

Sandlings Primary School

Easton Road, Sutton, Woodbridge, IP12 3TD

Inspection dates 15 - 16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Reception class make good progress in communication and language, in learning to read and write and in their knowledge of numbers.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
- Attainment has risen steadily year on year; by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading, English and mathematics is above average. As a result, achievement is good.
- Teaching is good because learning tasks are matched to pupils' different needs and teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well behaved and stay safe in school. Their attendance and punctuality are good.
- Senior leaders work closely with the governing body and have ensured good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and in raising pupils' achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and a few lessons require improvement.
- Pupils are not always informed of their next steps for learning when their work is marked.
- Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in topic work.
- A few of the more able pupils are not always given tasks to extend their learning further.

Information about this inspection

- In the 10 lessons seen, all jointly with the headteacher, all teachers were observed teaching. A small number of pupils read their books to the inspector and pupils were also observed reading in lessons.
- Samples of pupils' books were looked at jointly with senior leaders. Records of pupils' progress were seen. Children's work from the Reception class and records of the school's partnership with parents and carers in the Early Years Foundation Stage were also looked at.
- The inspection took account of 11 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents and carers) together with the 66 returns of the most recent school survey of parents and carers. Discussions were also held with a few parents and carers. Questionnaire returns from staff were examined.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's summary evaluation of its work and development plan, the record of visits by members of the governing body, policies and procedures to safeguard pupils and records of behaviour.
- Meetings took place with four members of the governing body, with members of staff including senior leaders, with a small group of parents and with one group of pupils.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sandlings is smaller than the average primary school and is located on a Ministry of Defence base. Around two thirds of its pupils come from the base with the remainder drawn from the surrounding rural area.
- A high proportion of pupils receive the pupil premium (additional funding for children from military families, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in local authority care).
- Nearly all pupils are of White British Heritage and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times of admission or leaving.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school does not use any external education providers.
- There have been a number of changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection. A new headteacher has been in post for two years, a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and two new teachers have recently been appointed. A new Chair and Vice-Chair of governors are also in post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils always know their next steps for learning when their work is marked
 - using every opportunity to extend the learning of more able pupils
 - promoting basic skills consistently in topic work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age in communication, language and literacy and in personal and social development. They make good progress as nearly all meet, and some exceed, the expectations for their ages by the end of the Reception Year.
- As a result of close work with families prior to their admission and strong team work among staff, children settle into their routines quickly. They make good progress in their knowledge and use of letter sounds for reading and writing, in learning about numbers and in working together confidently as learners.
- Despite the small Year group sizes and the high numbers of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times, there has been a steady rise in attainment since the last inspection. Consequently, the gap in pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics compared with other pupils across the country is now much narrower. In recognition of this, in December 2012, the Department for Education named the school as one of the top 100 most improved schools in the country. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading and mathematics are above average and attainment in writing is broadly average. The attainment of those in receipt of pupil premium funding is also above average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing.
- Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress from their relative starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Although only a small number of pupils in Year 1 met the required expectations in the national tests on phonics (knowledge and use of letter sounds) in 2012, an above-average proportion of the current Year 1 pupils are already on track to exceed national expectations for this test. In the current Year 2, attainment in reading and mathematics are on track to be above average and attainment in writing to be broadly average.
- Robust school data shows that all groups of pupils from both civilian and service families, including those in receipt of pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those at an early stage of learning English make equally good progress and a few make outstanding progress in reading and mathematics. This is as a result of some outstanding teaching and the wide range of effective support groups for learning, especially those for pupils who are in receipt of pupil premium funding. In 2012, the attainment of non-free school meals pupils was above average in English and mathematics whereas the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals was above average in mathematics and below average in English. The school has been successful in eliminating this difference and attainment is now above average in English and mathematics for both groups, who make good equally progress from their different starting points.
- A few higher-attaining pupils do not always reach their expected levels as their thinking is not always challenged sufficiently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection evidence shows that teaching has improved from satisfactory at the last inspection to good. This has been achieved through the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and effective arrangements for training and support provided by senior leaders. Lessons seen were mostly good and school data shows that some teaching is outstanding. Only a few pockets of

teaching require improvement, which the school is addressing effectively.

