

Sandal Magna Community Academy

Belle Vue Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 5NF

Inspection dates

15–16 March 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

- The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher, supported well by other leaders and governors, has successfully improved the school since the previous inspection.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the progress pupils make. They know the school's strengths and what needs to improve further.
- The trust provides a good balance of support and challenge. It regularly checks on how well pupils are doing and how to improve further.
- Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled effectively; most pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is rising across the school.
- Children enjoy themselves in the early years and develop good learning habits because teachers make activities interesting and fun.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Leaders check all pupils' progress closely and act quickly to address any gaps in pupils' learning.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language receive effective support. If they are in the school long enough, they achieve as well as their classmates, and sometimes better.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not always challenged sufficiently. Expectations of these pupils are not high enough to help them achieve more.
- The teaching of phonics has improved and this supports pupils' confidence in reading.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school generally. Teachers promote pupils' personal development effectively. The school is a very harmonious community. Relationships among its diverse population are very positive.
- The school's work to support vulnerable pupils and their families is a strength. Many pupils face many complex challenges in their lives. Staff promote pupils' well-being and welfare very effectively.
- Although pupils' progress in writing has improved significantly since the previous inspection, pupils, particularly in key stage 2, fail to apply their basic literacy skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in English or in other subjects.
- For a few pupils, particularly among the disadvantaged pupils, attendance is too low. These pupils miss too much school and so do not achieve all that they could.
- While the monitoring of teaching is generally rigorous, there is sometimes too much focus on what the pupils are busy doing, rather than how well they are learning. Expectations of pupils are occasionally not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment even further, by ensuring that:
 - staff have higher expectations of all pupils and the work is sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils in every class
 - teachers ask probing questions to extend pupils' knowledge and skills so that they apply themselves more confidently when facing new learning
 - teaching assistants are deployed to maximum effect throughout the school
 - pupils apply their basic literacy skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in all their written work
 - all staff plan activities that engage pupils fully and manage any lapses in behaviour consistently.
- Strengthen leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning even further by placing more emphasis on how well pupils of varying backgrounds and abilities learn and progress.
- Do more to raise the attendance of those few whose attendance is low.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong leadership by the headteacher and her deputy has been instrumental in the school's good improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders have a good understanding of what is going well in the school and where further improvement is still required to help all pupils make the best progress they can.
- Strong teamwork is evident among staff, governors and the academy trust. All have high aspirations for the pupils and the community. Their determination to improve has been effective. The well-thought-out development plan highlights what leaders are doing to raise standards and they check that the impact is effective. Pupils are making better progress and an increasing number are working at higher standards than two years ago. Staff morale is high and pupils benefit as a result. The school is now good.
- The leadership team, including subject and phase leaders, understands what is required of it to improve teaching and learning. Leaders monitor the school's performance closely and take effective action to address weaknesses. Staff have good access to support and training to improve their skills and knowledge. Weak teaching has been eradicated and swift action is taken where concerns arise.
- While the monitoring of teaching is generally fair and accurate, it sometimes lacks rigour. There are occasions where pupils are seen to be busy but do not make the progress of which they are capable because they are not being challenged sufficiently. The legacy of weaker teaching in the past has left some pupils, particularly at key stage 2, with gaps in their knowledge and skills. This is being addressed swiftly.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to support pupils' academic and personal development. A high emphasis is given to the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Reading is a priority, particularly pupils' comprehension skills. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities, including trips and visitors, to increase their experiences beyond school. Interesting topics and themes link learning across subjects so that they make better sense to pupils and make learning relevant. Sports, music, art and school performances extend their practical experiences effectively.
- The school promotes British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils have good opportunities, through the curriculum and assemblies and by working with visitors, to develop their understanding of how different faiths and traditions must live together peacefully in a mixed society and why they should respect this diversity. Visits broaden their knowledge of the wider world and instil in them a good understanding of citizenship, justice and democracy.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional support for eligible pupils in lessons and to access the breakfast club, visits and out-of-school clubs. Governors have recently undertaken a review of pupil premium provision. They have identified that the most able disadvantaged pupils lag behind pupils nationally in their academic progress. Many of these pupils face a multitude of complex issues in their lives and individual support is arranged where necessary to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Leaders make effective use the additional funding allocated to support pupils who have

special educational needs and/or disabilities to help these pupils make the best progress they can, including by involving expertise from other professionals.

