

Sanders School

Suttons Lane, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6RT

Inspection dates

14–15 December 2016 and
3 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been successful in securing consistently good teaching or pupils' good academic outcomes since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is uneven, and leads to variable progress between groups of pupils, year groups and subjects.
- The most able, including those who are disadvantaged and disadvantaged boys, make slower progress than their peers. Additional support has not enabled these groups to do as well as other pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are not ambitious enough. The most able pupils are not routinely stretched, and some pupils' needs go unmet.
- In the past, improvement planning has not identified priorities for action sharply enough.
- Assessment information is not used thoroughly throughout the school to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement. Pupils' learning is sometimes affected by low-level disruption. The quality of presentation in pupils' books is variable.
- Attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are low.
- Governors have not been effective in challenging leaders to improve the school's overall effectiveness with urgency.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. Strengthened leadership and current initiatives are securing better teaching and accelerating progress.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and demonstrate positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils progress onto suitable and ambitious education, training and employment destinations.
- Pupils with education, health and care plans receive effective support and make good progress.
- Pupils in Year 7 who receive additional support catch up quickly with their peers.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - using information about pupils' outcomes accurately to measure the effectiveness of teaching and identify where improvement is necessary
 - holding staff robustly to account for pupils' progress, in particular disadvantaged boys, the most able and the most able disadvantaged
 - ensuring that leaders' plans for school improvement precisely reflect the current performance of the school and accelerate improvements.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, the most able disadvantaged, and disadvantaged boys
 - using assessment information effectively to set suitably demanding tasks that enable pupils to make swift progress in their learning
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge where they have weaknesses
 - motivating pupils to take pride in their work, and promoting high standards of behaviour
 - using pupil premium funding more effectively to diminish the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Raise attendance rates, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not been effective in driving lasting improvements in the school's work to secure the school's good overall effectiveness. In the past, development planning has not set clear expectations for improvement.
- The quality of teaching remains uneven and requires improvement. The impact of some key initiatives has been limited by staffing changes including changes to the school's leadership team.
- Recently introduced approaches to measuring pupils' progress have not yet ensured that leaders have a clear view of how well all groups of pupils perform throughout the school and across subjects. Assessment information is not used thoroughly to check how well different groups of pupils make progress.
- In the past, leaders have not held staff sufficiently to account for the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- The school is working closely with other local schools and providing training for teachers to help them to improve their practice. Newly qualified teachers are well supported through an effective programme of professional development that leaders provide. Recent improvements to teaching quality have helped to reduce the differences in performance between groups of pupils.
- Leaders have not made the best use of the pupil premium in the past. However, leaders and governors have now sharpened the school's oversight of the spending of the pupil premium. This work is beginning to help decrease the differences between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Nevertheless, the most able disadvantaged and disadvantaged boys continue to achieve less well than their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have low rates of attendance. Significantly more pupils from these two groups are persistently absent from school compared with all pupils nationally. Interventions put in place by leaders and managers to improve this have not had a marked impact on improving attendance figures.
- In the past, additional Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding was not effective in developing the skills of eligible pupils. This year, leaders have made sure that the catch-up premium is used to deliver additional sessions tailored to pupils' specific needs. Selected pupils benefit from extra support provided by well-trained additional staff. As a result, the funding successfully helps pupils develop reading, writing and mathematics skills and catch up quickly.
- Leaders and governors have invested in the appointment of 'progress leaders', responsible for checking pupils' progress and identifying pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. It is too soon to evaluate the full impact of this work.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities that support learning and enrich their experiences. Leaders use assembly time and the tutor registration periods to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and develop pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, including the

rule of law and democracy.

- Leaders make sure that pupils access appropriate further education and training opportunities.
- Special educational needs funding is used particularly successfully to support pupils who have hearing impairment. Leaders make sure that they benefit from all that the school has to offer. Staff make sure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported so that they are fully included in main school classes.

The governance of the school

- Governors' scrutiny of leaders' work and pupils' performance, particularly the disadvantaged, has not been challenging enough in the past. Governors have helped to introduce recent changes in the school's leadership in order to support the school's work to raise standards. Governors are ambitious for the pupils at the school and are not complacent about the work required to secure good or better standards. They are well informed about potential risks to pupils' welfare and have ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school meets its statutory duties for promoting pupils' safety. Leaders provide up-to-date training for staff. They ensure that teachers and other staff are fully aware of on-going changes in legislation and know what to do if a safeguarding concern should arise. The school is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding pupils' welfare. Leaders promote the development of pupils' understanding of risk comprehensively, including through assemblies and form time.
- School leaders work closely with external agencies, parents and carers to provide support to pupils when it is needed. Leaders with specific safeguarding responsibility in the school have a thorough understanding of the safeguarding policy and procedures. They have detailed knowledge of the needs of pupils, and work well to promote pupils' well-being and safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not consistently high. Teaching does not challenge the most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils sufficiently in all subjects. There is also variability in the quality of work produced by boys and girls. As a result, pupils' progress is uneven between subjects and pupil groups.
- Staffing changes have hindered the impact of initiatives to promote teachers' consistently high expectations. Similarly, the introduction of new improvement strategies is not yet embedded.
- Training to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have had a variable impact. Improvements in mathematics, for example, are not matched by

improvements in modern foreign languages.

