

# Sandridge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117148
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312515
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Wynford-Jones

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Ciceley Scarborough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Weller
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Woodcock Hill Sandridge St Albans Hertfordshire AL4 9EB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 850576
<b>Fax number</b>	01727 837333

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves the village and surrounding area. Attainment on entry varies from year to year because the numbers entering the school are low, but is broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Similarly, the proportions who speak English as an additional language and those who come from minority ethnic groups are also below the national averages. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Many children entering the Reception year have attended other settings because the Nursery only operates on a morning.

The school holds the Investors in People award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. The leadership team is effective in bringing about improvements. Amongst the strengths are the pupils' achievement, the good level of care, guidance and support and effective teaching. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is above average and much improved since the last inspection. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Several pupils said that 'all teachers are friendly and helpful'. One parent wrote, 'The school has a family feel to it. The staff are extremely approachable.'

Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, standards vary from year to year because year groups are small but overall are usually above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make particularly good progress because they receive good and well-targeted support. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing were exceptionally high. In mathematics, they were in line with the national average. This is because some of the more able pupils did not attain the higher levels. At the end of Year 6, standards were exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science, reflecting good progress from an above average starting point. Currently, standards are above expectations in Years 4 and 5 but in Years 2 and 6, they are just above average. However, these pupils are making consistently good progress from their starting points. Although in Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, pupils' attainment in mathematics remains relatively weaker, continuing the five-year pattern.

Lessons are well planned and meet the needs of pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe and consolidate pupils' understanding and they provide good opportunities for pupils to work together. Effective use is made of the electronic whiteboards to enhance teaching. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and work with sustained concentration. Pupils' targets for improvement are clear. Teachers provide exemplary guidance to help the pupils attain their targets in English. However, in other subjects, guidance is not as fully developed.

Teachers ensure the pupils receive a broad and interesting curriculum that stimulates their learning. Good cross-curricular links allow pupils to see the relevance of their learning. The pupils enjoy the theme or topic-based approach and the opportunities provided to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT). A good range of extra-curricular activities and visits enhance the curriculum and promote the pupils' personal development well. Overall, their personal development is good.

The leadership team work together effectively and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school development plan is good, although the measures by which it is to be evaluated are not sufficiently precise. Governance is good. Governors provide a reasonable balance between support and challenge. As a result, the school has good capacity for further improvement and provides good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The children settle quickly into the Nursery and the Reception class because induction procedures are good and staff place significant importance on providing a good level of care. As a result, relationships are good. Children feel safe and develop a positive attitude to learning. They make good progress in the Nursery and satisfactory progress in the Reception class. This is because, in the Nursery, the accommodation, resources, teaching and the curriculum are better

suited to the children's needs. The recently introduced system of joining the two classes for an hour each day is a positive move towards improving provision. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children are working at levels similar to those expected nationally. However, there is a general pattern of below average attainment in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. This is partly due to a lack of precision in the planning and in the identification of the skills the children are expected to learn. Children achieve particularly well in their personal and social development, their communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development. This is because these skills are reinforced throughout the day. Children in the Nursery make effective use of the outdoor area to enhance their knowledge of being healthy, staying safe and for their physical development. However, the lack of a canopy and other resources restricts its use for the development of the children's mathematical and literacy skills. The school has identified the need to develop further the Nursery outdoor area and to provide more access for the children in Reception. This is because the Reception class base does not have a dedicated area outside the classroom.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Reception class to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and to promote their creative development.
- Challenge the more able pupils to attain higher standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

