

Sandown Primary School

The Ridge, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 2AA

Inspection dates

11–12 May 2016

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils enjoy going to a school where they feel cared for and safe.
- Parents are delighted that the school has become a place where children learn well and play happily together.
- Teachers are proud to work at the school and believe that they are providing an important and effective service.
- The headteacher is passionate about the school. He is ambitious for every child in it and the community it serves.
- Senior leaders ensure that any weaknesses are sorted out straightaway and are careful to recruit and retain only 'the right staff'.
- The school's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective and leads to pupils who are able to take their place in modern, diverse Britain.
- Pupils behave well. They understand the simple system for managing behaviour and follow it closely.
- There is some highly effective teaching, which is beginning to be shared more widely across the school.
- Teachers reflect regularly on what works well and use the Sandown Outstanding Learning (SOL) programme to research their own practice and improve it.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are nurtured carefully. This means that they make good progress even though their starting points are behind their classmates.
- Governors know the school well, plan their work carefully to be supportive, but also challenge leaders on all aspects of the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Outcomes for pupils still require improvement, although they have improved considerably over the last three years.
- Older pupils still need to close gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding caused by weak teaching in the past.
- The most-able pupils, including those in the early years provision, are not always challenged to reach the highest levels of attainment.
- Time in lessons is not always used as fully as it should be. Sometime pupils find that they have to rush their work or that they have not enough time to complete it.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes even more by:
 - extending the range of challenging tasks available for the most-able pupils, including children in the early years
 - applying to the most-able pupils the same rigour seen in 'pupil pursuit' activities for those with special educational needs or disability
 - closing further the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally.
- Share more widely the effective practice that already exists.
- Strengthen further leadership and management by:
 - tightening the processes for gathering, using and making even more accurate information about pupils' performance and their well-being.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has committed himself fully to the school. Many parents, lots of pupils, governors and the local authority commended the work undertaken to 'turn round' this once failing school. The school has been through a lengthy phase of its development where it was necessary for the headteacher to change many aspects of its work.
- The school is now a place where children are happy to be and where they learn well for the most part. The headteacher tackled poor behaviour immediately, which has resulted in a calm and orderly environment.
- The headteacher is intolerant of weak teaching, wanting the school to be the best it can be. He has worked with the local authority and the governors to ensure that teachers joining the school fit in well.
- In the last year, the headteacher has been able to appoint an experienced deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher who is also the special educational needs coordinator. All three senior leaders are continuing to focus on helping pupils to learn quicker and at higher levels.
- Senior leaders are supported well in moving the school forward by effective subject leaders. The literacy leader led the introduction of a new scheme for helping with early reading. This has added to the already strong work the school undertakes with phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). The mathematics leader has been responsible for ensuring that each year group has the resources and materials needed to meet the demands of the new national curriculum.
- Senior leaders have developed, in partnership with their own informal alliance of schools, a system of assessment that helps them to demonstrate pupils' progress against the new curriculum. This system puts each pupil at the heart of the learning process, which is fully in keeping with the school's ethos. It is too early to judge the full impact of this system on promoting pupils' rapid progress. The system does, however, already enable leaders to see those pupils who are at risk of falling behind and or those who may need to catch up.
- Leaders have also been keen to ensure that each pupil is able to benefit from a curriculum that is as broad and balanced as possible. Inspectors saw pupils learning in geography, history and science and religious studies as well as English and mathematics. Inspectors also found evidence of a wide range of learning opportunities made available through trips to the theatre, music workshops such as the weekly drumming classes, and after-school clubs such as karate. Pupils love and learn well about nature and the world with, for example, the school's own brood of hens. The vast site is also used well by the school to broaden pupils' learning experiences, giving, for example, pupils opportunities to plant and look after trees.
- Leaders work well with parents. Parents say that communication has improved dramatically in the last three years. They like receiving 'parent mails', or messages by text about matters relating to their child. They also like the way that teachers respond quickly to emails or are willing to meet them face to face if an appointment is requested. Everybody in the community loves, 'Funky Friday'. This is a special assembly where pupils receive rewards for their work, good behaviour or sporting achievements in the past week. The school has become skilled at celebrating pupils' achievements. This has had a significant impact on pupils' attitudes towards themselves and has helped boost their self-confidence.
- Thoughtful and well-planned actions by leaders are designed to help pupils develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. They are successful. Inspectors found this to be a strength of the school. Pupils are developing appropriate attitudes. They play well together and work collaboratively in class, pairs, small groups or as part of a team. They understand clearly the difference between right and wrong and know that actions have consequences. They are learning to appreciate the world around them and not just in their own local community. They learn well how to participate in modern, diverse Britain.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body rightly went through a process of change after the last inspection. The current chair of the governing body started his term of office at the beginning of the school year. He is ably supported by several members of the community, most of whom have been parents or grandparents of pupils at the school. They know and understand it very well. They have formed an accurate impression of the school's performance and are justifiably concerned to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.

