performance varies between different lessons. For example, in a very challenging mathematics lesson in Year 5, the high participation of all pupils and clear expectations for quick and accurate work led to outstanding learning about patterns in a sequence of numbers. In contrast, in classes where learning was satisfactory, pupils were not all fully involved in whole-class discussion or time was wasted so that pupils were not able to work hard throughout the lesson.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Recent developments in the way individual progress is being monitored are ensuring that provision is matched more closely to pupils' specific needs and additional activities are providing more focused support. There is no significant difference between the learning and progress of girls and boys or of pupils from differing heritages, and the few remaining areas of underperformance are being tackled swiftly.

Quality of teaching

Teaching overall is satisfactory, although there are strengths in the majority of lessons. Most parents and carers and their children feel that teaching is good. Teaching is more effective in some lessons than in others. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, members of staff make good use of comprehensive planning and assessment to support a variety of worthwhile activities. Story-telling, in particular, engages interest and promotes good learning. For example, children learnt quickly when sharing the story of *'George and the Dragon'*. The systematic teaching of skills throughout the school is improving pupils' progress in reading.

Teachers in Years 1 to 6 are also good at engaging the pupils' interest by using a range of tasks and questions. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, resources and probing questions were used well to support pupils' interest in learning about the solar system. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed finding out how the order of Olympic medal tables would change if an average points system was used. Teaching has less impact when teachers do not make sure that all pupils are actively involved during whole-class activities or when pupils are not reminded to work quickly. Teachers use praise to encourage, set targets and points for development, but these are not always sufficiently precise to help pupils improve their work straight away.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given sound encouragement and support, and are taught satisfactorily. The planned curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, and pupils are especially enthusiastic about the special 'wow' days. However, there are too few opportunities between Years 3 and 6 for pupils to practise and extend their writing in different subjects.

Teaching has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good relationships between members of staff and the pupils supporting the development of positive social skills. Expectations for behaviour are high and behaviour management is consistent. Clear guidance during acts of

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collective worship and in lessons supports the development of a clear set of shared values.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, feel safe, and agree that behaviour is good. They work conscientiously with their talk partners, take the initiative when necessary and provide each other with encouragement. The vast majority of parents and carers are right to be pleased with behaviour at the school and to agree that their children are kept safe. Behaviour is typically good over time and the few pupils that say that behaviour is not always good are confident that the occasional unacceptable behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively by all members of staff. The new behaviour policy, skilful support and strong guidance are having a positive impact on the few pupils who have been identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils feel free from all kinds of bullying including racism and cyber-bullying. As one pupil said, 'Grown-ups always sort things out quickly and fairly.'

Most pupils work together sensibly in lessons and show respect for members of staff and each other. They support each other in lessons by sharing and storing up good ideas, as they put it, 'by being magpies'.

Leadership and management

Leaders, including governors, demonstrate they have the capacity to improve the school through the actions they have taken, particularly in improving the progress that pupils make. Good provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection and gaps in progress between groups of pupils are closing quickly. For example, there is now better challenge for the more-able pupils. Until relatively recently, constant changes in pupil numbers and in staffing have made the continuity of provision difficult to manage between Years 1 and 6. Despite this, leaders have ensured that performance management is moving teaching forward and that provision is at least adequate. While attainment remains broadly average, it is higher than it was at the time of the last inspection. Senior leaders analyse data effectively to set rigorous targets. Areas identified for development at the previous inspection have been tackled successfully, although there remain some inconsistencies in teaching. New middle leaders and managers have not yet ensured that learning is consistently good. Nevertheless, effective training has increased their awareness of what to do to help the school to become good in the future and they are already involved in identifying the right course of action to improve the school further. Recent initiatives, particularly in making teaching and learning interesting, and in supporting the development of reading, are already having a sustained and positive effect on pupils' progress, which is picking up quickly across the school.

Equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination tackled competently. Pupils from different backgrounds are supported and encouraged equally. They are included well socially, and the school is working appropriately to eliminate

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unevenness in learning, and progress between classes and subjects, by providing further staff coaching and training as required. There are good relationships between most parents and carers and members of staff. Parents and carers make positive comments such as, 'I have always found the staff to be very helpful and enthusiastic and it is evident how dedicated and hardworking they are.'

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and most pupils and their parents and carers have confidence in them. Parents and carers know that the school takes well-considered action when concerns are raised. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is being improved, but opportunities to support writing in all subjects could be better. It ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.

25 April 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Sandhills Community Primary School, Oxford OX3 8FN

We enjoyed coming to inspect your friendly school, talking with you about your work and hearing some of you read. Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are the best things about your school.

- You learn quickly in the Reception classes.
- You enjoy school and we agree with you that your teachers are kind and caring and work hard to make lessons interesting.
- Members of staff are good at teaching you all about how to behave sensibly and, as a result, you behave well.
- The headteacher and the governing body know what needs to be done to make the school better.

To help it improve, we have asked your school to make sure that teachers and governors:

- give those of you in Years 3 to 6 plenty of opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum, always expect you to do your best writing and to make sure that you check your spelling and punctuation
- provide you with more precise targets so that your progress can be checked, and make sure that you are all kept busy and are fully involved throughout each lesson.

We have also asked the school to help teachers who look after subjects to check that all of you learn quickly, and to know how well you are doing across the school so that they can provide help where it is needed most.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. All of you can help your teachers by always writing well and checking your spelling and punctuation.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Lead inspector

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