

# Sandcross School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125110
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	293198
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jennifer Smith HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Sanders
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Reid
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002
<b>School address</b>	Sandcross Lane Reigate RH2 8HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01737 245467
<b>Fax number</b>	01737 244703

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	293198

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Sandcross is a larger than average, fully subscribed, three-form entry school. Pupils have a mix of social backgrounds and are drawn from the local area and surrounding villages, close to the town of Reigate. Year 3 pupils come from nine different infant schools. Just less than a quarter have some degree of learning difficulty and nine children currently have a statement of special educational need, broadly in line with the national average. The majority of pupils are White British and just three pupils have English as an additional language. Those entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average and the school serves an area that is more advantaged than most. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Sandcross School is a good school with some outstanding aspects. It provides a good quality of education and seeks to achieve excellence for all its pupils. A parent summed up the views of many when she said 'the school treats all children as individuals and builds on their strengths.' It provides an outstanding curriculum with extensive opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities outside lessons, including the very successful orchestra, the young journalist group, fencing and Latin clubs. Pupils' good basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), alongside their positive attitudes, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Attainment on entry to the school is variable year-on-year but is generally around the national average. Standards are a little above the national average by the time they reach Year 6. A significant number of pupils achieve the highest level 5 in national tests, particularly in science, which is a real strength. Standards in mathematics have improved this year because of the focus on raising achievement. Although standards have also improved in English, fewer pupils attain the highest level 5 and performance in writing remains a relative weakness for some pupils. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls over time, whilst those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress due to the careful and well targeted support provided.

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good throughout the school. Teachers are knowledgeable in subject areas and encourage all pupils to participate well in lessons, which contribute to pupils' good progress. Pupils enjoy the more active lessons and in particular science, art and ICT. However, this active involvement is not always well catered for in all lessons, and some are dominated by over-long teacher talk. The extra provision made for the more able group of pupils is excellent. This has generated a group of young journalists who regularly produce and sell their newspaper 'The Blues News' and inspired some young poets who have had their poetry published.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding; they very much enjoy school and are confident learners with very high self-esteem. Their behaviour is exemplary and attendance is good. Pupils are happy to share any concerns they may have with staff. The school council makes a positive contribution to early citizenship skills and pupils take pride in the range of responsibilities that they are given, such as 'playground friends'. The care guidance and support offered to pupils is good and the academic tracking of pupils' progress is thorough. However, pupils have insufficient information about the targets that they should be working towards.

The headteacher, ably supported by the senior team, provides good leadership and clear direction to the work of the school. The school self-evaluation is thorough and subject leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects well. Governors provide effective support and challenge to the school. They visit the school on a regular basis which provides them with a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

Staff and resources are deployed effectively and efficiently although some teachers still carry duties that are additional to their teaching responsibilities. The building is used to absolute maximum capacity; new plans are afoot to add much needed classroom space. The school has good capacity to improve still further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of the teaching further so that it ensures pupils are more active in their learning.
- Raise standards further in writing.
- Make more effective use of targets so that pupils understand how they might improve further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

'Expectations are high and my daughter thrives on the challenge', is how one parent describes the school, a sentiment shared by many other parents and carers.

Pupils' achievement is good and improving as pupils make good progress in their lessons. There was a dip in performance in the 2006 national tests but this has been rectified. The school has worked successfully to raise standards. It is tracking pupils' progress very carefully and has good systems for supporting those at risk of underachieving with individual help and booster sessions. Extra support is also provided to help improve boys' writing and setting has been introduced for mathematics. The unvalidated 2007 results achieved by the current Year 6 show that standards in English, mathematics and science have risen. Pupils are now making good progress overall. Pupils do best in mathematics and science, and higher attaining pupils do particularly well. There is very little difference in the achievement of other groups of pupils, such as those from minority ethnic groups or those with learning difficulties. Pupils' achievement in the creative subjects such as art and music is very good. Pupils have good ICT skills and these were demonstrated well during power point presentations in a celebration assembly.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, and they have excellent attitudes towards each other and adults. As one parent said 'the behaviour of the pupils is a credit to the staff'. Their attendance is good, and reflects their positive attitudes. At break and lunchtimes they play safely and well together and take pride in being chosen as 'playground friends'. Pupils reported that they feel very secure from bullying because of the very good supervision. They thoroughly enjoy lessons, and almost all attend thriving lunchtime and after school activities, during the course of the week. The school council flourishes and pupils learn how to effect changes through class representatives and offer sensible recommendations for improvement through the class school council suggestion book. Many subjects also help to prepare pupils for adult life, such as accuracy in handling money. Pupils gain further experience of economic activity by publishing and selling their own excellent newspaper. While pupils understand well what constitutes a healthy diet and its importance, and are provided with imaginative healthy choices of school lunch, they do not always apply this to the food in lunch boxes brought from home.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is very good. They reflect on assembly stories about how people behave in particular circumstances, and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They know how the school expects them to behave, and the consequences of breaking rules. Participation in social and cultural activities, such as music and poetry is excellent. Pupils' self esteem is raised considerably by the sensitive celebration assemblies, which also praise achievements gained outside school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lesson objectives are clear and are shared effectively with pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and persevere well with more difficult tasks. Most lessons are characterised by a range of activities, which ensure pace and help pupils remain on task. Teachers make good use of modern technology such as interactive whiteboards to interest and to motivate pupils. As one girl said, 'the interactive whiteboards make lessons fun, especially when we can come to the front of the class and use it ourselves'. The quality of display in the classrooms also helps to create a very positive learning environment. Although teachers know their pupils well, it is not always clear how this knowledge is used to plan consistently for the different abilities in the group. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by both teachers and support staff and consequently make good progress. In the better lessons teachers guide rather than direct learning. They provide opportunities for pupils to solve problems by themselves or to carry out research in small groups. Although the school has individual targets for every pupil, which enables it to track their progress well, these are not generally shared with the pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which has been enriched by the introduction of French to Years 5 and 6 and by moves to develop cross-curricular links. The creative aspects of the curriculum are given excellent prominence. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed in lessons as are pupils' ICT skills. Music is very good and the excellent school orchestra and choir represent the school successfully in competitions. A real strength of the curriculum, however, is the range and wealth of extra-curricular and extension activities provided, which are outstanding. In every year group pupils have visitors to their lessons such as the local religious leaders; they also undertake trips, for example, to the National Gallery and have the chance to go on two residential visits. All of these opportunities serve to broaden and enrich pupils learning. In addition, there is an extremely good range of after-school clubs which include, at different times in the year, Latin, fencing and a wide range of sporting activities. These are very much valued by pupils as shown by the fact that nearly every child takes up at least one of these opportunities. The provision for the more able pupils is very good, many are becoming good journalists and have had their poems published in anthology called 'The Little Laureates'.