- Governors support senior leaders' management of the performance of staff in the school. They help set the terms against which teachers will receive pay awards. They insist that evidence is provided that teachers have met their targets before pay rises are granted.
- The governors understand well their duty to promote the welfare and rising educational performance of disadvantaged pupils. Much of their work and questioning of the school's leaders focus on this group of pupils. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' results are improving. Governors know that the next challenge is to ensure that the gaps between these pupils and others nationally close as attainment in the school rises overall.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's nurturing ethos means that there is a full commitment to ensuring the safety of all pupils at all times. There is care for pupils at both ends of the day which the school manages effectively. Senior leaders ensure that all adults working with children are suitably checked and governors make sure that these checks are thorough and rigorous. All members of the community are working to reduce any potential risk to the pupils caused by the need for visitors, parents or carers to access the local authority maintained nursery within the school's grounds.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Over time, the headteacher has managed to recruit a team of teachers who know their roles well and are willing to improve their performance continuously.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, so they can teach all aspects of the curriculum with confidence, some with real creativity and flair.
- There remains a legacy of weak teaching from the past which has resulted in pupils, particularly in the upper part of the school, needing intense support to fill gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The local authority has supported leaders by making additional resources available to enable this to happen. Some pupils are helped to catch up with expert teaching one to one. Others are able to work in smaller groups to focus on particular aspects of English or mathematics where they are struggling.
- Teachers are assisted well in most classrooms by well-trained and suitably deployed teaching assistants. Pupils with special educational needs or disability are helped with their work particularly well if their learning support assistant is assigned to them as part of a funded plan. Other classes have one or two general assistants who support the class teacher with behaviour management or work closely and purposefully with smaller groups. In key stage 1, every adult takes responsibility for a small group during each day's phonics session and this is helping to raise standards further.
- Pupils benefit from classrooms that are laid out carefully and are full of resources to support learning. Some classrooms are packed with examples of words that pupils can use to strengthen the quality of their writing. Others have number lines and counting squares available so that pupils can get quick reminders of things they have learned already.
- The library is stocked with a good range of fiction and non-fiction, and all pupils, including those in the early years, like to visit to view and borrow books. Books go home regularly and parents are increasingly committed to hearing their children read. This, too, is helping to raise standards in reading overall.
- The school's policy on home learning is followed by all. Sometimes this includes learning spellings, which are tested on a Wednesday. Often it includes work to extend purposefully what has been learned in class. Each pupil has a carefully planned, longer piece of work to be completed at home that lasts for a term.
- The school's assessment policy is followed by all teachers. Pupils assess their own work and occasionally the work of their classmates. The quality of their own self-assessment is frequently very accurate and enables them to take the next steps quickly. Teachers provide feedback regularly in lessons and use skilful questioning to check understanding and meaning. Teachers' written feedback is useful in many cases and helps pupils move forward in their learning. Most pupils take advice and improve corrected work.
- The Sandown Outstanding Learning (SOL) programme has been a very successful way in which teachers have improved their own practice without needing to go on expensive training courses. Each teacher researches an aspect of their work that they believe will make a difference to the pupils. If the outcome of the exploration proves effective, they share the findings with the rest of the staff. Inspectors saw evidence of some innovative work going on which is helping to boost pupils' confidence and enabling them to attain at a higher level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's evident commitment to each pupil's well-being is most keenly felt in its pastoral care system. Pupils are happy and safe at the school.
- Pupils are very willing to declare their love of school and how much they enjoy what they are doing. Most pupils are self-assured and talk to adult visitors sensibly and clearly. The school council represents the pupil population extremely well.
- Many pupils face challenges in their lives. The school's leaders work selflessly to ensure that the impact of these situations is not too great on their learning. Leaders work closely with parents. Many parents took time to tell inspectors just how caring the school is. One commented that he had one matter he was concerned about and the headteacher dealt with it as soon as possible.
- The school works with many agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the right support promptly. The school has helped some families get much-needed help with pupils' medical conditions or disability.
- The school uses its assembly programme and personal, social, health and economic education curriculum to help pupils develop resilience and to become independent. It also helps them to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- The governors have a member responsible for overseeing the school's attempts to keep children safe online. He also holds responsibility for health and safety. The school takes every reasonable step to ensure that pupils know how to stay safe online and about the dangers of cyber-bullying. It was clear from pupils' talk that some spend many hours using a computer outside school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school carefully and quietly. They play well in the large outdoor spaces, especially the field.
- Inspectors saw very little low-level disruption. From time to time, however, inspectors noticed some pupils losing concentration or not trying as hard as they should, especially when teachers were busy with other pupils and did not remind them constantly to continue with their work.
- Pupils were very clear in their explanation of how behaviour is managed in the school. They understand the system, what happens if they get things wrong and how hard they have to work to get back to 'normal'.
- The school does not exclude pupils. The school uses a nurture facility for some pupils who need extra care or help with their own self-discipline. This means that a greater number of pupils remain in school than was previously the case.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and punctually. There are a few pupils who miss a lot of school days due to ill-health or other situations that affect their lives. Senior leaders go to great lengths to get all pupils into school as regularly as possible. This includes sending suitably trained and qualified staff to collect from pupils' houses any who might be about to miss an important part of school life.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils were clear about this. They were also able to describe what they would do if it occurred. Pupils told inspectors that the school has taught them about some forms of behaviour or names they call each other that are unacceptable.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Over the last three years, leaders' actions and increasingly strong teaching have resulted in pupils achieving much higher standards than at the time of the last full inspection.
- Pupils in Year 2, for example, in 2015 attained higher than average results in reading, writing and mathematics. Also, pupils in Year 1 exceeded the national average in the phonics screening check by six percentage points. Disadvantaged pupils on average achieved more highly in this test than other disadvantaged pupils nationally. The proportion attaining this standard was close to the percentage of pupils nationally.

