

# Inspection of a good school: Sandwich Infant School

School Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9HT

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Inspection date: 30 January 2024

## Outcome

Sandwich Infant School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Leanne Bennett. This school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annie Wiles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Butterworth.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel that this is a friendly and caring place. As this is an infant school, their stay here is relatively short before transition to the next phase of their education. Despite this, children settle quickly on joining Reception and make good progress both academically and socially by the time they leave. The school's nurturing ethos supplements the high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do well because of the positive experiences provided by staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive here. Parents and carers are particularly happy about the support that pupils with SEND receive.

Inspectors' discussions with pupils revealed high levels of positivity about how safe they feel. Pupils feel that the actions of others do not impact on their learning. They behave well because routines are firmly established, and staff are consistent in their approach when pupils need gentle reminders.

Pupils love their trips into the local community. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils could hardly contain their excitement about their pending visit to a local nature reserve to study microhabitats. Learning how to make (and then eating) pizza 'in town' scored equally highly in their well-considered list of favourites when talking to inspectors.

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

Parents are mostly very positive about the school. All who responded on Ofsted Parent View feel that their children are happy, feel safe and do well. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working here. They know their pupils very well. They work hard because leaders inspire and support them in equal measure. Self-evaluation of the school's main

strengths and what needs to be better is sound. The school knows that pupils' achievements in writing are not as strong as they need to be, although pupils are achieving appropriately across other curriculum areas.

The curriculum offer is being reviewed and refreshed constantly to suit the needs of pupils better. Despite ongoing adaptations, staff are keenly aware of what they need to teach and when. Collaborative work with other schools across the multi-academy trust also supports curriculum development. An additional layer of challenge and support is provided by experts from the multi-academy trust, who ensure that good practice is shared and that support is provided when needed.

Pupils enjoy learning at this school. Children in Reception get off to a good start when learning to read. A new phonics programme has been introduced in the last two years, and staff are confident in its use. Children who are struggling to read are identified early because checks on pupils' understanding are secure. Additional support is provided where needed, especially for pupils with SEND or for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Although the school's work to teach pupils to read is sound, pupils' love of books and reading is underdeveloped. Pupils find it hard to recall their favourite books or authors. Despite the school environment being book rich, many pupils are not excited or enthused by reading, referring to the display of books 'on the wall, in the hall', rather than having much recollection of what they have read in class or on their own over time. Leaders know more needs to be done in this regard.

The school's curriculum has been designed to provide a continuum from Reception through to the end of Year 2 as far as possible. This is the case in mathematics, where expectations are high across all year groups. Subjects such as art, geography and history are carefully mapped so that teachers are aware of what pupils have learned before and what comes next. This aspect is supported by a growing collaborative partnership with the local junior school so that staff have a better understanding of the demands of the Year 3 curriculum.

Leaders at all levels have a clear vision for the school. The relatively recent move to join the multi-academy trust has been a positive step, though outwardly little appears to have changed. The small-school, family ethos continues, but staff are clearly benefiting from the wider support and advice afforded by the collective expertise available through new partnerships. Importantly, pupils are the main beneficiaries. They enjoy coming to school and attend well. They are receiving a good and improving quality of education. They feel safe, and their personal development continues to be given great importance. Their social and emotional development is supported well. Age-appropriate coverage of aspects linked to understanding equalities and difference are all in place, helping pupils to gain a growing understanding of life in modern Britain.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievements in writing are not as strong as they should be. Leaders know this and recognise how pupils' weaker writing could slow achievement in other curriculum areas. The school has already identified some steps to address the issue, but now needs to focus more sharply on a whole-school approach to improve writing.
- Pupils' love of books, reading and the written word is underdeveloped. While the school's programme to teach pupils to read fluently is effective, a significant number of pupils lack the spark and enthusiasm for reading that might be expected. The profile of books and reading needs to be raised further, and in a meaningful way, so that pupils' motivation and passion for reading and books are strengthened.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Sandwich Infant School, to be good in February 2017.

## 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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148502
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296473
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Butterworth
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Annie Wiles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Leanne Bennett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sandwich-infant.kent.sch.uk">www.sandwich-infant.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust. A local governing body provides aspects of governance for the school, as defined in a scheme of delegation.
- Sandwich Infant School converted to become an academy school in April 2021. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing body, accompanied by two other governors. He also met with the CEO of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, 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 gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of pupils and staff respectively were also considered through Ofsted's surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Harris

Ofsted Inspector

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