- The school's assessment procedures are not fully established. As a result, the reliability and accuracy of assessment information in some subjects is not as secure as in other subjects. This limits leaders' and teachers' ability to spot underachievement and to intervene quickly. This year, leaders are analysing pupils' progress across subjects more sharply than before, but it is too soon to see the impact on pupils' outcomes overall.
- The whole school approach to building pupils' literacy skills is not routinely applied. For example, pupils' progress in developing literacy skills in a wide range of subjects is reduced when teachers do not tackle pupils' incorrect spellings of key subject vocabulary.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. Weak subject knowledge affects the development of pupils' understanding when it leads to misconceptions or inaccurate generalisations.
- Progress is better in humanities and religious education than in other subjects. Activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers ask demanding questions, check pupils' understanding and encourage pupils to develop new ideas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- Pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Poor presentation in pupils' books shows that pupils sometimes lack pride in their work.
- Some parents expressed concerns about school leaders' response to bullying concerns. However, pupils interviewed by inspectors and parents who responded to the online survey were confident that pupils typically feel safe and cared for by the staff.
- Pupils know what they would do if they had a safeguarding-related concern. Pupils also understand how to keep themselves safe online and are aware how to avoid risks associated with using social media. Pupils know about different types of bullying including cyber and homophobic bullying, and racist behaviour.
- The school has recently introduced a student council to involve pupils more in decision making. Pupils are active in the drive to raise attendance. Staff foster pupils' well-being effectively. Pupils know how to stay healthy through participation in physical activities and eating healthily. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. For example, selected pupils took part in a Shakespeare festival, and other pupils participated in a thought-provoking visit to German Holocaust sites.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In some lessons, pupils lose focus when work is not suitably demanding or when teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve lack ambition. This leads to low level disruption and off task behaviour.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are constructive and the environment in

classrooms is generally positive. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains low. Newly appointed progress leaders encourage pupils to raise their aspirations for the future and attend school regularly in order to improve pupils' academic performance. As a result, overall attendance has improved marginally since the last inspection.

- Pupils conduct themselves around the school in an orderly and considered manner. Pupils arrive punctually to lessons so that lessons start promptly and purposefully.
- Pupils attending off-site provision attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, pupils made broadly average progress. Pupils attained standards at least in line with the overall national averages in GCSE examinations. However, variations between groups of pupils, including the most able, the most able disadvantaged and disadvantaged boys, and between subjects, meant that overall improvements in outcomes were modest.
- New strategies, including in assessment, have not improved the learning of all groups of pupils evenly. Leaders have changed the use of the pupil premium funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' performance is improving overall when compared to last year. However, disadvantaged pupils currently in Year 9 perform less well than pupils in other year groups. Improvements in pupils' performance in subjects such as geography and French are slower than in other subjects. Teaching does not offer enough challenge to the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, who are currently at the school.
- Last year, the progress of pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up was slow. Those pupils now in Year 7 are making brisk gains in basic skills.
- Leaders and managers provide pupils with appropriate careers advice and guidance. The school's destination data shows the proportion of pupils in education, employment or training is in line with the national average and is rising.
- Pupils access suitable 16 to 19 study programmes. Current information provided through the local authority careers service demonstrates that pupils start suitable courses that help them to be successful at the next stage in their education.
- Pupils with education, health and care plans were amongst the highest performing groups in the 2016 GCSE results, as a result of the support they receive. Pupils with hearing impairment are particularly well supported and make good progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	102341
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10019666

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	636
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Secular
Headteacher	John McEachern
Telephone number	01780 443 068
Website	www.sandersschool.org.uk
Email address	enquires@sandersschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 October 2014

Information about this school

- Sanders school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school, and the number on roll has fallen since the last inspection. Most pupils are of White British heritage with an average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above average.
- The school houses a resource base for a small number of pupils with hearing impairment. These pupils are taught in the main school and only withdrawn to the resource base for speech and language therapy.
- The school offers a vocational education course in construction to pupils through Barking College as an alternative provider.
- The school meets the government floor standard.

- The school has been exploring the possibility of joining an academy trust next academic year.
- The information published on the school's website meets statutory requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was initially inspected on 14 and 15 December 2016. On 3 March 2017, two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence around pupils’ current performance and outcomes. The evidence gathered from all three days was used to inform the final judgements.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 42 lessons, including eight lesson observations which were jointly conducted with the headteacher and deputy headteacher in a wide range of subjects and all key stages. In lessons, inspectors scrutinised pupils’ written work and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies and tutor period activities, and spoke with pupils about their experiences of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work across all subjects of the curriculum to consider progress and learning over time, and the accuracy of the assessment information provided by the school. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the school governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents including: leaders’ evaluation of the school’s performance; school improvement planning; assessment information; behaviour logs; attendance information; safeguarding documentation; minutes of governing body meetings; and policies and procedures.
- Inspectors spoke with staff individually about other aspects of the school work, and observed pupils’ attitudes at break, lunchtime and departure from school.
- Inspectors considered 57 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey. No responses were received from the pupil survey. Inspectors also took into account 34 responses to the staff questionnaire and the school’s own survey data.

Inspection team

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