There is an improving trend in the rate of progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with skills broadly similar to those expected nationally. Standards at the end of Year 6 are typically above average, the exception being this year where standards are just above average. This is specific to the year group. These pupils, though, have made good progress from a lower starting point. Pupils enjoy reading and most become confident writers. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are consistently below those in reading and writing. The more able pupils are not attaining the higher levels in mathematics because they are not challenged sufficiently.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and are keen to learn about and celebrate other cultures and ways of life. They particularly enjoy learning about other cultures through their work in art, drama and music. Nearly all the pupils understand the importance of eating a balanced diet and taking part in regular exercise. They want to adopt a healthy life style. Pupils cooperate, work, and play together well but at times, especially in the playground, there is a lack of consideration for others. Pupils understand the importance of helping others to be happy and they are proud of their contribution as members of the school council. They offer suggestions to improve the school and help to raise funds for many charities such as for breast cancer and for animal welfare. Pupils are developing good social and academic skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and manage classes effectively. They maintain the pupils' interest and ensure pupils behave well. Teachers make good use of questioning strategies and teaching is often lively and challenging. Teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum and plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils make good progress. However, in some lessons, the learning outcomes are not sufficiently precise and at times, the pace of the lesson is too slow. In these lessons, the pupils make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 1 are not always sufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants work effectively with groups and individuals helping them to make good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well. The emphasis placed on English and mathematics ensures pupils make good progress in these subjects. Elements of the revised primary curriculum are being successfully piloted by all teachers and the initiative led by subject coordinators. Provision for teaching pupils French in Years 5 and 6 are good. Plans to extend this provision to Years 3 and 4 are appropriate. There is a good two-year rolling programme for covering National Curriculum requirements in the other subjects. Pupils enjoy the theme or topic approach and have good opportunities to learn and apply skills in ICT. Their skills are above average as a result. However, issues with reliability of computer equipment last year did slow pupils' progress for part of the year. There are particular strengths in the art, drama, music and history curriculum. These contribute much to the pupils' cultural development. Visits, visitors and themed events, such as the book days help enrich the curriculum and stimulate interest in learning. A good range of clubs and sporting activities contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pastoral care is strong. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and enjoy school. Health and safety requirements are met. Procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. Pupils know their targets for improvement and receive good academic guidance. There are examples in the English books of exemplary marking. As a result, pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning and in offering suggestions as to how friends could improve their own work. However, this good practice is not yet fully established across the whole school. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well because links with parents and outside agencies are good.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. All staff work together effectively to improve standards and ensure pupils make good progress. The senior leadership team has clear and generally accurate views of the school's strengths and areas for development. The statutory

targets for the end of Year 6 are challenging at Level 4 and Level 5 in English and science and at Level 4 in mathematics. Middle managers undertake their roles effectively and contribute to the school development by producing and monitoring subject action plans. This is leading to higher standards. Governors are fully involved with the school and provide good support and challenge. Discussions in committee meetings are detailed. The outcomes are reported back to the full governing body thus ensuring all governors have a broad view of the school's work.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

1 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandridge Primary School, Sandridge, St Albans AL49EB

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my time at Sandridge and talking to you. I was very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and to see your attendance is above average. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. Throughout the day, you behaved well and demonstrated that you are keen to take responsibility. You generally have a good understanding of healthy living and know about being safe.

Your school provides you with a good education. Your personal development is good and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are generally above those found in most schools. You make good progress in the Nursery and in Years 1 to 6. In the Reception class, you make satisfactory progress overall because you do not attain high enough standards in your knowledge and understanding of the world and in your creative development. By the end of Year 2, some of you could attain higher standards in mathematics. To help you, I have asked your teachers to make certain they concentrate on these areas.

Much of the teaching is good. The teachers make certain you are offered a broad curriculum. They make it even better with the good range of after school clubs, by arranging visits and organising special events. I thought your costumes for the 'book day' were tremendous. It seemed a lot of fun and I am sure you learnt a lot about the different characters. I thought the three witches from Macbeth were really scary.

All the staff look after you well. They want to make certain you are safe and well cared for. They offer you good guidance on how to improve your work, especially in English. If you always work as hard, as when I visited, I am sure you will do really well.

Good luck and best wishes for the future.

David Wynford Jones Lead inspector