

Sandfield Close Primary School

Sandfield Close, Leicester LE4 7RE

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, including governors, have taken effective action to ensure that the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are good.
- Leaders use systems effectively to check the progress pupils make and quickly identify those in danger of falling behind.
- Behaviour and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well.
- Pupils say they feel safe because the school's work to keep them safe is effective.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and how well they should behave.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied. It promotes key values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years make good progress because teaching is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils, including children in the Reception classes, yet reach the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers do not always consistently apply the school's handwriting and marking policies.
- The teaching of reading is not always effective in ensuring rapid progress and checking that pupils understand what they read.
- Leaders do not always have a clear overview of the effectiveness of their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise attainment further by making sure that:
 - the teaching of reading helps pupils to build their skills effectively and to demonstrate their understanding of what they read
 - teachers in the early years expect pupils to make more rapid progress and provide wider opportunities for them to excel at speaking and writing
 - teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy
 - teachers raise their expectations of the quality of presentation in pupils' books.

- Strengthen leadership and management by establishing a greater overview of monitoring systems in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work more efficiently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Key to the school's success is the determined drive by the headteacher and senior leaders to improve the progress that all pupils make. They use rigorous systems, and the pupil premium funding, effectively to ensure that all pupils do well in their academic and personal development, and to provide extra support for those who need it. As a result, outcomes for pupils, including the disadvantaged, are good.
- Leaders share information about pupils' progress frequently with teachers to establish high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Leaders check the quality of teachers' work regularly and set targets linked to the school's priorities to help them to improve. Staff know the aims of the school and receive the training and support they need in order to do their jobs well. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good.
- Support from the local authority effectively helps the school to improve in key areas. For example, work with staff in the early years ensures their evaluations of children's skills are accurate.
- Leaders create a culture of success. They expect staff and pupils to perform well. They have introduced new whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading and mathematics which have had a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment. Leaders establish clear school rules and routines which are understood by all. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- The curriculum is well balanced and interesting. Leaders, including those responsible for subjects, check that teaching leads to good progress and gives all pupils equal opportunity to succeed. Subjects are often linked together in topics which interest pupils and inspire learning. A good range of trips and visitors extend pupils' experiences and promote their understanding of the wider world. For example, in science pupils develop a good understanding of current scientific developments such as Britain's involvement in space travel.
- A range of after-school activities enhances the curriculum and promotes pupils' creative and sporting skills well. Involvement in musical events provides opportunities to meet with pupils from other schools and to perform to an audience. The primary sports funding is used well. It leads to increased participation by all pupils in physical activity, with a positive effect on developing team skills and health and fitness.
- The promotion of key values and the understanding of others is at the core of the school's work. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a strong sense of community. They learn about current affairs and local and world issues. They know about key British figures and various cultural traditions. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is effective and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Governors evaluate the effectiveness of their work and are committed to continued improvement. They know how well teachers and pupils are doing and understand how good teaching leads to good outcomes for pupils. Governors analyse information about pupils' progress and identify areas for improvement. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the effect it has on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors visit the school regularly and ask questions about the school's performance. They know how the school's curriculum promotes key British values and a strong sense of community.
 - Governors are well informed about current legislation and carry out their roles effectively.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including governors, are clear about their responsibilities. The school's systems and training for staff to keep pupils safe meet requirements. Vetting procedures are thorough. The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe and recognise any potential risk. Positive links with parents ensure that pupils are well supported.
- Leaders have numerous ways to check the effectiveness of the school's work but sometimes these are not sufficiently sharp to give them an overall picture, for example to gain an overview of the progress that specific groups of pupils make.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Staff have high expectations and are enthusiastic. They establish good relationships with pupils and build pupils' confidence in their own ability. Staff manage behaviour well and promote positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers provide the right level of work to enable pupils to make good progress. They ask relevant questions to check that pupils understand and expect pupils to express their views and explain their

reasoning. Teachers use pupils' responses well to move learning forward.