- The primary schools physical education (PE) and sport funding is used to enhance the quality of sports in the school and teachers' skills to widen their expertise. Specialist coaches work alongside teachers to provide a range of clubs and inter-school events, which pupils enjoy, as they widen their understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- Pupils know that any form of discrimination is not tolerated at the school. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the world they live in and make sure that all have access to what the school has to offer. Leaders promote equality effectively and know that the most able pupils could benefit from higher challenge.
- The school works hard to engage with parents and encourages them to support their children's learning. Meetings with parents regarding children's progress are high priority, with home visits if parents cannot attend. While parents' responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire were few, parents who did voice their views and those who completed the school's parent survey were happy with the school and their children's progress.

Governance of the school

- The trust is committed to working with the school to ensure continuous improvement. It provides effective support to leaders, including the governors, and challenges them to raise outcomes for pupils. Leaders and governors agree that the school needed to improve urgently after the previous inspection and effective steps have been taken to provide support and training to all staff to move the school forward successfully.
- Governors make frequent visits to the school and understand its performance well. They have supported senior leaders in eradicating weak teaching. They check that the actions senior leaders take to make improvements are effective. They have set high targets for all pupils and know that while the school was deemed to be 'coasting' in 2016, the overall progress trends are rising steadily. They question pupil progress data and hold teachers to account if pupils fall short of the targets they are set.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, particularly the effectiveness of the spending of the pupil premium and primary school PE and sport funding. They undertook a review of the provision for disadvantaged pupils recently so that the school can raise outcomes for these pupils more rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school takes its duty of care to keep pupils safe very seriously. All staff and governors have undertaken the training required to safeguard pupils at school and when they are absent. Procedures for recording and reporting concerns about children's welfare are secure and parents are made aware of these procedures fully.
- The school works closely with other professionals where necessary to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly and rigorously. The school has many vulnerable pupils; staff make sure that these pupils are safe and happy in their care.
- All staff understand their 'Prevent' duty and other government guidelines regarding keeping children safe and protecting them from the dangers associated with social

media sites, the internet, extremism, radicalisation and abuse. The school's personal development curriculum, assemblies and regular reminders from professional bodies as well as staff provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss such matters safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and areas for improvement have been addressed. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and ensure that classrooms are well ordered and calm. A purposeful learning atmosphere is achieved in most classes and pupils understand that school and learning are important. The majority try their best.
- Displays in classrooms remind pupils of what they can achieve and pupils value this recognition. Learning is mostly very interesting and engaging and pupils receive the individual support they need to achieve well from their often very low starting points.
- Most teachers manage behaviour consistently. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave accordingly, keen to complete their work. The school has a few pupils who do sometimes present challenging behaviour. When this is not managed quickly and effectively, lapses occur and this slows the progress of these pupils.
- Leaders have established an assessment system to ensure that pupils make good progress. Previous weaker teaching has been challenged and expectations have been raised. Training and support for teachers to improve their skills are proving effective and outcomes for pupils are rising. The legacy of past weaker teaching, resulting in gaps in pupils' learning, is still evident in key stage 2, but is being addressed effectively through bespoke individual support for those at risk of falling behind.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in key stage 2, teachers often work to their strengths by, for example, sharing the teaching of mathematics and literacy. Emphasis on promoting pupils' basic skills in these subjects is high priority. Occasionally, the focus on completing tasks rather than securing good understanding results in some pupils not being confident in applying their learning when facing new work.
- Much of the teaching is now good across the school, but in some instances, the most able pupils are not being challenged enough by the work they do. This limits the progress the most able pupils make so they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Teachers' use of strategies, such as encouraging pupils to talk to each other about their work, helps pupils understand their learning. Some teachers ask probing questions to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, but this practice is not consistent.
- The teaching of reading is improving rapidly and pupils enjoy reading. There is a good focus on introducing phonics in the early years. The school has a high proportion of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language, so this early start strengthens the skills of all pupils in building words accurately and increasing their vocabulary. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds were eager to read to inspectors and discuss their ideas, taking pride in their successes.
- Writing continues to be a high priority across the school. Pupils have good opportunities to write in literacy and in other subjects and most have a good

understanding of what features to use to make their writing interesting and accurate. Most know the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling well, but when not reminded, a few make errors that sometimes go unchecked and so continue to prevail in subsequent work.