Parental support in school is good. Parents use their own expertise, for example in such diverse activities as, helping pupils with operatic singing and embroidery. Some excellent embroidered covers were being made by pupils for a piece of project work on the tropical rain forest, following a visit to Kew Gardens.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Pupils feel safe from bullying, and through lessons they have an awareness of risks, such as internet 'chat rooms'. Safeguarding procedures are secure. Vulnerable pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good

levels of care, and sensitive guidance and support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. The academic progress of pupils is tracked well, which identifies those who need support or greater challenge. The quality of marking is very good; teachers provide helpful comments which enable pupils to improve their work. In Years 5 and 6, in particular, pupils have begun to undertake some assessment and review of each other's work, which helps them improve their own efforts. However, pupils do not know what National Curriculum levels they are working towards until Year 6, so they miss an opportunity to fully understand the goals that they are working towards. Good and improving links with feeder infant schools ensures a smooth induction of pupils into Year 3. Arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school are effective.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher involves staff in decision-making and has encouraged staff to work effectively as teams across year groups and in pairs in leading English, mathematics and science subjects. The headteacher is ably supported by her senior team and staff contribute well to the development of the school improvement plan. The whole school self-evaluation and that of subject areas is robust and thorough, and action is being taken as a result of the outcomes from its monitoring. For example, in addressing weaknesses in writing. The school has good systems to monitor and support teaching although the focus is more often placed on teaching rather than pupils' learning. The effective academic tracking of pupils ensures that the teachers are able to identify where a pupil's performance dips and target resources appropriately to support them.

Although the last inspection report did not identify any major issues for action, the school has worked successfully on the reported minor points for development.

New staff are inducted into the school very well, which ensures they settle quickly to their new roles. Governors fulfil their duties well and have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They provide a good level of challenge and support.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

19 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandcross School, Reigate, RH2 8HH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and joining you in your lessons and were very pleased to see how much you like school. This is what we found out.

Sandcross is a good school, with some excellent opportunities. Your behaviour is outstanding, you are enthusiastic in class and are learning well because your teachers have high expectations of you. Teachers are good at explaining things and they prepare interesting activities for you. We were particularly impressed with 'The Blues News' and the poetry we saw, including this one written by Jonathan Day, aged 9:

In a dark frost-bitten wood  
Shone a huge ball of fire  
Trees shook off their snow  
Stretched in the blazing sun  
As the snow fell again  
It did battle with the scorching rays  
Small animals peered from  
The cracks in their old decaying trunks  
The trees looked on,  
Emotionless rigid  
Too busy to mind another frost to fire battle.

The staff look after you very well and so you enjoy school and feel safe. The school gives you many exciting things to do outside lessons. We were particularly pleased to see the school orchestra and heard about the wide range of sports in which you participate. You did so well in the assembly we watched, with many achievements to celebrate both in and outside school. Mrs Reid is a good headteacher. She and all the other adults work very hard to help you do as well as you can.

We think that there are some things that would help your school become even better. We have asked the school to encourage you to take a more active part in your learning; to find ways to help you improve your writing and to tell you what your targets are, so that you can judge the progress you are making for yourself.

We wish you luck in the future, especially Year 6 who will soon be moving on to their new secondary schools.

Jennifer Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector