

Sandlings Primary School

Easton Road, Sutton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3TD

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, too many pupils have not made the good progress of which they are capable by the end of key stage 2. Pupils' progress has been affected by staffing turbulence.
- Leaders' actions have not secured rapid and sustained improvements in mathematics. The progress that pupils have made in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 since the previous inspection has been too varied.
- Governors do not have a precise enough understanding of how leaders' actions are impacting on pupils' achievement. They do not understand fully the effectiveness of the spending of the pupil premium, or the additional funding for physical education and sport.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment does not focus sharply enough on pupils' progress. Staff are not fully held to account or specifically enough for the progress that pupils make from their varied starting points.
- Regular visits by the local authority have not supported leaders well enough to bring about rapid improvements in the school's provision at key stage 2.
- Although teaching, learning and assessment are now improving, teachers are still having to help pupils to catch up in some basic skills because of previous turbulence in teaching.
- At times, the teaching of phonics in key stage 1 does not help pupils to be enthusiastic about reading; this is particularly the case for boys.

The school has the following strengths

- The personal development and welfare of pupils are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have tenaciously ensured that pupils' welfare has remained a top priority.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Most pupils behave and attend well.
- Leaders and governors have now secured permanent staffing and more capacity to improve mathematics in key stage 2.
- The provision in early years is good. Diligent leadership ensures that children get a strong start to their educational experience.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the support and challenge provided by governors and the local authority by:
 - ensuring that governors and the local authority use information routinely to review the impact of leaders' actions to raise the achievement of pupils, including those who have been at the school for long periods of time, those eligible for pupil premium funding, the most able and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - reviewing how the additional funding that the school receives, including pupil premium and physical education (PE) and sport funding, is spent so that governors know the full impact this money is having on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Sharpen leaders' monitoring and review of teaching, learning and assessment so that they:
 - systematically review the quality of pupils' progress from their various starting points
 - continue to check on the accuracy of assessment information, especially in mathematics
 - hold staff precisely to account about the progress that pupils make
 - ensure that staff take greater responsibility for pupils' progress and their own professional development.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise achievement by:
 - using assessment information so that all adults have consistently high expectations about what pupils can achieve
 - continuing to use ongoing assessment information to help pupils catch up in those aspects of their learning where they have gaps
 - ensuring that staff can confidently use the most up-to-date good practice in the teaching of phonics, and use this to create interesting and engaging activities that enthuse and engage boys in reading in key stage 1.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors, with the support of the local authority, have been unable to maintain the good standard of education identified in 2013. This is partially due to some staffing turbulence and difficulty in recruiting new teachers, which have negatively affected pupils' progress in key stage 2 since the previous inspection.
- Last year, the headteacher and deputy headteacher resorted to undertaking additional teaching to try to reduce the potential underperformance of pupils. Although school evidence shows that this intervention in Year 6 made a difference to pupils' outcomes, it was not enough to ensure that pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders' actions to raise standards in key stage 2 have not secured rapid enough improvements. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 has been varied since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics. This includes pupils who stay at the school for extended periods of time. Leaders and governors understand these issues, but their actions have only recently begun to show signs of having a positive impact on achievement in key stage 2.
- Leaders' monitoring focuses on teachers' performance rather than on the difference that teachers' actions make to improving pupils' progress. Leaders do not use pupil progress meetings to hold staff sharply to account over the progress that pupils make from varied starting points. Consequently, leaders do not ensure that staff take full ownership of the progress of pupils and their own professional development needs.
- Leaders have identified that their review of the small numbers of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities needs further development this year. Staff undertake specific roles in talking to parents and reviewing pupils' needs. Leaders are currently reviewing this approach so that they can be better aware of the impact that they are having on the quality of provision and resulting achievement for these pupils.
- The local authority routinely visits the school to work alongside governors and leaders. However, the local authority's evaluation of the school's effectiveness is over generous. These visits have not helped leaders to focus tightly enough on the progress that pupils are making over time, especially those who have been at the school for longer periods. Consequently, this support has not helped the school to secure better outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 rapidly enough.
- The headteacher rightly prioritises the need for pupils to experience a varied curriculum. The opportunities for pupils to engage in a variety of subjects, extra-curricular clubs, trips, visits and music tuition, are broad. To develop this further, and strengthen leadership capacity, the headteacher has allocated responsibilities for each subject to middle leaders this year. Leaders have identified that the monitoring and assessment of these subjects are still developing, especially for those middle leaders who are new to their roles.