- The teaching of mathematics has also improved since the previous inspection, with a higher proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of each key stage and a few working at a higher level. Children's confidence with number begins in the early years and subsequent teaching ensures that pupils extend their skills through problem solving in mathematics and other subjects. For a few, it is their literacy that limits their progress.
- Teachers provide constructive feedback that helps pupils know what they have done well and how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to check their work before completion, but not all do this and a few submit work that is not entirely their best effort.
- In some classes, the quality of teaching assistant support is high to support pupils' learning effectively. This practice is not consistent, particularly during whole-class activities where some staff are not deployed to maximum effect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school promotes a safe, friendly and harmonious ethos where pupils feel valued. From their very diverse backgrounds, pupils learn to respect others and know that school is important. Most try hard to do their best and enjoy learning.
- Pupils say that they are happy at school and are confident that all adults will help them if they are worried or upset at home or school. As one pupil said, 'Teachers will sort things like people calling you names, straight away. It is not kind to upset people.'
- The school's caring ethos underpins the way adults treat each other and their pupils. Pupils use staff as role models in the way they treat each other. Staff promote pupils' personal development effectively and know the individual needs of pupils and their families well. The school works hard to support vulnerable families, and pupils benefit.
- Pupils relate to each other well and help each other kindly in lessons and around school. Older pupils take on responsibilities, for example as playground helpers, making sure that pupils play safely and treat each other with respect. They know the difficult circumstances that some face in their lives and are kind to each other.
- Pupils explained that bullying does sometimes happen, but incidents are rare and teachers deal with problems promptly. They say that most pupils behave well in school.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when on the internet, and not to disclose personal details to strangers. They know the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse and what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. As one pupil explained, 'If you want to be a footballer or [in] other sports, you must take care of your body. We learn about that.'
- The staff, parents and pupils who completed the online questionnaires during the inspection agreed that pupils are safe and well looked after at school and behave well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved because staff have high expectations of pupils and support them well in the way they conduct themselves. There are occasional lapses when a few become fussy and inattentive if learning does not engage them fully. These minor lapses are generally managed effectively, but not consistently so.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous. Most work hard in lessons because they want to do well. They work with each other sensibly and talk about what they have learned enthusiastically. For example, Year 1 pupils who visited a farm during the inspection were still very excited the next day, explaining that, 'I did not know baby pigs is called piglet and they get milk from their mummies just like people babies.'
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised and most pupils behave well at all times. Incidents are few and staff record any concerns regarding altercations appropriately.
- Despite all the school's best efforts to raise attendance, particularly among the disadvantaged pupils, it remains below the national average. Most pupils have high rates of attendance and arrive on time and ready to learn. A few persistently miss school and so make slow progress. Leaders use the pupil premium funds to encourage these pupils' families to send their children to school regularly, including by paying for breakfast club and other enrichment activities, but the response from a few is slow.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Historically, pupils have not achieved as well as they could. In 2016, although the school met the floor standards expected nationally, the school was deemed to be 'coasting'. School assessment data of current pupils and inspection evidence show that pupils' outcomes have improved. Pupils are currently making good progress across the school from their often very low starting points. This is due to better teaching.
- Effective teaching means that pupils' outcomes are now improving in reading, writing and mathematics and in phonics. Pupils are on track this year to make good progress and a high proportion are predicted to attain age-related expectations and a number to exceed these outcomes. This is because leaders are focused on raising standards.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills that are much lower than is typical for their age. A significant number also speak little or no English as this is not their home language. From these low starting points, children make good progress in the early years. While overall still a little below typical levels by the end of Reception, they are prepared well for Year 1.
- Over the last two years, there has been an increasing proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. In 2016, the school was close to the national level; the proportion was 73%, compared with the previous year of 63%. The teaching of phonics is good and outcomes are rising.
- In 2016, at the end of Year 2, while still below national expectations overall, an increased proportion of pupils were working at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Very few were working at greater depth. Pupils' workbooks and school assessments show that current Year 2 pupils are better placed to achieve

well and 20% or more to exceed expectations in these subjects.

