

Sandhills Community Primary School

Terrett Avenue, Oxford, OX3 8FN

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- The headteacher's clear focus on and ambition for consistently raising pupils' achievement are shared by staff, senior leaders and members of the governing body.
- Good leadership of teaching and learning, together with effective management of teachers' performance, has ensured that teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Consistently good teaching has led to a rising trend in attainment, with Year 6 pupils reaching standards that are significantly higher than those of all pupils nationally.
- All groups of pupils, including pupils who benefit from additional funding and those who find learning more difficult, make good progress because they are interested in their learning and want to do well.
- Regular checks on pupils' learning highlight any underachievement. Focused help from skilled support staff closes any gaps in their learning quickly.
- Pupils know what it takes to be a good learner. There is a 'buzz' of excitement as pupils talk confidently about their work, share what they know and try out new ideas.
- All adults show a high level of care and respect. This ensures that everyone is included, pupils feel safe and behaviour is consistently good.
- Members of the governing body make sure that they know about the school. This helps them to play an important part in making the decisions which drive the school forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure all pupils learn exceptionally well.
- Checks are not always made on whether pupils have done their corrections.
- Pupils' misunderstandings are not always identified and corrected quickly.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always as neat as it should be and spelling is not always accurate.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 25 lessons or part-lessons were observed.
- Thirteen joint observations of teaching and learning were conducted with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and carers and took account of the 63 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' workbooks and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equality, minutes of meetings of the governing body and planning documents.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Barbara Atcheson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maura Doherty	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sandhills Community Primary School is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background; the rest are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is similar to the national average. There are no looked after children or children from service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is similar to the national average. The proportion of those who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2013.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - pupils' misunderstandings are identified and corrected quickly
 - checks are carried out to make certain that pupils have understood how to improve the work they do in books.
- Raise the standard of pupils' work by ensuring that handwriting is always neat and pupils spell words correctly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school's focus on learning is at the heart of its improvement. It has ensured that achievement has improved over the last three years. All pupils talk confidently about their learning, from the youngest children in the Reception class to the oldest pupils in Year 6. Pupils have a good understanding of their learning because they work together and share or 'maggie' ideas to draw up their own success criteria. They happily try new ways of working, listen to what others say and adapt their work accordingly.
- The school places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of all its work. There is no discrimination. All teachers and support staff are held responsible for pupils' achievement and pupils' progress is checked at regular meetings. If any pupil is seen to be underperforming, extra help is quickly arranged to help them catch up.
- Small learning groups taken by skilled, well-prepared, support staff help to speed up learning for those pupils who have gaps in their learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils supported through additional funding are achieving as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 these pupils also do as well as their classmates in reading and writing but are two terms behind them in mathematics.
- Accurate identification, thorough planning and a good range of extra help in the form of skilled support staff enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same rate of progress as their peers.
- In 2013, Year 2 pupils, including more-able pupils, reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics which were significantly higher than those of all pupils nationally.
- Year 6 pupils' attainment and progress were significantly above those of all pupils nationally. The work in the books of all groups of pupils shows that they make good rather than exemplary progress. Handwriting is not as neat as it should be and words are not always spelled accurately.
- More-able pupils make rapid progress. They revel in the challenge that their work provides and the challenges they set each other. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson they vied to set increasingly difficult problems for their classmates, using odd numbers, square numbers and divisibility.
- The school's work on storytelling and the focus on the correct use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) have ensured pupils are very secure in their reading and writing skills. The outcomes of the annual phonics check in Year 1 in 2013 were above those nationally. Year 2 pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently, using their knowledge of letter sounds to help them read and the rest of the text to help them understand. They have a good understanding of what they are reading and query anything they do not understand. Year 6 pupils, particularly boys, enjoy reading much more than they used to because they are given a budget and can buy their own books from a selected pool.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and want to do their best. Teachers know the pupils well and take care to set work at the right level of difficulty. For example, Year 6 pupils grappled with the ever increasing mathematical challenges they set each other. The teacher stopped them from time to time to check their learning. Pupils confidently shared their difficulties and their classmates proffered ideas for them to try.
- Pupils have a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. This is because teachers and support staff listen to what pupils say and are skilled in asking the right questions. In return pupils are skilled not just in giving the answer but also giving the reason. For example, Year 2 pupils decided that 'and' was not a good connecting word to use when the bird in the sentence had been sitting on eggs for two weeks. They decided 'finally' was much more suitable.
- Most pupils know what they have to improve and are proud of their achievement. For example,

a Year 2 boy rushed to find his book to show how much his writing had improved. When pupils make mistakes, teachers and support staff are usually quick to redirect their learning and so no time is lost. However, this is not always the case and occasionally pupils continue down the wrong path unchecked.