- The percentages of pupils making expected progress in writing and mathematics were above the national averages in 2015. More of the disadvantaged pupils at Sandown made expected progress in mathematics than disadvantaged pupils in other schools. The percentage of disadvantaged pupils who met this standard was also just above the figure for all pupils nationally. These are creditable outcomes, given the very low starting points of pupils joining the school.
- However, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading was below the national average. Also, few pupils went on to attain the highest levels in all three subjects, although the proportion of pupils who attained the old Level 5 in reading was above the national average.
- Standards in the English, grammar, punctuation and spelling tests were below national averages. This is a relatively new test and the school is making strenuous efforts to ensure that current pupils do well in this test going forward. This is because the school already adds value to the way pupils write in line with standards nationally.
- The value-added scores for Year 6 pupils in reading and mathematics were not as strong as in writing. However, they were very close to the average and have been rising steadily over the three years that this measure has been taken into account.
- The progress of pupils currently on roll is similar to the rising trends seen in the last few years. This is seen in the school's new system for assessment which has been developed to be in line with changes to the national curriculum. Leaders provided strong evidence that the new system is not set to cause standards to decline. If anything, pupils are now learning more and learning it more deeply. Good proportions are reaching standards known as 'mastery'.
- Generally, pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. Pupils are increasingly making strong progress through Reception Year and attain well in key stage 1. The legacy of weak teaching means, however, that older pupils, who did not benefit from good-quality teaching early on, are having to catch up and this is reflected in their published results.
- Very few pupils attain the highest standards. This also reflects their low starting points, even though many are personally bright, alert and articulate. Many already possess well-developed critical thinking skills and could achieve much more with work better matched to their ability. These most-able pupils have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding that need to be filled. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that teachers are always providing work for them that challenges them to attain higher levels and deepen their understanding of different topics.
- There are wide gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally. Although such gaps are closing over time, this is still an aspect of the school's work that requires improvement. Gaps between them and their peers remain. This is because overall performance is going up. Consequently, the rate at which disadvantaged pupils' performance needs to increase is much greater if gaps are to close completely.
- Leaders are addressing these gaps through the innovative and successful 'pupil pursuit' programme. This gives leaders and teachers very detailed information about each child which is discussed fully in regular pupil progress meetings. The programme typically results in pupils receiving specialist help or individual tuition.
- The 'pupil pursuit' programme is also used to identify and support pupils with special educational needs or disability. The additional tuition or support that often results from pupil progress meetings for these pupils is necessary and welcomed. These additional resources mean that pupils with special educational needs or disability make progress comparable with that of their classmates, even though the levels they are attaining are sometimes much lower. Some achieve at much faster rates than other pupils with similar starting points and those who do not have special educational needs or disability in the school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children make a good start to their time at Sandown in the early years. They join from a range of pre-schools and some have had no prior formal learning experience at all.
- Children enter Reception at standards typically below age-related expectations. The school takes time to assess what they can do already and what they know. Parents contribute to this process. They continue to provide evidence of their child's development which is matched to what adults are seeing in school, so that an accurate assessment of the child's progress can be made.
- Assessment information is collected through a simple tablet computer application. This enables the staff to keep a regular check on each child's progress and to feed information back to parents.