- Leaders and governors ensure that the PE and sport premium has been used to support pupils' engagement in competitive sports as well as to begin to improve staff confidence in teaching PE.
- Pupil premium funding has been allocated to support The Thrive Approach provision in the school this year. This is particularly effective in supporting those pupils who really need intensive support to manage their emotions, behaviour and social needs. However, leaders' evaluation of this funding is not consistently precise so that they know whether the funding is being as fully effective as it could be.
- The headteacher has been able to stabilise staffing by recruiting new teachers this year, including new leadership in key stage 2 and mathematics. She has been resolute that she will not appoint until she finds high-quality candidates. This is starting to secure raised expectations about what pupils can achieve, and where they need to catch up so that they can be better identified and supported over time. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this promising start on the achievement of pupils in key stage 2, especially those who have been at the school for longer periods of time.
- Many pupils arrive or leave the school at times other than at the start of the academic year. A big proportion of pupils arrive at the school with specific social and emotional needs. Leaders' work to support all pupils, including the most vulnerable, is exemplary; they ensure that each pupil receives the one-to-one care and support that they need to engage in all aspects of school life.
- The curriculum develops pupils into well-rounded citizens and is a strength of the school's work. In particular, pupils learn about other people from a range of cultures and lifestyles in a sensitive yet critical way. Leaders skilfully ensure that these opportunities support the development of a cohesive school community where members respect and value one another. Additionally, leaders' work with parents and other carers ensures that children and pupils receive the wraparound support that they need.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been successful in ensuring that the school has maintained the good provision identified in the previous inspection.
- Despite routine visits to the school, often alongside the local authority, governors are not collectively challenging leaders sufficiently about the achievement of pupils, most notably the progress made by pupils, particularly those who stay at the school for longer periods of time. For example, despite significant underperformance of pupils in key stage 2 last year, governors have not acted rapidly to review the outcomes to assure themselves that leaders are taking appropriate actions to secure better outcomes for current pupils.
- Governors have not ensured that the website is compliant with statutory guidance. Despite routine checks by governors, a number of policies and documents on the website were not up to date, such as the accessibility plan, the special educational needs information report, the evaluation of pupil premium spending and the evaluation of PE and sport funding.

- Governors do not know enough about the effectiveness of the additional funding that they receive for disadvantaged pupils, or the PE and sport premium. While governors challenge leaders when they do not see a clear rationale for a particular spending decision, they are not yet ensuring that this money makes the best difference that it can to the achievement of pupils.
- Governors undertake thorough work around their statutory responsibilities to oversee the behaviour and safeguarding of pupils. The governor with named responsibility for safeguarding visits routinely, undertakes thorough checks of staffing and recruitment procedures, and reviews leaders' actions to protect vulnerable pupils. Governors check on leaders' work by routinely asking pupils their views about how they feel about the work of leaders and adults to keep them safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of the suitability of staff to work in the school meets statutory requirements. Staff training is up to date with the most recent statutory guidance, including guidance about how to ensure that pupils are not vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Staff use this guidance to make regular and appropriate referrals when they have concerns about pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work tenaciously with external agencies to protect children and ensure their safeguarding. This includes working closely with families, staff and external services to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable receive effective support. Leaders also work diligently with other adults in the school to ensure that pupils are well monitored, and that pupils' records are maintained meticulously.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that school systems are constantly reviewed so that pupils are kept safe. In particular, they ensure that they remain vigilant to pupils' safeguarding over time, constantly checking for trends or ongoing low-level concerns. Leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date, through formal training and updates on issues both in the community and nationally, as they arise.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with individual support to meet their changing needs and develop their understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils say that they feel safe, are taught how to stay safe and are well looked after by staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Until recently, staff vacancies, particularly but not exclusively in key stage 2, have meant that teachers have not been able to support pupils well enough to make consistently strong progress in their learning over time.
- Staff have not developed an ongoing knowledge of what pupils already know and can do in order to plan lessons that ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. As a result, pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 has not been consistent. This is especially the case in mathematics over time, and in reading last year.
- Since September, leaders have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics. The roll-out of the school's chosen mathematics system in key stage 2

this year is bringing a greater consistency. It has also raised staff understanding about what pupils should be able to achieve by the end of Year 6. Teachers require more time to identify fully the gaps in pupils' knowledge in mathematics to secure good progress for all groups of pupils by the end of Year 6.

