

Inspection of a good school: Sandling Primary School

Ashburnham Road, Penenden Heath, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2JG

Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

Outcome

Sandling Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. At playtime, pupils take part in organised activities such as timed skipping challenges. Pupils chat happily with friends while eating their lunch. In lessons, they learn to take turns and work together to take on challenges or solve problems.

Pupils feel safe and behave very well. They are polite and keen to help. Bullying is rare. However, when it occurs, staff work with parents and carers to take effective action. Pupil 'mediators' and 'anti-bullying ambassadors' help their classmates with minor disagreements.

Staff have high expectations. As the website states, the school's aim is for no 'ceiling' on what pupils can achieve. Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils are keen to learn. They take part regularly in visits linked to their learning. For example, Year 3 go to Chislehurst Caves when learning about light and dark in science. Year 4 go to Horton Kirby to do a river study. Pupils and parents welcome the wide range of clubs organised by staff to link with pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy planting flowers in gardening club and performing for parents in street dance club.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders know the school well. Together with governors, they are ambitious to build on the school's strengths. Staff share leaders' vision for all pupils to develop their full potential in all areas and work well to put this into practice.

Reading is a priority for the school. Pupils love reading and quickly learn to read. Children take part in daily phonics sessions as soon as they start school in Reception. They develop their reading skills by reading books that match closely to the words and sounds that they know. Any pupils who fall behind get help to catch up effectively. Regular help is also

arranged for parents to help them support their child at home. At key stage 2, pupils develop their reading skills further using a wide range of different texts.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve very well. Staff are expert in their explanations to pupils. They provide practical experiences whenever possible that enhance pupils' learning. Staff systematically recap learning to make sure that pupils remember key knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils build effectively on previous learning.

Leaders have created an exciting curriculum. They have linked a broad range of subjects together within carefully chosen topics. Subject leaders are enthusiastic and well informed. They make sure that pupils' knowledge and skills develop in a logical sequence. Pupils' learning is monitored closely in English, mathematics and science. However, assessment systems in other subjects are not yet fully in place. In these subjects, pupils are not yet learning as well as they could.

Leaders have developed an assessment system, which is still to be implemented across the whole curriculum. They have made a commitment to avoid adding to staff workload. Staff appreciate that leaders listen to any concerns and act on them. They are proud to work at Sandling Primary and feel that their workload is manageable.

Leaders want all pupils to achieve well, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff think carefully about how to meet each individual pupil's needs. Staff change activities to help these pupils learn alongside their classmates. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are successful in their learning and play a full part in the life of the school.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and are keen to learn. They listen well and follow instructions promptly. Pupils often work together in pairs to share their thinking. They take turns and show respect for each other's views. Pupils use their initiative and can work independently. Disruption to lessons is rare.

Leaders are keen to prepare pupils for the 'responsibilities of life'. They learn about democracy when they elect representatives for the school council. Pupils find out how to care for the environment in eco council. They learn to care for others when raising funds, for example for the British Heart Foundation, and when collecting donations for a local foodbank. As one parent wrote, 'As a school, they give my child the very best start in life which I am very grateful for'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at this school. They are happy to talk to staff when they have problems and know they will get help. Staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff know that they must respond promptly if they have concern about a pupil's well-being.

Pupils are taught how to be safe. They learn about e-safety and know that they should not chat to strangers online. Staff have thought carefully about local dangers. For

example, they remind pupils about road safety regularly as there are lots of busy roads close to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are not yet using assessment procedures consistently in the foundation subjects to support the teaching of the curriculum in these areas. Governors and leaders need to ensure that procedures are in place so that assessment is used well in the foundation subjects, to inform teaching and embed pupils' knowledge systematically.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118511
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10122276
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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr John Viner
Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Downes
Website	www.sandling.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2016

Information about this school

- There is a breakfast club and an after-school club on site, both run by an external provider.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the early years coordinator and the subject leaders for reading, mathematics and physical education (PE).
- I met with the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair of the governing body and four other governors.
- I scrutinised the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding. I talked to parents, staff and pupils. The responses to the online questionnaires were also considered.
- I visited almost all classrooms, including those in Reception Year. I observed pupils learning in class, in extra-curricular activities, in the playground and dining room, and while moving around the school.

- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation and improvement plan, the headteacher's reports and external reports.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. This involved talking to subject leaders, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, hearing pupils read, and talking to pupils and teachers.

Inspection team

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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