



Sandhurst Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100702
Local Authority Lewisham
Inspection number 285850
Inspection dates 13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Kay Johnson HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior	School address	Minard Road
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	7–11		SE6 1NW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8698 1846
Number on roll (school)	300	Fax number	020 8695 1275
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Skip Amrani
		Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Jones-Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sandhurst Junior is a larger than average school. It has a diverse community of pupils. The majority of pupils are Black British Caribbean with one fifth being White British. There are 21 ethnic groups represented at the school and nearly a quarter of pupils have English as an additional language. Over one fifth of pupils are entitled to free school meals and over one third of pupils have special educational needs. These proportions are above average. Most pupils transfer from the infant school which shares the same site.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because of the exceptional leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by the teamwork of the staff, governors and pupils. 'The school makes every effort to make learning fun and stimulating,' said one parent and it is true. Pupils talk about their learning enthusiastically. As a result of this focus, achievement is good and standards are above the national average, especially in English. Standards in mathematics and science are not as high as in English but still above average.

The harmonious relationships between staff and pupils result in excellent behaviour. Pupils are confident and expressive. They really appreciate the additional activities which are available at clubs. There are a range of opportunities and experiences in which pupils can shine. For example, the school council, food and gardening groups have extended their learning and helped them to prepare for future life. The principles of healthy living are promoted throughout the curriculum and in every aspect of school life and, as a result, pupils have a clear understanding of its importance. They are able to talk knowledgeably about safety and the value of exercise.

Teaching is outstanding because of the excellent questioning of teachers and the focus on pupils learning independently. Pupils were able to pinpoint moments when they had understood a concept. They ask each other questions in order to solve problems in their learning teams. Teachers create a climate where pupils not only take responsibility for their own learning but actively move each other forward. The vision and creativity of curriculum leaders stands out in the planning and daily experiences of pupils. The curriculum is imaginative and stimulating with a myriad of enriching additional experiences and activities. An example of this is the Creative Arts partnership that has led to regular whole days on exciting arts projects with the input of a professional artist and educational visits. Cross-curricular opportunities are seized upon by staff with tremendous enthusiasm and this has significantly enhanced what is on offer. As a result, achievement is improving.

The school is slightly modest in its self evaluation because it sets such high standards for improvement. Self evaluation is rigorous and underpins thorough school improvement planning which focuses on outcomes for pupils and equality of opportunity. All groups of pupils achieve well, especially those of Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean heritage whose results are above average and better than other groups within the school. This is because of the high expectations and carefully planned staff training and development. The excellent judgement and knowledge of governors about the school ensures that the capacity for the school to improve further is outstanding. Their dedication and commitment to the school is palpable.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics and science, matching those in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievements are good, with some outstanding features. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school to ensure that their attainment is secure. This information is used as the starting point for a comprehensive and detailed system for tracking progress. Because of this, pupils are quickly identified if they need additional help. The school analyses the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils very well. Pupils make good progress overall. They arrive in Year 3 working below national averages and by the end of Year 4 they are working in line with the expected levels. In Year 5 brisk progress is maintained so that by the end of Year 6 pupils have met and sometimes exceeded school targets. A significant improvement in 2006 was the increase in the number of pupils who attained level 5 especially in English, although this is not yet as evident in mathematics and science. High expectations, excellent tracking procedures and responsive team work have resulted in at least good achievement for all pupils including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities. The performance of the many Black Caribbean and White and Black Caribbean pupils is a particular strength. Their results in the national tests of 2006 are considerably better than the national picture.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop a love for learning and school life that is based on the excellent relationships that exist in the school. They thoroughly enjoy the stimulating opportunities provided. This is reflected in above average attendance rates. The children are friendly and helpful to visitors and each other. They are confident and mature learners. The celebration of success is a major feature in achieving this. Members of the impressive choir are really proud of singing at the Albert Hall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour and safe practices around school are excellent. They are well aware of dangers and risks outside of school. Pupils show an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles. They talk expertly about trying to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables daily and participate keenly in the wide range of physical activities provided. Pupils are developing an outstanding sense of being good citizens and contributing to community life. They represent the views of classmates on the very active school council. They have a strong appreciation of music, drama, poetry and art. They leave the school with good skills in numeracy, literacy and information technology, balanced with excellent personal skills. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. This ensures that pupils, who enter the school with levels below national averages, make at least good progress and achieve well. The use of questioning to move pupils' learning on is particularly effective. Teachers and pupils have excellent relationships, creating a positive learning environment where pupils develop their confidence. Teachers' planning is very good. They devise interesting activities that are fun to do and really motivate pupils. As a result, they thoroughly enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Tasks are effectively matched to pupils' abilities because teachers make good use of assessment to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Lessons include visual, practical and speaking and listening activities to promote pupils' understanding. For example, good use is made of 'talking partners' to involve all pupils and help them clarify their ideas. The purpose of lessons is very clear to pupils. They receive good guidance through marking and feedback on their progress and how they can improve their work. Pupils are increasingly involved in reviewing their own work. Teaching assistant support in class is very good. It contributes significantly to pupils' progress, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a broad and extremely rich curriculum that contributes very effectively to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. Careful evaluation of pupils' needs has resulted in an innovative and adventurous curriculum. This gives pupils opportunities to show and develop their strengths, particularly in the arts and sport. It draws very effectively on the wide cultural diversity that exists within the school. The emphasis on linking learning across subjects, as in the creative arts project, makes tasks and activities more relevant to pupils and enhances their understanding. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to ensure that all groups of pupils are provided with activities, including an excellent range of after school clubs, which meet their learning needs. As a result, pupils who find learning hard, the most able, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who learn in different ways are all well catered for. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the very wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. These enhance pupils' learning and contribute to their good progress. As one parent commented, 'the choice of after school clubs is wonderful.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