- On occasions, teachers are not confidently using their knowledge of phonics in key stage 1 to create activities which engage pupils, including those who need to catch up, particularly boys. Consequently, these pupils sometimes lose focus and don't develop an interest in reading as well as they could.
- Teachers are starting to raise their expectations about what pupils can achieve in reading, writing, and grammar, punctuation and spelling through their refinement of their 'big write' programme. This is starting to give pupils further opportunities to hone their writing and reading skills and use more complex writing styles.
- The quality of support provided by additional adults, particularly higher level teaching assistants, to support learning is often very effective, especially for pupils who have more complex SEN and/or disabilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and staff provide highly effective support for a number of pupils who arrive at the school requiring additional support for their social and emotional well-being. Some of these pupils have experienced considerable emotional upheaval.
- In order to meet pupils' often complex needs, leaders work closely with parents, previous schools and other relevant agencies to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of pupils' experiences before they arrive at the school. Leaders provide a high-quality induction package for pupils and their families to ensure that these pupils rapidly become part of the school community and feel safe. As a result, almost all pupils settle very quickly and make friends.
- Leaders and staff share ongoing information formally and informally to ensure that they remain vigilant to pupils' needs throughout their time at the school. In particular, leaders focus intensely on pupils' welfare needs. Leaders seek ongoing support for pupils and their families, especially those families who are less socially mobile, more isolated or who have fewer support networks to help them.
- Leaders constantly reflect on the changing needs of pupils and what pupils say to them about how they are feeling. For example, the ongoing development of the school's one-to-one welfare provision is in direct response to pupils' feedback. Pupils speak very highly of the support that they receive, especially when they are struggling with personal issues.

- The headteacher finds creative and innovative ways to address the needs of pupils and their families. She has been very successful in actively bidding for additional funding to give pupils an even wider and more comprehensive package of trips and visits for pupils who have had less experience of wider cultural opportunities. Most recently, this has been to further develop the extensive music provision in the school for pupils who are keen to learn a musical instrument that the school does not currently provide.
- Leaders and staff provide very high-quality support for pupils who join the school from different cultures and backgrounds. The continual review of the life skills curriculum, coupled with the messages through assemblies, displays and focused days, mean that leaders provide lots of opportunities for pupils to explore a range of cultures and views. Leaders ensure that this is relevant to the pupils in the school at that point in time, so their different backgrounds are fully appreciated by their classmates, and so that pupils genuinely appreciate the values and beliefs of pupils new to the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have ensured that the learning environment is welcoming for pupils and visitors. They use displays to celebrate pupils' work and achievements, as well as celebrate the different cultural heritages of the pupils in the school. The school is a vibrant place that welcomes all pupils through its doors.
- Staff promote positive relationships. Most pupils follow their example in the way they treat each other and staff in the school. Consequently, the use of fixed-term exclusions is low, and no pupils have been permanently excluded since the previous inspection.
- Pupils value their education and attend well. Leaders and staff monitor attendance well and maintain high expectations about pupils' attendance. As a result, attendance is consistently at or better than the national average, and persistent absence remains low.
- A small number of pupils on arrival at the school struggle to regulate their behaviour, and this has been exacerbated by significant turbulence in their education prior to joining the school. Leaders' and staff's genuine care, compassion, patience and tenacity ensure that these pupils quickly learn how to improve their behaviour, so that they are better ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, standards in key stage 2 have not been securely good. In 2014, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for English and mathematics for that year. Although the school has met the floor standards in subsequent years, outcomes for Year 6 pupils, most notably in mathematics, have remained variable.

