

Sandy Lane Primary School

Sandy Lane, Bracknell, RG12 2JG

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- The school's leaders have not done enough to fully address the issues highlighted in the previous inspection report from 2010. In particular there is still not enough effective teaching.
- Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is inadequate and their attainment by the end of Year 6 has been too low in recent years, especially in mathematics.
- The most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Too few make good progress in mathematics because the expectations of teachers have been too low, and the work they are given not demanding enough.
- Pupils' abilities to use grammar, punctuation and to spell correctly are significantly lower than their peers nationally.
- When teaching is not good, some pupils lose concentration in class and distract others, meaning they make too little progress.
- Improvements made since September 2012 have yet to ensure the gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils are narrowing. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 who are eligible for the pupil premium make much less progress than their peers in writing.
- Leaders have only recently started to analyse pupils' performance data in sufficient detail and use this information to plan for additional support. The monitoring of the impact of these interventions needs to be improved.
- School leaders, including some governors, think that, in the past, the school was performing better than it was. This is partly down to receiving inaccurate performance data.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new headteacher has continued to build on the work of the acting headteacher and significant actions have been taken to increase the capacity and confidence of leaders at all levels. There are improvements although it is too soon to measure the full impact on pupils' progress.
- Teachers who are new to the school have been very well supported and are already ensuring pupils make good progress.
- Staff, parents and carers, governors and pupils are rightly supportive of the new headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 30 lessons, one of which was undertaken jointly with the headteacher. They also visited two assemblies, observed play and lunchtimes, listened to pupils read, and made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, two groups of pupils and five members of the governing body.
- A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 61 parents' and carers' responses to the online Parent View survey in planning and undertaking the inspection.
- An inspector met some parents and carers informally before the start of the school day. As requested, one of their complimentary comments was relayed to a member of the non-teaching support staff.
- The inspectors also took account of 55 staff questionnaires.
- A range of evidence was reviewed, including the school's improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, local authority monitoring reports, governor minutes, the work pupils have been doing in their books and a range of the school's documentation, including that relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Nick Riddiough, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Fiona Allen

Additional Inspector

Michael Buist

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Sandy Lane is a much larger than average-sized primary school and also has a nursery.
- Most pupils in the school are of White British heritage with other pupils coming from a range of ethnic groups, the largest of which is other White.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for those eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families) is lower than the national average. All of the pupils who receive the pupil premium at Sandy Lane are eligible for free school meals.
- The previous headteacher left the school at the end of the 2011/12 academic year. The current deputy headteacher led the school for one year before the new substantive headteacher took up her post in September 2013.
- Since September 2012, eight newly qualified teachers have joined the school and other appointments have been made in order to add capacity to the leadership of the school, including a new special educational needs coordinator.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
 - all learning activities are carefully matched to the needs of individual pupils, particularly in mathematics, so that they are always challenging
 - the teaching of reading, particularly phonics (letters and the sounds they make), is of consistently high quality, as well as the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - weaker teachers observe and learn from the several strong teachers in school.
- Ensure that all groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve highly, especially girls, those eligible for the pupil premium and the most-able, by:
 - rigorously monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and progress for these groups
 - increasing pupils' ability to maintain concentration for sustained periods when working
 - increasing pupils ability to work out what to do when stuck
 - implementing and monitoring targeted interventions for any pupil or group of pupils who are making less progress than could be expected, particularly those that are eligible for the pupil premium.
- Take the next steps in improving the school's' leadership and management, including governance, by:

- embedding the recently revised roles of middle leaders, including that for special educational needs, and narrowing the gap leaders and continue to empower them to impact on the quality of teaching and pupil progress in their teams
- ensuring that the performance data received by the governors are accurate.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning by:
 - ensuring every lesson is interesting and engaging with activities meeting the needs of every child, regardless of their ability
 - increasing the resilience of all pupils to increase their ability to work without adult intervention.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because for several years they have made poor progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2. As a result, their attainment in mathematics has dropped to be significantly below average by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been below the national average for each of the last two years. The proportion of girls and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium who achieved the expected standard was well below the national figure in 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard when they retook the phonics screening check at the end of Year 2 was well below average, especially girls. The teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is not good enough.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 requires improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils make good progress. However, achievement in Key Stage 1 has improved since September 2012, especially in writing and mathematics.
- While the proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 who make expected progress is broadly in line with national averages, too few more-able pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- As a result of good teaching recently, pupils in Year 6 are currently achieving well in reading and writing. However, good progress is not consistent throughout the school with weak progress in some year groups in Key Stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Those eligible for the pupil premium make less progress than their peers nationally in writing in Key Stage 2 whereas those not eligible make more progress comparatively. As a result, eligible pupils are working approximately half a year behind non-eligible pupils in English and mathematics, and this gap has widened slightly in reading and writing. This pattern is reflected throughout the rest of the school where the attainment gap continues to widen.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities for all its pupils, regardless of gender, background or belief. This is demonstrated by leaders in their recent appointment of a member of staff with a specific remit to work with teachers to narrow gaps in the attainment of different groups of pupils.
- While the progress of pupils from White British and other White backgrounds was low in mathematics in 2013, progress in reading and writing was broadly in line with the national average for almost all ethnic groups.
- Since September 2012, several groups have been run to help pupils who require additional support in order to help them catch up with their peers. However, leaders have not targeted these extra sessions effectively enough and therefore few actually resulted in raising achievement. For example, despite their inadequate progress over time, there are no specific intervention groups for the most-able pupils or girls at Key Stage 2.
- Children achieve well in most areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, their ability to understand the sounds that letters make is not secure enough for them to get off to a flying start in Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 achieve well.
- Pupils' attainment in reading at Key Stage 2 has improved steadily over the last three years and is now close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who made good progress in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 was above that seen nationally last year.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- While teaching is improving, there remains too much that is inadequate throughout the school. As a result, pupils are not making the progress that they are capable of and continue to underachieve. The groups that remain most vulnerable to underachievement are more able pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium. Too often work set for pupils is too easy for them, especially in mathematics.