- The picture is similar for current pupils in Year 6. In 2016, pupils' overall progress was significantly lower than expected, particularly in reading and writing. Progress was better in mathematics. The school's current assessment data, when broken down by groups of different abilities and backgrounds, shows that most pupils are now making good progress. The legacy of weaker teaching in the past is still an issue for older pupils who have some gaps in their learning. However, leaders are taking swift and effective action to bridge these gaps and accelerate pupils' progress.
- Throughout the school, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Hence, few progress quickly enough to work at greater depth to achieve more. This was identified as an issue in the outcomes for pupils in 2016. Leaders have taken swift action to address this by raising expectations of all pupils and setting higher targets this year. Improvements in teaching and additional support for these pupils are proving effective. Even so, the outcomes of these pupils still require further improvement.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils who learn English as an additional language; many do not speak any English when they start. A high proportion start at various times other than in Nursery and so cannot initially access what their peers are doing. Support for these pupils is good, including bilingual teaching where possible. Those who start in the early years or key stage 1 catch up quickly and achieve as well as their classmates, if not better. Those joining in key stage 2 also make good progress, but do not have long enough in the school to achieve more.
- The school has a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils who have very many issues and needs. They receive good support and most achieve well. This year, a significant proportion of these pupils are on track to achieve as well as pupils nationally. The most able of these pupils have not always been challenged well. Leaders are addressing this.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because staff plan for their support well. These pupils' needs are identified early and leaders seek guidance from other agencies if concerns arise with any pupil.
- The school has a few pupils from Traveller families. The attendance of these pupils is within the government guidelines but absences are high. Staff help these pupils make good progress when they are present and encourage them to attend more regularly.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Effective teamwork among staff ensures that all children make a good start to their education. Children's individual needs are identified early and effective links with parents support a smooth transition into school and daily routines. They settle quickly and are happy at school and in their learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff know the children well and provide an interesting and engaging range of activities both inside and outside to suit children's diverse needs. Those who speak little or no English are given time to

adjust, and receive individual support as necessary, to enjoy everything open to others. The same is true for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Staff are very vigilant in their assessments of children's progress and take professional advice where concerns arise about a child's learning and progress. The proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is high; many present social and emotional needs, which staff work with sensitively. Many of these children are not school-ready when they start in more than just their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Children learn to behave well, take turns, share resources and listen to others when asked to contribute to discussions. They show a thirst for learning and see every day as an adventure when new things happen to extend their experiences. Outdoor play is a particularly popular attraction, but children know that they have to do other things such as reading books, writing and number work. They want to please staff and so try hard.
- Staff lead activities such as phonics, writing and number work step by step, checking where children are not grasping concepts and returning to these on an individual basis if necessary. In a number activity learning, 'more than' and 'less than', staff quickly adjusted the task when it was clear that some children were insecure with the vocabulary. Staff know how much children can take in at any one time but appropriately step up the challenge as children move into their Reception Year.
- The teaching of phonics is made fun with recitations and repetitions that children use to cement their skills. Children enjoy stories and listen avidly when staff read to them. They were delighted to read to inspectors, saying, 'I love reading a lot – it helps you be clever like the teacher.'
- Staff make sure that children cover everything they should, steering children to more challenging tasks such as writing and developing resilience among those who find learning difficult. For example, children did not see counting how many more goals they needed to make 10 a chore; it was just competitive fun which they loved.
- The level of challenge for the most able is not always sufficiently high to make even better progress. Once sure of their speaking and communication skills, particularly those learning English as an additional language, these children could achieve more. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years has increased over the last two years to being close to average.
- Teachers encourage parents to help their children learn at home and invite them in to help with reading and to see what their children are doing at school. Attendance at these events is high and reflects that parents want their children to do well.
- Care arrangements are good and staff are appropriately trained to look after children at this age. Children know to play safely when climbing and the soft-surface play area protects children when tumbles happen. Daily checks of play equipment are routine.

School details

Unique reference number	139280
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10031029

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Peter Bell
Headteacher	Louise Sennett
Telephone number	01924 303530
Website	www.sandalmagna.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@sandalmagna.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a member of the Enhance Academy Trust (EAT).
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has provision for early years that starts from when children are aged three. Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, at 90%, is very high compared with that found nationally.
- Almost all of these pupils speak English as an additional language and a significant proportion are at an early stage of learning English.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and are supported through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- Pupil mobility is high. A high number of pupils join the school at times other than in Nursery, including at various points in key stage 2.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school was deemed to be 'coasting' in 2016.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils.
- A high number of staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school; a number of observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and the vice-chair, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and subject leaders. The inspectors also had a meeting with three representatives from the academy trust that sponsors this school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, information on current pupils' progress and planning and monitoring documentation.
- Inspectors scrutinised the spending of funding for disadvantaged pupils and primary school PE and sport funding. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, were also taken into consideration.
- Inspectors considered the seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and feedback from the four parents who expressed their views via text messages to Ofsted. Inspectors also listened to the views of parents who spoke to them at school and took into account the school's own survey of parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and talked to staff during the inspection about their views of the school.
- Inspectors also took into consideration the 21 responses submitted via the online Ofsted pupil survey.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Larissa Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector

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