

Sandy Lane Primary School

Sandy Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 2JG

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Until recently, leaders have not taken effective steps to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Progress is not yet consistently good and pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been below average.
- In the past, governors did not check the school's work for themselves. Consequently, they were unable to challenge leaders about the school's performance and hold them to account robustly.
- Leaders at all levels have not evaluated the impact of teaching precisely enough. They have not focused their checks clearly enough on the difference teachers are making to the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Until recently, leaders have not managed the performance of staff well enough. They have not identified the precise support and challenge needed to promote consistently good teaching.
- Middle leaders, most relatively new to their roles, have not had sufficient time to help colleagues improve their practice and evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teaching varies in quality and does not always help all pupils to make good progress. Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of what different groups of pupils can achieve, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching does not always help pupils to extend their skills in writing. Teachers do not always show pupils how to organise their ideas effectively or give them sufficient time to write at length across subjects.
- Not all children have been ready to start Year 1 with secure basic skills. Until recently, too few children reached good enough levels of development.

The school has the following strengths:

- The interim executive headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteachers, has introduced a number of changes to help improve teaching, pupils' behaviour and their progress.
- A well-planned range of subjects and topics enriches pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes effective provision for the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent). Pupils across the school enjoy reading.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe in school.
- Parents and carers are supportive of what the new leadership is trying to achieve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, some in conjunction with senior leaders. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, an assembly, the dining hall and the playground.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and school leaders. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 160 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as consulting informally with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They also took account of the 39 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of additional sports funding.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Veronique Gerber	Additional Inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional Inspector
William Alexander	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised in 24 classes, all of which are single-age groups.
- The interim executive headteacher took up post in January 2015, following the resignation of the previous headteacher.
- The large majority of pupils have a White British background, with small proportions coming from a range of ethnic groups.
- All the children in the early years (Reception class) attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority. Currently, there are very few children on roll who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching, including in the early years, to good or outstanding levels by making sure that teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what all groups of pupils can achieve so that more reach their full potential
 - plan a wider range of activities that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - ensuring that all children in the early years learn to form their letters correctly
 - providing more time and opportunities for pupils to write at length across subjects and extend their skills
 - making sure that teachers show pupils how to organise their ideas before writing them down.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management on accelerating school improvement by ensuring that:
 - leaders use observations on the quality of teaching more effectively to improve it to good or outstanding levels
 - the skills and expertise of middle leaders are developed to increase their impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - leaders at all levels, particularly governors, evaluate the school's effectiveness with greater rigour and accuracy.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not consistently good.
- Until recently, leaders did not check the quality of teaching thoroughly enough. They did not evaluate clearly enough the difference that teaching is making to the achievement of different groups of pupils to identify precise areas for improvement.
- In the past, leaders have not used the information from their checks to set teachers challenging targets for improving their performance. They have not provided appropriate training and support followed by further checks to ensure that issues are resolved and that practice has improved.
- Middle leaders, most new to their roles, have not had sufficient time to become fully effective in helping colleagues to improve their practice. Consequently, their impact on raising pupils' achievement is limited.
- Significant changes to leadership and staffing since the previous inspection have given the school the opportunity to move forwards. The interim executive headteacher has galvanised the work of senior leaders and set higher expectations. Much has been achieved in a short space of time.
- Firm steps taken recently to strengthen the teaching, particularly of reading, to improve behaviour and the use of additional funds are leading to better progress rates for pupils. These successes demonstrate the school's capacity to keep improving.
- Recently, leaders have set clearer targets for staff to improve their impact on pupils' progress, followed by appropriate support and training. Teachers know that increases in pay are based on good performance.
- The school fosters equality and diversity through well-planned subjects that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and respect for British values well. Pupils develop a strong respect and tolerance for each other's differences, religions and beliefs through a range of activities involving their own and the wider community.
- Leaders promote effective relationships and tackle any discrimination well. There have been very few incidents of harassment since the previous inspection. The improved support for disadvantaged pupils, supported by the pupil premium, is more closely matched to their differing needs. Consequently, this year, these pupils are achieving as well as others in school.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school's work. They appreciate the improved levels of communication from leaders during this period of turbulence, which has helped maintain their confidence in the school.
- Checks on the use of the additional primary sport funding show that all pupils are more active and competitive in a range of sports such as tag-rugby, athletics and cricket. Teachers have the opportunity to work alongside the specialist sports coach to develop their skills to help sustain these activities.
- The local authority has provided some effective support for the school during a time of significant staff changes. Consultants have supported new leaders in strengthening the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They have also ensured that governors are no longer ineffective in supporting the school.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. The school has rigorous procedures for managing the protection of pupils. All training for staff and governors is up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the past, governors did not hold leaders strongly enough to account for the school's performance. They did not check rigorously enough the work of the school and so were unable to challenge leaders about why teaching and pupils' achievement were not better.
 - Due to effective support from the local authority, governance has improved, although governors are still at the early stages of embedding recent improvements. They have restructured their work to become better organised and are more knowledgeable in evaluating the school's work alongside leaders. However, their routines are not yet fully effective in moving the school's effectiveness to good levels.
 - Governors recognise that, until recently, the performance of staff has not been managed rigorously enough to improve teaching. They know that teaching has not been good enough over time, resulting in pupils achieving below national averages by the time they leave the school. Governors understand that this is being addressed now and that any underperformance is tackled more robustly. They now ensure that only good teaching, which results in pupils making better progress, is rewarded.
 - Governors know how additional funds are spent to help disadvantaged pupils and to develop sporting activities. They are aware of the impact the funding is having on pupils' achievement and their overall levels of participation in sport. Although improving, they recognise that progress for these groups of

