

Inspection of a good school: Sandcross Primary School

Sandcross Lane, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8HH

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

Sandcross Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'This school helps us to be active – there is a buzz – like a beehive.' This comment sums up the busy, happy atmosphere at Sandcross. Pupils consistently meet the staff's high expectations of their behaviour, and live up to the school's values. Alert and diligent in lessons, pupils act courteously and responsibly around the orderly school site. They listen to their teachers and respect each other. Staff deal fairly and consistently with any cases of bullying or unkind behaviour.

Staff set high standards for what they teach and expect all pupils to do their best in lessons. The youngest children are enthusiastic, busy and attentive learners. As they go through the school, pupils build on their early love of learning and are proud of their knowledge and skills. Their opinions are valued and contribute to decisions about the school. For example, pupils helped to design the well-stocked and inspiring library at the heart of the school building.

Parents value the headteacher's passionate and committed leadership. Welcoming and knowledgeable staff keep them well-informed about their children and school life. Parents are delighted to see their children thriving and, as one commented, 'bursting with new learning'.

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

The school provides a high-quality curriculum that clearly lays out what pupils need to learn from the early years right through to the end of key stage 2. Overarching principles help pupils to link different subjects and remember their learning when they move on to something new. Teachers plan topics carefully and make sure that they are logically ordered to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.

The staff's expertise certainly makes an impact on pupils' achievements. For example, the school's recent drive to improve pupils' writing has turned around pupils' attitudes. They love writing now, because they learn new vocabulary, gain confidence with grammar and sentence structures and read inspiring texts to get them started.

Reading is taught consistently well throughout the school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are deliberately prepared for phonics right from the beginning. Pupils know that reading is important. Even those who may struggle at first, practise reading their sounds and stories with impressive perseverance. Pupils enjoy a range of stimulating stories, non-fiction, picture books and poetry. Their growing love of reading is further encouraged by the in-depth knowledge of the school's librarian.

Leaders make sure that staff cater well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are quick to note any identified emerging needs when pupils join the school. Pupils with SEND learn the same ambitious topics as their friends in class. They are supported effectively by well-trained teaching assistants. Pupils are also given helpful resources to encourage their confidence and independence. However, leaders have rightly identified that planning for pupils with SEND is sometimes too general. Sometimes pupils' targets are not precise enough or linked to specific subject areas.

Pupils clearly demonstrate their commitment to school life through their positive attitudes and good behaviour in and out of lessons. They enjoy taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including music, sports and charity work. Regular events, trips and celebrations throughout the school calendar encourage pupils' interests and build a well-rounded school community. Pupils' understanding of the wider world and themselves is also enhanced by the well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme.

Since his appointment, the headteacher has wisely restructured the school's leadership team. Senior leaders now oversee phases or key stages and groups of subjects. They oversee the work of subject leaders who are knowledgeable and plan sequences of learning well. However, some subject leaders lack experience and are not used to evaluating the precise impact of what is being taught.

Trustees and members of the local governance committee are astute and dedicated guardians of the school's values. Governors and trust members know the school well and guide the headteacher and his team with wisdom and integrity. Staff really appreciate the way in which the senior team makes sure that they have enough time to manage their workload, and takes care of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff are well trained to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding training is based on the latest guidance, and is strongly linked to the school's own context. Staff know how to report concerns, and understand the importance of recording these precisely and accurately. Safeguarding leaders and assistants support each other and ensure that pupils and families get the help they need. The school works effectively in partnership with other agencies who protect children. All checks on staff working in the school are carried out in line with guidance, and are regularly monitored.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are new to their roles and are not yet confident about how they monitor and evaluate the impact of their curriculum plans on pupils' learning. Senior leaders must ensure that subject leads are able to evaluate precisely what pupils have learned and remembered, in order to ensure progression through the subject.
- Provision-mapping and target-setting for some pupils, particularly those receiving SEND support, are not precise enough or linked to specific subjects. As a result, subject leaders are not able to track pupils' progression in their subjects as well as they could. Senior leaders must make sure that targets and provision for pupils with SEND are more manageable, specific and measurable.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sandcross Primary School, to be good in September 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	144938
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10203139
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	699
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Adams
Headteacher	Mark Richards
Website	www.sandcross.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became an academy in 2017. It is part of the Everychild Trust, an academy trust which is responsible for one other primary school.
- The current headteacher took up his post in April 2020. The deputy headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in January 2021.
- The school uses alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the local governance committee and members of the Everychild Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspection team also looked at the school’s work to improve pupils’ writing and planning in other subjects, including PSHE, design and technology, and science.
- A meeting took place with leaders and staff responsible for safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors also spoke to staff about their safeguarding duties, and reviewed a sample of records of concerns. An inspector scrutinised the single central record of checks made on adults appointed to work in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed planning to support pupils with SEND and toured a sample of classes with the special educational needs coordinators.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils formally and informally. An inspector toured the school with a group of pupils to review the school’s provision for their personal development.
- The inspection team took into account 274 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including over 150 free-text responses. More than 500 pupils completed the pupil survey and their responses and comments were considered. The responses from 61 staff to the staff survey were also reviewed as part of the inspection evidence.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Clare Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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