

# Sandal Castle VA Community Primary School

Barnsley Road, Sandal, Wakefield, WF2 6AS

**Inspection dates** 23–24 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is a rapidly improving school. Senior leaders have taken well-targeted and robust action to tackle the areas of concern raised at the last inspection. Led effectively by the headteacher, sustained improvement is being made to teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The achievement of pupils, as a result of improved teaching, is rising rapidly. From starting points below what is typical for their age, children make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils progress equally well.
- Teaching is consistently good and improving. This is because staff work well together to share their best practice and take on board leaders' guidance. They provide high quality feedback and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils are well equipped to engage with the next steps in their learning.
- The school has a strong ethos of respect, care, guidance and support for all pupils, which make a strong contribution to the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- The school is a calm and happy place in which pupils feel safe, know how to keep themselves safe and enjoy their learning.
- Children in the early years make a strong start to their learning. By the time they complete the Reception Year they are increasingly well prepared to access the curriculum in Year 1.
- School leaders, at all levels, work well together, clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and have high expectations for learning and behaviour across the school.
- Governors are dedicated to making the school the best it can be. They are skilled and knowledgeable about all aspects of school life. The governing body is effective in holding school leaders to account and ensure swift and rapid action is taken to address issues.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations of the presentation and accuracy of pupils' work is not always high enough, particularly in writing.
- Attendance is improving rapidly, but is still below average.
- School leaders do not ensure that targets set for teachers precisely match the school improvement priorities.