- Teachers, including in the early years, make learning interesting. As a result, pupils are keen to find out about new subjects. For example, during the inspection good teaching motivated pupils' interest in the Romans. Pupils made good progress in understanding people from the past because the teacher made good use of artefacts and a trip to an outside location to stimulate learning.
- Teachers often use topics as starting points for writing, to spark pupils' interest. Writing develops well in complexity and structure as pupils move through the school. Teachers teach phonics (the sounds that letters represent) and spelling, punctuation and grammar regularly, with positive effect on the standards pupils reach in these subjects.
- In mathematics, teachers adopt a consistent approach which is developing pupils' skills well and raising attainment. They make sure that pupils build on what they know and apply their skills. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were given a range of tasks to explore multiplication. Some pupils used their skills in practical tasks while the most-able pupils received a greater level of challenge to deepen their understanding.
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They play an important part in developing basic numeracy and literacy skills and pupils' personal development.
- New approaches to the teaching of reading promote pupils' enjoyment of stories and a range of books well. Pupils read widely and for a range of purposes. Teachers follow the school's approach consistently, teach reading regularly and involve parents in their children's reading. However, leaders are at an early stage of evaluating the effectiveness of the school's methods in the systematic building of skills and checking pupils' comprehension.
- Leaders have raised the expectation of how well pupils should present their work, but a consistent approach to handwriting is not always followed by teachers. There are some good examples of teachers' marking giving pupils good guidance on how to improve and correct mistakes but the school's marking policy is not consistently applied by all teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils strive to do their best and approach their work with increased maturity and confidence as they move through the school. They get on well together and show respect and tolerance towards each other because these values are promoted well.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. They talk with enthusiasm about their role as digital leaders and the responsibility they have to post 'blogs' on the school's website. They play their part in keeping pupils safe by carrying out road safety checks with the local police force. Pupils actively engage in promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing environmental issues such as graffiti.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and that they know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including when using technology, because this is addressed well by the curriculum. Pupils say, 'bullies no, buddies yes' is the school's policy and that there are 'no bullies in our school'. Incidents are rare but any that do occur are recorded and followed up by leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that the school's rules are fair and that they understand the sanctions. Their good behaviour has a positive effect on the good progress they make in lessons because they are attentive and there is no time-wasting.
- Pupils maintain the same good level of behaviour with a range of adults, including in the well-run breakfast club, because they have positive attitudes and enjoy school. Pupils talk keenly about the range of activities on offer. They say they enjoy lessons, trips out and the after-school clubs because they are interesting and help them to develop their skills and talents.
- Attendance is average. The school has good systems to follow up those pupils who stay away from school frequently. Staff work with parents to help them to understand the effect of poor attendance on their children's achievement.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- From starting points that are often lower than those typically expected on entry to the Reception classes, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils made above-average progress in reading, writing and mathematics, preparing them well for the learning they will encounter in secondary education.
- Because pupils are now making better progress than previously, attainment throughout the school is rising. A greater proportion of pupils now reach the expected standards by the end of the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There are big improvements in pupils' attainment in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, leaders recognise that there is still some way to go to make sure that all pupils, especially children in the early years, reach the standards expected for their age.
- The most recent attainment information shows that, by the end of Year 2, the number of the most-able pupils who reached the higher levels was below average because not enough made good progress during their time in Key Stage 1. Work in books shows that this picture is now changing and the most-able Key Stage 1 pupils are making more rapid progress.
- The proportion of the most-able pupils that reached the higher levels by the end of Year 6 in 2015 was well-above average in grammar, punctuation and spelling and writing. Throughout the school, the most-able pupils do well because they receive work that is well matched to their ability.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Leaders make regular checks on how well these pupils are doing and help staff to match work well to individual needs. Staff are given good guidance on how to support pupils' learning effectively in lessons and when working with small groups of pupils.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2015, disadvantaged pupils made above-average progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. In grammar, punctuation and spelling, these pupils reached higher standards than other pupils nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils did not attain as highly as their peers and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, they were more than two terms behind their peers and over a term behind others nationally; in writing, more than two terms behind their peers and about a half a term behind others nationally; in mathematics, two terms behind their peers and just over a term behind others nationally. Leaders make sure that these pupils receive extra help when needed in order to continue to close the gaps in their performance.
- The very small number of pupils who arrive at the school with little or no English make good progress because they are quickly helped to acquire English language skills.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in the Reception classes with personal and social skills that are lower than those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in these areas because good teaching promotes positive relationships. Staff develop children's confidence, imagination and understanding well. By the time they enter Year 1 they are ready to settle well to their learning.
- Children behave well and safely because staff are mindful of their welfare. Children follow instructions and listen to their teachers. They learn to cooperate with each other and share resources. They enjoy the activities on offer because good teaching provides interesting tasks. Staff give children activities that are well matched to their abilities, based upon accurate assessment of their skills.
- Staff provide the right level of support and use any additional funding to close gaps in performance between groups of children, including the disadvantaged. They make sure that topics stimulate children to make good progress in literacy and mathematics. They establish firm links with parents and are making headway in helping them to understand what is expected of children when they start school.
- School leaders have ensured that good teaching has been sustained during changes to the leadership of the early years and have improved teaching further. There is now a much stronger focus on more rapid development of children's literacy and speaking skills, which are lower than typical when they start school. As a result, attainment is on an upward trend and children's progress in writing and speaking is speeding up. However, there is some way to go to make sure they reach the levels expected for their age by the time they leave the Reception classes.

School details

Unique reference number	120047
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10001838

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shilen Pattni
Headteacher	Amanda Dhillon
Telephone number	0116 266 0333
Website	www.sandfieldclose.leicester.sch.uk
Email address	office@sandfieldclose.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from a minority ethnic background, the largest group being of Indian origins. A large proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language but very few speak no English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The funding is received for pupils who are, or have been, eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years comprises two Reception classes which children attend full time.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school shares its site with a privately-run pre-school which is subject to separate inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced staff and leadership changes.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, three of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. In all, 15 members of staff were seen teaching.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from all age groups, spoke to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to pupils read. An inspector observed some after-school activities and visited the school's breakfast club.
- The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, leaders and staff. An inspector also held a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed 25 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They took into account responses from parents to a questionnaire conducted by the school and spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- There were insufficient responses to the questionnaire for school staff for inspectors to analyse.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at progress and attendance information, school improvement planning, evidence of the monitoring of teaching and documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Jennifer Digges	Ofsted Inspector

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