

Inspection of Sandford School

Sandford, Crediton, Devon EX17 4NE

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Beginning in the early years, the inclusive ethos is a strength of the school. Children and staff form warm relationships. Children settle quickly into school and are keen to learn. The school's nurturing approach helps children develop resilience and learn how to cope with setbacks.

In the main school, pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Pupils know what bullying is. They say it happens sometimes. Staff deal with any incidents quickly. Pupils value this. Pupils appreciate the 'worry boxes' around school to enable them to communicate their concerns and receive support. As a result, they feel safe.

Pupils enjoy learning outdoors where they cook bread over an open fire, make dens or collect eggs from the school chickens. Visitors and trips help pupils to engage with their learning and bring the curriculum to life. A federation-wide residential trip to Bath contributes to developing pupils' character.

The school offers pupils a range of clubs. Dodgeball, drama and multi-sports are all popular with pupils. Pupils participate in sporting events like the federation tag rugby tournament. Many choose to learn musical instruments such as flute, keyboard, clarinet and saxophone. These pupils perform a variety of popular music in the school band.

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

The school has designed a new curriculum that is well sequenced to show the knowledge that pupils need to learn and in what order they need to build it. However, the curriculum is new and has not had time to embed. As a result, in some areas the school has not checked how well the curriculum is working to help pupils to learn. This means that in these areas pupils do not learn as well.

Pupils learn mathematics particularly well. In the early years, children explore mathematics in practical ways. For example, they use different objects to learn about sequences. This helps them to develop strong foundations in mathematical understanding. Teachers use assessment in mathematics well throughout the school. They regularly check what pupils have remembered and adapt learning so that key information is revisited if needed. This helps pupils to build on their knowledge from the early years to Year 6.

Children in Nursery and Reception settle well from the day they join the school. Children learn to explore, create and be active. They benefit greatly from rich and exciting activities. Through a well-planned curriculum, they develop their speaking and listening, physical movement and early mathematics knowledge.

The school has made reading a priority. Children start to learn their letters and sounds as soon as they join the school. All pupils enjoy daily story and reading time. Adults use the school's chosen phonics scheme to help pupils at the early stages of

reading gain confidence and fluency. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds they are learning. This means they practise reading the sounds they know. Pupils who need extra help or have gaps in their learning are identified quickly and given the help they need to catch up. Once pupils have built confidence in their reading, they read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books in the well-stocked library.

The school has high expectations for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is quick to identify the needs of these pupils and knowledgeable staff support them well in and out of the classroom. Nevertheless, the next steps identified for these pupils sometimes lack precision. This means that, on occasion, some pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need to make the best possible progress.

Pupils are proud of the leadership roles they hold. School librarians help to promote a love of reading. Play leaders teach younger pupils' games in the playground. More recently, school councillors have been elected and have plans to develop the playground. The school ensures that pupils have opportunities in all subjects to reinforce some of the key learning from personal, social and health education (PSHE), for example in geography by boosting pupils' awareness of climate change. The PSHE curriculum helps to broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils understand the importance of equality and respect.

Governors understand their roles well. They share the same ambitious vision for pupils and staff. They support and challenge the school. Staff feel well supported by governors and school leaders. As a result, they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school has not fully checked on the implementation and impact of their curriculum. This means pupils do not learn as well in these areas. The school needs to check that the curriculum is implemented as intended so that it has maximum impact.
- Some pupils with SEND do not benefit from precise, targeted support. This means they sometimes do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that targeted support is well designed so that all pupils with SEND learn well.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	113107
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10288129
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	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jackie Enright
Headteacher	John Jolliffe (executive headteacher) Hannah Fee (head of school)
Website	www.exevalleyfederation.co.uk/sandford
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The head of school joined the school in July 2023.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The early years includes provision for three-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the governing board, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl Thornton

Ofsted Inspector

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