As one parent wrote, 'Our daughter feels confident and secure and is able to approach the staff if a problem occurs. She is treated as an individual and her needs are met.'

This is true. Pupils know they have someone to talk to and that their views are valued. Very thorough attention is paid to risk assessments especially in relation to trips out of school. First aid arrangements are very good. Secure child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Consistency and teamwork amongst all members of staff in behaviour management, recognising the needs of vulnerable pupils, and the use of assessment information to provide support and academic guidance are key factors in the school's success. The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those with English as an additional language and those who are able and talented is outstanding. Pupils in Year 6 say they are very well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because they have established a vibrant and responsive community which focuses on learning. Excellent teamwork has resulted in everyone taking responsibility for school improvement. The governing body supports and constructively challenges the leadership team. Governors balance this with remaining accountable to everyone including the pupils who ask them questions about the best way to use the school budget. The school knows itself inside out. Its self evaluation is secure and rigorous. It is constantly looking to improve the pupils' performance. The evaluation of teaching and learning is detailed and rigorous. Self evaluation is used as a springboard for the well written school improvement plan. The 'Every Child Matters' outcomes are its core principles and, therefore, gaining the best outcomes for pupils is at the heart of the school ethos. The school has been successful in gaining awards, such as Investors in People, Artsmark Silver and excellence in the use of interactive whiteboards. It has used this process for effective staff development and to improve outcomes for pupils. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have created a culture of active learning which infuses all aspects of school life. There is an infectious enthusiasm throughout the school, which is underpinned by detailed planning and robust systems ensuring that pupils receive high quality care and education at all times.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school.

We agree with you that your school is excellent. Your headteacher and the staff are always making sure the school does as well as it possibly can. You work hard, behave exceptionally well and understand what you are being taught.

Your teachers work exceptionally hard to make your lessons interesting and that you all understand the importance of learning for yourself and from each other. The teachers expect a lot from you and you try very hard to meet their expectations. Sometimes you manage to do even better because doing well means so much to everyone.

Your parents support your school and the governors make sure they come in to school and get to know everyone. You ask the governors some difficult questions. They were impressed by that and we agree that you should keep on asking questions and getting involved with the development of your school to make it even better.

To help the school to become even better we have asked the headteacher and teachers to help more of you reach higher levels in mathematics and science.

You all work very hard as a team and enjoy your achievements. Well done!

Yours sincerely

Kay JohnsonLead inspector