- Teachers usually make good use of assessment to match learning tasks to the different needs of pupils. Very occasionally teachers miss opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils in lessons. Teachers give good feedback in lessons on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve, although this is not as consistent when they mark pupils' work.
- Teachers provide stimulating activities and challenges which pupils enjoy, encouraging and promoting team work between pupils. This motivates pupils to learn and was confirmed by pupils who said teachers make learning fun. Children in the Reception class chose a range of challenges for other children to complete, such as rolling two sets of dice and then adding the numbers of each dice to make a total, constructing a car and drawing two identical snowmen. They completed their challenges with great enjoyment.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were challenged to incorporate a range of interesting vocabulary and punctuation to further enliven their writing. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to discuss ideas for writing questions about the weather and then write down the questions using question marks instead of full stops. As a result they wrote down, 'Why is it icy?' 'What is the weather like outside?' and 'Why did it snow?'
- Although the teaching of communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills is good throughout the school, pupils' work shows that there are occasionally missed opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy in topic work.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the few who are at an early stage of learning English well, both in lessons and in support groups outside lessons. They focus on developing key vocabulary to enable pupils to understand new concepts and develop pupils' knowledge and skills further by breaking tasks down into smaller steps. Catch-up groups in literacy and numeracy for pupils in receipt of pupil premium are particularly effective in ensuring these pupils make accelerated progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and they have a good understanding of how to stay safe. During the inspection, pupils wrapped up warmly before playing outside at break times and avoided the icy playground, opting to play on the snow covered field instead. Behaviour in assembly and in the dining hall at lunchtime was good and pupils always moved safely from one area of the school to another.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning, together with their good behaviour, attendance and punctuality, make a significant contribution to their learning. In lessons seen, pupils invariably focused on their learning activities, listened to others and followed instructions. On just a few occasions, there were rare incidents of minor disruption. These were dealt with effectively by the teacher as pupils responded well to how their behaviour was managed.
- The school's own survey of parents and carers, discussions with parents and carers during the inspection and the analysis of Parent View show that most parents and carers agree that pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of prejudice and different kinds of bullying. They spoke about

how some children can be bullied because they look different or come from different families. They said that bullying is rare and teachers deal with it effectively. Very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour or harassment were recorded and systems for following these up are thorough. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the headteacher took up post nearly two years ago, the school has improved rapidly in all aspects of its work under her leadership. The headteacher is supported well by the senior leadership team. Together, they have developed strong team work among staff with a shared commitment to school. The high staff morale is reflected in the positive comments expressed by all staff in their questionnaire returns.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously and provide effective support and training for staff. This has led to good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. All leaders observe lessons regularly and look at teachers' planning and pupils' work. Information from these activities, together with regular reviews of pupil progress, provides leaders with an accurate view of the strengths of teaching and any weaknesses. These findings are used to set clear objectives for improvement. Performance against these objectives is checked throughout the year and is linked closely to the headteacher's performance objectives. All objectives are based on sharply-focused priorities for school improvement, derived from accurate self-evaluation. Leaders ensure there is a strong focus on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching in line with the national teaching standards. The performance of individual teachers is carefully linked to any increases in their salaries.
- Subject leaders are effective in checking how well teaching is helping pupils to learn and make progress within their subject areas. Their findings and clear action plans influence the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and the well-conceived school development priorities.
- Leaders have developed a good curriculum across the school to encourage independent learning and raise pupils' achievement. Leaders ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted well, as seen in the good provision in place for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those at an early stage of learning English, and pupils who are gifted and talented. A wide range of effective support groups is in place for pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their work, or who need to catch up.
- Pupils' learning is enriched through the extensive range of after-school clubs, visitors to the school, and visits to places of interest. These also promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils enjoy activities such as China Day, Passport Day and the celebration of the Olympics, where they gain deeper insight into different cultural traditions.
- Funding on pupil premium is used to good effect. The well thought-out intervention groups in place to support reading, writing and mathematics have led to accelerated progress for those pupils eligible for this additional funding.
- Good partnerships with parents and carers have led to increasing confidence and support for the school with all parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey indicating they are willing to recommend the school to others. Firm and effective links are established with parents and carers of Reception children. These are achieved through regular home visits and through sharing of information about children's progress through learning journeys, reviews and informal discussions.

- The local authority has provided good support for the school particularly in reviewing the impact of its work on pupils' achievement, and in providing training in the teaching of phonics and training for governors.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body ensure that statutory requirements are met, particularly for safeguarding which fully meets requirements. They have ensured vetting procedures are rigorous for all staff and visitors, that staff training is up to date and that the school is following the recommended policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of its pupils. They attend parents' evenings and monitor the school's work through regular focused visits. Good support and training provided by the local authority has led to good improvement in governance since the last inspection. Governors now have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have been instrumental in overseeing the management of the headteacher's performance in improving the quality of teaching. As a result they are well-informed about how the school rewards good teachers and tackles underperformance. The governing body regularly checks financial expenditure, and looks closely at how well the spending for those in receipt of pupil premium is improving their achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124685
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	406262

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susie White
Headteacher	Patricia Toal
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2010
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