- Last year, attainment was broadly in line with the national average, but pupils made much slower progress in reading and mathematics in Year 6 than other pupils did nationally. This was especially the case for the most able pupils and those of average prior attainment, including those who have been at the school for longer periods of time.
- Leaders' actions have not brought about sustained and rapid improvement in mathematics by the end of Year 6 since the previous inspection. The school's own assessment information indicates that a significant proportion of the most able pupils were expected to achieve the standard in greater depth by the end of Year 6, but no pupils achieved this in mathematics last year.
- Pupils' progress and standards in writing at key stage 2 have improved since the previous inspection. However, outcomes in English grammar, punctuation and spelling were below average, with only just over half of the boys in Year 6 achieving the expected standard last year. Most of these pupils were from middle-prior-attaining starting points. This is not good progress for this group of pupils.
- Actions taken by leaders are now starting to raise expectations in key stage 2. Current teaching, learning and assessment are now starting to identify gaps in pupils' outcomes and to fill these gaps more securely. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work on pupils' progress, given the previous turbulence in teaching.
- In 2015 and 2016, the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics check was above average, but this has fallen year on year. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the standard in the check fell to below average. Leaders can show that they made a real difference to some of these pupils, even though they didn't manage to achieve the standard required.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement in key stage 1 has remained at least in line with the national average for each year. These outcomes have been moderated externally by the local authority. In particular, the actions taken by leaders to secure better standards in mathematics paid off in 2017, when the proportions who achieved or exceeded the expected standard improved and were above average.
- Pupils are well supported to make the transition to the next stage in their schooling, whether they are moving to the next key stage, another primary school or secondary school at the age of 11. However, despite a strong start in early years and key stage 1, too many pupils leave at the end of key stage 2 without having made the good progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able pupils and those from middle-prior-attaining starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children join the school in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is usually above the national average. Children make good all-round progress in all areas of learning.
- Leadership in the early years foundation stage is diligent, and ensures that the very youngest children in the school get off to a strong start. The leader's work with parents, children and other adults in the classroom, and in using assessment, ensures

that almost all children make good progress from their varied starting points.

- The early years leader has ensured that the high quality of provision in the Reception class has been maintained since the previous inspection. In particular, the induction that the early years team gives to children on arrival is a real strength. High-quality communication with feeder nurseries, home visits and engaging induction days ensure that adults know children well and that children receive the right support to settle quickly.
- Children make good progress from their various starting points in most areas of their learning. The proportion of children in early years who have achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception has been above average for the past three years.
- Children are kind to each other, and learn quickly how to listen and share. Staff also help children to build their independence through well-planned activities. Staff maintain consistently high expectations about children's behaviour and children respond well to these expectations. As a result, the behaviour of children in early years is good.
- Leaders ensure that they accurately check on children's starting points when they enter early years. This includes considering information from their previous provision, and the early observation of children's abilities. Children have many opportunities to use the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in the activities that staff plan for them. Children enthusiastically undertake these tasks and continue to develop their skills.
- Phonics is taught well in early years, and adults encourage children's early enjoyment of reading. Children are enthusiastic when participating in reading tasks. For example, Reception children clearly enjoyed reading 'Room on the Broom' together, and engaged in the subsequent tasks that were set for them, including boys with writing. Consequently, children develop an early interest in books, reading and words.
- The early years leader is constantly reflective about the work that the school needs to do to engage parents fully as participants in their child's learning. The development of parental engagement since the previous inspection has been well thought out and meaningful. As a result, parents are engaging more routinely and are becoming more effective in how they support their children to develop early reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Staff have a well-developed knowledge of the early years assessment requirements. There are effective systems in place for staff to check on the progress made by children. The pictorial and written records and observations of children's work and progress are very specific to them, and support appropriate planning for their next steps. Adults use the vibrant indoor and outdoor learning environment to engage children in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	124685
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10036201

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Lacey
Headteacher	Patricia Toal
Telephone number	01394 420444
Website	www.sandlingsprimary.co.uk
Email address	patricia.toal@sandlings.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the use of pupil premium and the PE and sport premium funding, the special educational needs report and the accessibility plan. The safeguarding policy is also out of date.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- Significant numbers of pupils arrive or leave the school mid-way through the year or key stage.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are in receipt of pupil premium funding who access free school meals is below the national average, although there are significant numbers who receive some funding because they meet the criteria for other reasons.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum standards for English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector undertook learning walks and lesson observations across the school, and reviewed pupils' work. A number of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also undertook a work scrutiny of English and mathematics in key stage 2.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the new leader for mathematics, middle leaders in science and in PE, and governors. This covered numerous areas of the school's work, including achievement, special educational needs, attendance, behaviour and the curriculum. The inspector also met with two local authority representatives.
- A range of school documentation was reviewed, including that relating to safeguarding, achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- There were seven responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, which was not a sufficient response to be able to report on. There were also 10 responses by staff.
- No pupils completed the pupil survey, so the lead inspector met with a small group of pupils formally, as well as talking to pupils during breaktime and during lessons.
- The inspector observed pupils' conduct at breaktime, between lessons, in an assembly and during lessons.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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