- In some classes, pupils do not develop sufficient ability or resilience to work for a sustained period. If they get stuck, they sometimes have to wait too long for help and do not have the strategies to solve problems for themselves.
- Marking is too inconsistent. Some teachers make clear what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve their learning further. However, they do not give pupils enough time to respond to their comments or learn from their mistakes. In meetings with pupils, they highlighted this as something they would like to improve.
- Some girls said that they do not enjoy mathematics because the activities they are given are too easy. They also feel that boys dominate question-and-answer sessions within the class and this limits their ability to make progress. Inspectors observed in lesson observations that girls are passive and reluctant to contribute.
- There are pockets of strength in teaching across the school. Where teaching is stronger, pupils enjoy their learning and make better progress. In these lessons, teaching assistants contribute to pupils' learning with good effect because they understand what the teacher is aiming to achieve.
- A significant number of newly qualified teachers have joined the school since September 2012. Leaders, especially the school's teaching and learning mentor, have supported them well and provided them with a thorough programme of professional development. This has ensured that they are already teaching at a good standard. They have improved the overall quality of teaching across the school and their impact is expected to increase further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils often behave well but when teaching is not good, or the work they are given is too easy, pupils' attitudes to learning are poor. They lose concentration quickly and can disturb and distract other pupils and this limits the progress that they make.
- When pupils are not fully engaged, it takes them too long to respond to requests from staff and to get settled into learning activities. As a result, too much time is lost as the flow of the lesson is interrupted which limits the amount of learning pupils can do.
- In some lessons, especially when year groups are set into ability groups, teachers have to spend too much time trying to engage pupils and manage their behaviour. This wastes too much time.
- Otherwise pupils' behaviour around school is good. They are very polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. They demonstrate good manners and conduct themselves very well outside of the classroom.
- Children, parents and carers, staff and governors all agree that the school is safe and that children behave positively around the school.
- Sandy Lane is a Rights Respecting School and this underpins the school's strong ethos. Pupils report that they feel happy and safe in school. They have a good understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying, and are adamant that it is very rare in their school. They are confident that if they did witness any unpleasantness, staff would sort it out quickly. The school's own behaviour logs support this.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved in the last two years.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management, including governance, are not yet good because leaders have not taken the actions required to fully address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. As a result, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and lessons do not yet consistently challenge all groups of learners, particularly the most able. Furthermore, until recently, the progress of pupils has not been tracked rigorously or accurately to ensure they all make good or better progress in writing, especially the most-able, girls and those eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- Until very recently, leaders of the school, including governors, have had an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness, particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and pupils'

achievement. This is partly because information that has been provided to governors has been incomplete or inaccurate.

- In the last academic year, the existing deputy headteacher, who led the school as the acting headteacher, introduced several improvements. As a result, the current Year 6 pupils made good progress and there were improvements in pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. This demonstrates that the school can improve further.
 - The recent appointment of the new, experienced headteacher has provided a refreshed impetus and a sense of urgency regarding the improvements that are required. She has very quickly gained an accurate view of the areas that require significant improvement across the school and put rigorous plans in place to address these. While inspectors agree that the plans are appropriate, it is too early to measure their impact on pupils' progress.
 - The teaching and learning mentor has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching provided by the school's newly qualified teachers. She has also worked alongside some of the school's weaker teachers and made a successful impact on their performance which has resulted in good pupil progress. This also indicates that the leadership has the capacity to improve the school further.
 - The school has recently invested in increasing the capacity of the middle leadership by appointing a new special educational needs coordinator and a member of staff with specific responsibility for narrowing the attainment gap between pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their peers. While inspectors agree that these are wise appointments, it is too soon to judge the impact of their role on pupils' progress.
 - The school has recently committed to leadership development at all levels. Phase leaders and subject teams have had their roles clarified and now have an overview of performance across the school. They are receiving appropriate professional development to carry out these roles with confidence, although it is too soon to judge their impact on pupils' progress.
 - The school curriculum makes a good contribution towards pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development with sport and music being particular strengths. The Eco-Schools award, links with a school in Zambia, a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and a senior citizens' lunch all enhance children's experiences and broaden the curriculum.
 - The school has clear plans for the expenditure of the sports premium by linking with a local sports provider but it is too early to measure the impact of this on pupil participation as yet.
 - The appraisal of teachers' performance has recently been improved and there are clear plans in place to link their pay to this.
 - The local authority has provided suitable challenge and support since September 2012, to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement, particularly in Year 3 and Year 4.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. The governing body of the school is supportive of the ethos of the school and recognises that Sandy Lane has a good reputation within the community. Governors challenge the school leaders through questioning and hold them to account for the progress of pupils, although the information they have received in the past has not always been accurate or complete and therefore their judgements have been too generous. They are aware of the need to monitor the impact of pupil premium but at present, they are unsure of the impact it has had on raising achievement for eligible pupils. Governors were right to take their time in selecting a new headteacher and have made an astute appointment.
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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	133619
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	427300

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	678
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Reading
Headteacher	Jane Sculpher
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2010
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