- Pupils are usually quick to learn from the mistakes they make when working in books because teachers point out where they have gone wrong. However, occasionally teachers do not go back to check that pupils have made the correction and this restricts how well their work improves.
- Although pupils' handwriting is not always neat and spelling is not always accurate, work in books clearly shows that pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of their learning and make rapid progress.
- Most pupils are properly prepared for their learning because support staff 'pre-teach' any who have learning gaps so that they are ready to learn on an equal footing and no time is lost. When Year 2 pupils were told that in three minutes they were going to have to gather on the carpet and have their answers ready, one girl said to her partner, 'We'd better get a move on!'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a friendly and welcoming school. The headteacher and her staff set a very good example. Pupils know that they are cared for and say they all work together as a team '...like one big family; no one is ever left out'.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well. Pupils know that there are a few pupils who have different needs and say, 'They are not naughty; they just find it difficult to behave properly.'
- For the most part, pupils are so involved with their learning there is no thought of misbehaviour but, when they are not so involved, there are a few odd occasions when pupils fidget or chat about other things.
- Pupils are proud of their school, proud of their achievements and take great delight in showing off the good work that they and others have done. They take care of each other and enjoy the times when they work across year groups on different projects in 'Buddy Groups'. They take care of the environment. Eco warriors go round the school turning off lights and taps. Pupils can choose how to spend rewards gained, for example, in a class picnic.
- Pupils love learning and enjoy coming to school regularly. The school has worked hard with parents and carers to recognise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. As a result the attendance rate has improved dramatically and is now higher than the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know about the different sorts of bullying through assemblies and they know it is wrong. They are emphatic that there is no bullying but say that, if there was, they would tell an adult and they would be confident it would be dealt with in a quick and fair way. They know about cyber bullying and are confident they know how to deal with it.
- Playtimes are enjoyable and safe. Pupils understand the rules for staying safe on the large outdoor equipment and enjoy sharing the many singing games that go on. If there are any minor disagreements, they are happy for others to intervene and sort things out in a friendly way.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to Parent View said that their children are happy and feel safe at school.
- Parents and carers appreciate the benefits of the school's breakfast and after-school club and pupils enjoy the food, especially the cereals and toast at breakfast time, the companionship and games.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have an accurate view of the school's

strengths and areas for development. They have high aspirations for the school and are quick to recognise and successfully tackle areas for improvement. As a result, the school's performance has improved year on year. All staff are very supportive of the headteacher and work hard to achieve these goals.

- Staff also hold the positive attitudes to learning that are so well established in pupils. There is a willingness to learn from each other and to appreciate that different approaches work for different teachers and different pupils. Teachers feel supported by this positive approach. School records and inspection evidence show that their practice has improved as a result.
- Teaching and learning have also improved as a result of the effective checks on teaching and learning made by leaders at all levels. These checks identify key areas for teachers to improve their practice. Good quality training, together with support from colleagues, has helped improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders collect a wide range of information within their areas of responsibility. They accurately check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Follow-up actions from these observations have also successfully improved and shaped teachers' skills and have had a positive impact on pupils' performance.
- All staff check regularly on pupils' learning and record the progress each pupil makes. This good practice leads to open dialogue for school improvement among all staff, including support staff, and is influential in driving up standards.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Personal targets are set for all staff and any support needed is identified and provided. Reviews of staff performance tackle weaknesses and recognise and reward improvements in teaching.
- The school has carefully planned how to spend the new primary school sports funding. So far it has been used for football coaching, swimming and to widen pupils' experience of physical activity to include rock climbing and archery, to name but two additional activities. However, the school is mindful that it wants the funding to have a lasting impact on improving pupils' physical health and well-being and has therefore earmarked a sum to develop outdoor education in line with the new curriculum in September.
- The local authority has given the school effective support and advice which has helped it to improve, develop and grow into a school which now provides a good quality of overall education.
- The school's good partnership with other schools is a significant factor in helping to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The school also has a good partnership with all parents and carers, which is a significant factor in ensuring that they are active partners in their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The members of the governing body play a significant role in the strategic direction of the school and the rapid improvement that the school has made since the previous inspection. They have benefited from good quality training in order to improve their skills. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and how pupils' test results compare to those nationally and those of other similar schools. They realise that more work has to be done to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.
 - Governors understand about the management of teachers' performance and how it must be used to improve the quality of teaching if pay rises are to be awarded. Governors are fully involved with setting targets for the school and hold it rigorously to account. They ensure that statutory duties such as for safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well. They know that pupils known to be eligible for extra funding are beginning to close any gaps they may have in attainment because money allocated for this purpose is used appropriately.

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	123027
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	429594

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	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Staines
Headteacher	Stephanie Lovett
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 April 2012
Telephone number	01865 433 000
Fax number	01865 433 001
Email address	head@sandhills.oxon.sch.uk

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