- Adults have become adept at matching the activities to each child's individual learning needs. For example, boys who may be developing fine motor skills less quickly than girls receive support from a dedicated 'physical development' teaching assistant. Similarly, children whose communication skills lag behind their peers receive direct learning support from a specialist speech and language assistant.
- All children benefit from a well-resourced learning environment which has a good range of equipment to support their learning through play.
- All children participate in a structured and systematic programme for supporting the development of early reading skills. This gives them a good foundation for learning in Year 1, where many go on to exceed the national average in the phonics screening check.
- All adults working in the early years provision are trained well to support this very important aspect of its work. Staff told inspectors that they receive regular opportunities to improve their practice through training. Recently, some have gone to visit other settings to see how even better use is made of the outdoor space. Others have been trained to get more from their observations of children's learning through play.
- Leaders of the setting are concerned that it should be the best it can be. They support the professional development of their staff and work collaboratively with other providers to ensure that the early years setting at Sandown meets the needs of the children.
- Leaders are ambitious for the children in Reception. Over the past three years, they have improved practice to such an extent that even from the very low baseline, children are attaining a level of development by the time they enter Year 1 that is in line with national averages.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Reception attain less well than their non-disadvantaged classmates. There are gaps between them and other children nationally. However, their progress is the same as their non-disadvantaged peers; they just start from further back. Leaders are striving to close the gaps even faster over time, so that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain a good level of development, one that matches that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- More girls than boys attain the good level of development standard. In 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged girls who attained the national standard was greater than the national average for disadvantaged girls elsewhere. This is a tribute to the focused and skilful efforts of all involved in the early years provision.
- Leaders of the early years provision are fully aware of the challenges that they still face to ensure that all have an equal opportunity to succeed, given their low starting points. However, rigorous, honest and accurate self-assessment has led leaders to focus on the right things.
- Leaders are also conscious of the need to maintain a secure and safe learning environment. They are relentless in their efforts to safeguard children. Leaders work cooperatively with staff in the maintained nursery setting next door. Children in both settings share the outdoor space. All adults, therefore, act consciously to ensure that site safety and security are not compromised by, for example, parents entering the site to drop off or collect children from the nursery.

School details

Unique reference number	114447
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10012279

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Collins
Headteacher	Charles Lindsay
Telephone number	01424 436983
Website	www.sandown.school
Email address	office@sandownprimary.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2014

Information about this school

- Sandown Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school in Hastings, East Sussex.
- More boys than girls attend the school.
- There are twice as many pupils eligible for free school meals as the national average.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who benefit from support for special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is nearly twice the national average.
- The population is very stable, with families staying close to the area.
- The community experiences levels of deprivation in the poorest 20% nationally.
- The school is part of an informal alliance of local schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 26 parts of lessons. Senior leaders jointly observed learning on five occasions. Inspectors also observed registration time and an assembly.
- The lead inspector met with governors and had a phone conversation with the local authority's representative.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of pupils' work in exercise books and compared some work with samples from the previous year.
- Senior leaders met regularly with members of the team to discuss different aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met with a group of nine parents, while team inspectors met parents informally at the school gates. Inspectors took into account 61 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey, and one set of comments sent to Ofsted centrally.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils and heard four Year 4 pupils read.
- Inspectors also met with the school's subject leaders, a group of classroom teachers and another group of support staff.

Inspection team

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