## Information about this inspection

- The Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, a representative from the local authority, five members of the governing body, leadership teams, staff and pupils.
- Some pupils read to inspectors and their work was sampled.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the on-line parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors talked to some parents outside the school and considered 186 responses to a recent school survey of their opinions.
- A range of documentation was reviewed including previous monitoring inspection letters, published data, school data on pupils' progress and attainment. In addition, inspectors looked at reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings and the action plans for improving the school performance.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Brown, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Lunn	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector
Stephen Fisher	Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has recently expanded from a two-form entry to a three-form entry primary school.
- In September 2014, the junior school extended its age range to incorporate a 'good' local infant school.
- New accommodation on the current junior site to house early years and Key Stage 1 classes was completed and opened in April 2015.
- The school has limited published data for 2014 SATs results. Results in mathematics and reading were annulled due to questions raised by the Standards and Testing Agency about the maladministration of the tests. As a result, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. The proportion of pupils who are new to English or speak English as an additional language is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The children attend the early years provision in the Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- In February 2014 the school was placed in special measures. There have been three monitoring inspections by HMI since then.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring pupils' work is always accurate and legible and that pupils take even greater care in the presentation of their work.
- Improve attendance so that it at least matches that seen nationally, especially for those pupils that are frequently absent, by building on actions already taken and learning from the best practice elsewhere.
- Ensure that school leaders match the targets set for teachers more precisely with the outcomes they have set as priorities for the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders, including governors, are ambitious to see the school improve and the needs of every pupil met. Their actions, including tackling weaknesses in teaching, have ensured a rapid and sustained improvement in all aspects of the school's work and are making a positive difference to the lives of pupils.
- The school has good systems in place to check on how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff have a comprehensive programme of checks and balances, including working with good and outstanding schools, to ensure their assessments are accurate. This information is used as part of a wider evidence base to challenge and support teachers to improve their practice.
- Middle leaders have an accurate overview of their subjects and ensure systematic links between English and mathematics are secured in other curriculum areas. They work collaboratively to ensure that all teachers understand their own strengths and weaknesses in any particular subject area.
- The additional primary school sports funding is used well to improve the quality of physical education. An extensive rolling programme of out-of-school specialist provision is complemented by ensuring pupils have access to high-quality teaching and equipment during lessons.
- Pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are woven into a range of subjects to help provide a purpose to these aspects of learning. Teachers have worked hard to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. A programme of assemblies and lessons improve pupils' understanding, respect and tolerance of differences between people. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum feature strongly. Leaders ensure good provision promotes equality of opportunity good relations between groups of pupils and the wider community. Teachers explore in depth and with sensitivity issues, including tackling discrimination, that have an impact on the lives of pupils in the wider world.
- The school's systems to keep pupils safe are of high quality. Safeguarding arrangements meet with statutory requirements. In addition, all staff contribute to a culture in which safeguarding is made a priority, issues are understood, concerns dealt with promptly and then systematically reviewed to ensure best practice is maintained.
- Additional funding provided to the school to support disadvantaged pupils is well spent. Pupils' achievement has improved as a result of targeted support and access to out-of-school provision. Training for staff to identify and help pupils reach their potential has been effective. The progress these pupils make is systematically tracked and reviewed.
- Parents are positive about the experiences their children have in school. They have increasing confidence in the progress their children are making and would happily recommend the school to other parents. They find that the teachers and school leaders are easy to approach with issues and concerns.
- The school has benefited from the continued support from the local authority. As the school has improved, the local authority has rightly stepped back to ensure the school is capable of supporting its own improvement. The school has established strong partnership working with other good and outstanding schools to ensure it continues to learn from the best practice available.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have high ambition for the school. They are proud of the family ethos the school promotes. They have a clear picture of the standards reached by all groups of pupils and the quality of teaching across the school. Governors rightly focus on those at risk of underachieving and the impact that actions the school is taking is having on them. They receive regular reports and updates from school leaders at all levels. Governors work well with school leaders to track outcomes for all groups of pupils, including those at risk of underachieving, to ensure they promote equality of opportunity and tackle issues promptly where they arise. This means governors know the school well and help drive school improvement priorities by challenging and holding school leaders to account. They have been robust in tackling weaker teaching. However, systems to manage teachers' performance currently lack sufficient overview to ensure that targets set for teachers fully reflect the priorities in the school action plans. Governors have commissioned external reviews of how well the pupil premium funding is spent. As a result, they know what is working well and what further steps also need to be taken.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils are courteous and polite, they show care and respect for each other and adults in the school. As a result, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere conducive to effective learning.
- Behaviour outside the classrooms is exemplary. Pupils walk around the school with due consideration for others and play well together at playtimes. As a consequence, they enter their classrooms ready to learn.
- As the quality of teaching has improved, pupils' attitudes to learning have also improved. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well in lessons. Occasionally, some pupils lose concentration. This only occurs where the work set for them lacks clarity or is not challenging enough.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They understand the concepts of respect and tolerance and take their responsibilities to each other seriously. The views of pupils are taken into account and the school council provides a democratic platform for their ideas to be shared with school leaders.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. A culture of safety is a characteristic of the school. This is because all staff and pupils are clear about their roles and responsibilities to keep themselves and others safe. Staff keep continually updated about current safety concerns, review their practice regularly and provide an explicit programme of lessons to raise awareness with pupils.
- Bullying is rare and where incidents do occur they are dealt with promptly. Pupils have a good understanding of all forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. They are given the necessary skills and attitudes to resolve conflicts effectively.
- Pupils are well aware of the dangers they may face on-line, and what to do if they feel concerned.
- The school has established a system of 'safety ambassadors' which provides a forum for pupils to raise concerns about safety in and around the school. This includes pupils talking to other pupils, gathering their views and supporting evidence, including photographs, and presenting them to senior leaders.
- The headteacher and safeguarding officer have taken a range of actions to ensure that attendance improves. Where pupils are frequently absent, the school tackles any difficulties families may face in accessing education for their child. This work includes working with other agencies. While attendance is rapidly improving, there is still more that the school can do to lift it from below the national average.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons, along with assessment data across the school, shows that pupils are making good progress as a result of good teaching in reading, mathematics and writing.
- The effective teaching of the sounds that letters represent (phonics) is helping pupils make good progress with their reading across the early years and Key Stage 1. This is because it is taught regularly and systematically. Teachers and other adults use their good subject knowledge to target and help pupils when they get stuck.
- The guidance pupils are given to correct and improve their work is good and at times outstanding. In addition, they are given time to review work with teachers and other adults to clarify any misconceptions. This means that all pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve and how. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of all pupils and provide support that is timely and effective.
- Teaching stimulates and engages pupils with their learning. On occasions, when pupils have demonstrated their grasp of an idea or concept, teachers do not move them on quickly enough to deepen their understanding. As a result, they miss opportunities to accelerate their learning further.
- Teachers set pupils appropriate and at times challenging homework. This has been well received by parents.
- Many teachers plan activities which match the needs of all pupils and capture their interest. The expectations, pace and challenge set engage all pupils and make them want to succeed. As a result, all groups of pupils make significant gains in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting the pupils with whom they work. They understand their roles and work well alongside the teachers. They mainly work with pupils who are behind in their learning. This sometimes limits the access these pupils have to the expertise of the teacher.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Inspection evidence confirms that pupils make good progress across the school and that they quickly make up for lost ground. From their individual starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics pupils make rapid and sustained improvements. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils are meeting the

expectations for their age and an increasing proportion of pupils are working at higher levels.