pupils needs to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and has improved from the previous inspection. Typically, pupils are polite and friendly. They were eager to talk to the inspectors about how much they enjoyed their learning.
- Attitudes to learning have been transformed, as pupils are now very clear about what they have to do to achieve well in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to learn and increasingly proud of their achievements.
- On occasions, when the learning is not pitched at the right level of difficulty, there is some loss of concentration by a few pupils. However, most of the time pupils are cooperative and work well together.
- Pupils take their roles and responsibilities for helping each other or looking after the school environment very seriously. Some are especially trained as school councillors, library monitors, eco-committee members and 'peer mediators' to assist others in resolving any minor issues. This is helping to promote a positive atmosphere around the school and in the playground.
- There have been marked improvements over time in the incidents of poor behaviour of a few pupils with emotional difficulties. Due to effective measures implemented by the school, these pupils are able to participate fully in their learning, which has eliminated the need for exclusion.
- Due to firm steps taken by school leaders, there is little persistent absence and attendance rates are in line with national averages. Pupils respond positively to the range of incentives to encourage and celebrate good attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents and carers agree with this view.
- Pupils are clear that bullying seldom happens but they have confidence in the adults to sort it out should it occur. They are aware of the forms bullying can take, such as cyber bullying, but are well trained in how to keep themselves safe online.
- The subjects covered and the assemblies help pupils to develop self-confidence and social skills well, improving their awareness of their personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
- Safeguarding is good for all pupils, including the most vulnerable, with comprehensive policies, training and practices in place.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently good over time. It has not enabled all groups of pupils to achieve well over time. Inspection evidence shows that while teaching is improving and most teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, some inconsistencies remain.
- Sometimes teachers do not set work with the right level of challenge for all groups of pupils in mathematics. Although they develop pupils' number skills competently, they do not plan enough tasks that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils finding perimeters of two-dimensional shapes were unclear of how to do it in different ways to work out the answer more quickly.
- Teachers have developed pupils' basic skills in writing securely. However, they do not extend these skills through frequent opportunities to write at length across subjects to a high standard. Teaching does not routinely ensure pupils know how to organise their ideas for writing, which limits the quality of what they produce.
- The teaching of reading is effective, with phonics taught more thoroughly through the early years and Years 1 and 2, enabling pupils to become confident readers quickly. Teachers develop pupils' comprehension skills well through focused, small-group activities.
- Over the past year, teachers have planned tasks that are more inspiring and engage pupils' interest more effectively, such as writing their own myths as superheroes. Routinely, they help pupils to understand what constitutes good achievement.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and follow the school's policy for checking pupils' work

conscientiously. Pupils say that they appreciate their teachers' helpful comments and increasingly they follow their guidance to make improvements to their work.

- Recent improvements to teaching are ensuring that the provision for disadvantaged pupils is more clearly matched to their needs. Similarly, the work done by the specialist reading teacher and teaching assistants is better targeted so that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive the precise support they need.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement as too few pupils make consistently good progress across subjects. However, progress rates show improvement this year. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in this year's national tests is on track to be higher than in previous years.
- Pupils' national assessment results in each subject have been broadly average in Key Stage 1 but below average in Key Stage 2. The majority of current pupils are making good progress in reading, although this is more variable in mathematics and writing.
- Achievement in mathematics shows improvement. While pupils are developing their number skills effectively, they are not always given different tasks that extend their thinking and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported by teaching assistants and specialist teachers, although like their classmates, their progress and achievement also require improvement.
- Pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling are much improved and secure across the school. The school has introduced a new style of handwriting that is helping to improve presentation. However, some of the very youngest children find this hard to master. The work in pupils' books shows that they have too few opportunities to practise and extend their skills by writing at length to a good standard across subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as others in the past. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, their attainment was over two terms behind that of others in the school in mathematics and writing, though similar in reading. However, they were over a year behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and writing and two terms behind in reading. In current groups, the gaps have closed in mathematics and reading, and reduced in writing. Overall, these pupils are making better progress than was previously the case.
- In the past, the most able pupils have not been challenged consistently in their work and too few in Key Stage 2 reached the higher National Curriculum levels in each subject. In Key Stage 1, attainment for this group has been in line with the national averages. Recent improvements to the teaching are ensuring that these pupils are stretched more effectively and their progress is better than it has been.
- Pupils apply their phonics knowledge well in their reading, due to the more rigorous teaching of early reading skills. As a result, they are becoming confident readers more quickly. Pupils enjoy reading across a wide range of literature, with effective comprehension skills.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement, as over time, leaders have not ensured that all children achieve well enough to start Year 1 as confident learners. Children have not made consistently good progress in their basic skills from their various starting points to be prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching requires improvement as there is still some unevenness in the progress children are making, particularly in writing. Teachers do not routinely show children how to record their ideas. Some children do not form their letters correctly and the adults do not always address this promptly. For example, some children wrote their 'tricky' words on their whiteboards but were unable to read their writing confidently as their letters were not always formed correctly.
- Recent improvements to the way that early reading skills are taught are having good impact on progress rates. Currently, the proportion of children on track to meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning is in line with the national average.
- In the past, leaders have not identified children whose progress has slowed quickly enough and provided additional help. Disadvantaged children have not achieved as well as their classmates. The new leadership team has introduced an effective system for checking achievement and taken firm steps to improve the

provision where needed. Consequently, these children are now making good progress with no gaps in attainment.

- Children enjoy the opportunities to follow their own interests, working productively both indoors and outdoors. They behave well, showing that they are able to play and work together effectively, following the positive relationships modelled by the adults.
- Good attention is given to children's welfare so that they are kept very safe in school. Parents and carers are also positive about the way the leaders now ensure that children have a better start to school.

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	462655

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	Trudi Sammons, interim executive headteacher
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 November 2013
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