- Significant improvement in achievement is due to teaching being clearly focused on the basic skills of grammar, punctuation, reading and mathematics. This means that pupils are confident in tackling number problems more accurately. This is not as evident in writing, where, although pupils write at length, care and accuracy in pupils' work is less apparent.
- Children arrive in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are often below those typically expected for their age. Children make good progress across all aspects of learning, especially in mathematics and reading. Progress is not as strong in writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read with increased fluency and accuracy. They do not always understand everything they read. Most pupils have secure phonics skills appropriate for their age by the end of Year 1 and those who do not, quickly acquire them in Year 2.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly average. All pupils have made the progress expected of them and many have made better than expected progress. The majority of those that needed to catch up have done so.
- The vast majority of current Year 6 pupils achieve well. However, despite recent good and sometimes outstanding rates of progress, some pupils still have gaps in their learning due to previous inadequate teaching.
- The most-able pupils are consistently challenged to meet their potential. Teachers plan well for this particular group. As a result, these pupils make good progress and more pupils are reaching higher levels across the school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. They are set ambitious targets for their achievement and well supported in meeting their needs. This ensures that progress across the school for this group of pupils is now good.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide a range of approaches to assist disadvantaged pupils. Inspection evidence confirms that additional adult support, programmes of support and provision for school trips and other activities help these pupils make good progress and catch up with their classmates. However, direct comparisons between this groups' achievement and that of others nationally is limited by the lack of published data for the school in reading and mathematics in 2014.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups, those who are new to English or speak English as an additional language is equally as good as that of their peers. This is because they receive the support they need to take a full part in learning.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children have been in their new Reception classrooms for three months. Staff have worked successfully to ensure a stimulating and exciting learning environment. As a consequence, children have settled well and continue to thrive.
- Good quality teaching, with a relentless focus on developing skills for learning, alongside basic skills in literacy and number, ensure that children make good progress from their different starting points.
- By the time children enter Year 1, most are well prepared for life in Key Stage 1. School assessments and inspection evidence show that achievement is improving. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years is improving but is still below average.
- The care and support provided for children are good. All staff know the children well. High expectations, clear routines and praising good behaviour are key characteristics of the setting. Planned activities are exciting and engaging. Planning builds on accurate assessments and a good knowledge of children's interests.
- Staff have worked successfully to ensure that they make the most of learning from all the planned activities. Consequently, children are eager to learn. They have opportunities to initiate and direct their own learning and are encouraged to persist with what they are doing. Children have opportunities to collaborate and solve problems together. One activity involved children working together with crates and planks to build secure structures on which they could walk. They were encouraged to assess risk, cooperate and evaluate the outcomes of the challenge. These features, alongside good relationships between adults and children, and clear expectations about how children should behave, mean that children feel safe and behave well. Speaking and listening skills are well modelled by staff and children are encouraged to speak clearly and at length.
- The leadership of the early years is good. Leaders accurately understand the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and have clear plans in place to progress further. Where weaknesses in teaching and provision are evident, they take swift and immediate action to address them. Ensuring the safety of

children as they moved onto the new site has been, and continues to be a priority. Systems put in place, including risk assessments and regular site reviews, ensure children are kept safe. Leaders have ensured that assessments about children's starting points are accurate. They have identified the need for more work with parents and other settings to ensure children can make the best start to school possible. Priorities identified in the early years inform the priorities set in the wider school and whole-school priorities feed into the early years. For example, more opportunities for writing have been identified, linked to a wide range of activities with an increasing expectation that writing is part of everything children do.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108270
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	455532

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	573
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Samantha Wade
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nichola Russell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303525
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