

Sandbach Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111037
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337613
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Westington HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Carol Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Treadway
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2008
School address	Crewe Road Sandbach Cheshire CW11 4NS
Telephone number	01270 685222
Fax number	01270 798188
Email address	head@sandbach-pri.cheshire.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Inspection number	337613

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 13 lessons of varying length and observed an assembly, playtimes and lunchtimes. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority and met with parents and carers bringing their children to school. They looked at a range of documentation including policies, pupils' books, the school's records on pupils' progress, assessments of pupils' learning, the school's development plan, the single central record of information held on staff and other safeguarding documentation, and the school's records of looked after children. They also considered 16 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, eight questionnaires from staff and 68 questionnaires from pupils.

- the standards reached and the progress made by all pupils, especially boys and the more able
- the quality of teaching, assessment and academic guidance
- the standards reached in English
- the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Sandbach Primary School is smaller than average. Its pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds although the majority are drawn from the social housing nearby. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are more boys than girls in the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above average as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Inclusion Mark, the Cheshire Healthy Schools and the Eco-Schools awards. The school has been subject to considerable changes in staffing over several years. At the time of this re-inspection, the staffing was at its most stable for some time. Plans to develop a children's centre at the school have been agreed. In its last inspection in 2008, the school was given a notice to improve.

The school offers a breakfast club, managed by an external provider, to pupils and their families. The most recent Ofsted inspection report for this provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

At the time of the last inspection in October 2008 the school was judged to require significant improvement in the standards reached by pupils, the progress they make and the quality of teaching and learning. Standards are now higher and rising: more pupils are making better progress and the quality of teaching and learning is improving, although there is still work to be done to increase rates of progress for all pupils, especially the more able and in English. The quality of pupils' written work has improved but insufficient focus is given to the marking and correction of basic skills. In some instances, for example in science books, the quality of pupils' recorded work does not reflect their knowledge and understanding of concepts and ideas. Weaknesses in written work are hindering further progress for some pupils, especially the more able. The over-reliance on the use of pupils' self-assessment and checking of their work means that not all teachers are aware of how well pupils are doing in lessons. The progress of a minority of boys in reading, particularly in Key Stage 2, is being impaired by the gaps in their letter-sound knowledge.

Pupils' behaviour is good, the result of much work by the school to improve behaviour generally. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils' contribution to the school and the wider community is good. They enjoy the increasing number of opportunities to participate in partnership activities with other schools and take responsibility in and around school. In all other respects, except for attendance which is low overall, pupils' outcomes are satisfactory.

The school's provision to care for, guide and support pupils is good. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable and at risk are well supported and their records are meticulously kept. The school knows its pupils and families well. Statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding are met as are welfare requirements for the youngest children.

Safeguarding records are very well maintained and safeguarding has a high profile in the school and among staff and governors.

The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection as new appointments have been made and the management roles and responsibilities of other staff have been strengthened. A range of management systems, guidelines and higher expectations have been put in place to sharpen the focus on the quality of teaching and strengthen accountability for pupils' progress. This package of improvements is beginning to bear fruit but it is early days and there are still pockets of underachievement in the school. Nevertheless, there is now in place a firmer foundation

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

upon which the school can build further. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further, and increase rates of progress, across the core subjects but especially in English and for the more able pupils by ensuring that:
 - - pupils capable of achieving higher levels are identified and challenged in all lessons
 - - pupils, especially the older pupils, know which levels they are working at and are guided to reach the next levels
 - - the marking of pupils' written work in all subjects is of a high standard and is completed regularly
 - - the issues identified in the marking are used to inform teachers' planning
 - - marking corrects persistent errors of spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar
 - - the use of pupils' self-assessment and peer assessment is monitored
 - - high standards of layout and presentation of work are established
 - - gaps in pupils' letter-sound knowledge are identified quickly and rectified, especially for boys.
- Improve further the attendance of those pupils with the highest levels of absence.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The standards reached by pupils are rising as a result of better quality teaching overall but the rates of progress remain variable. In the lessons observed, pupils' progress was generally stronger in the science and mathematics lessons than in the English lessons. The school's own data show that pupils are currently making faster progress at upper Key Stage 2 and in Reception than elsewhere. Inspection evidence confirms this. Discussion with pupils reveals increasing levels of knowledge, for example in science, but this is not reflected in their books. The school's focus on improving pupils' writing has had a positive impact: pupils know more about different styles of writing and this was reflected in the improved national test results for seven-year-olds and 11-year-olds in 2009. The standards reached were broadly average, overall; an improvement on previous years. However, there is still some work to do to raise standards further. The school has also recently identified reading as an area that requires further development. Observations showed that not all the time devoted to the teaching of reading is used well and there are clear gaps in some pupils' letter-sound knowledge which is impeding their ability to decode unknown words and read fluently. This is particularly the case for some boys, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making satisfactory progress as a result of the targeted help they

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

receive. The school carefully monitors pupils who are potentially vulnerable and/or at risk of underachieving and they make satisfactory progress.

The attendance figure for the last full school year was below the national average; however, the figure for the period September to November 2009 is much improved on the same period in 2008. The school has a number of pupils whose attendance is especially low, including potentially vulnerable pupils. The learning mentor's work has been successful in improving attendance for these pupils.

Pupils make a very effective contribution to the school and local community. They take their responsibilities seriously. For example, there is fierce competition for the jobs which are advertised in the school hall on the 'Job Centre' board and for which formal applications must be made. Many other pupils volunteer to take on extra responsibility around school such as litter picking and carrying out their roles as the school's road safety and recycling officers. Pupils are increasingly knowledgeable about how to lead healthy lives. Some pupils grow a selection of produce which is cooked in the school's kitchen. The results are tried by the majority of pupils even when they are unfamiliar foods such as beetroot muffins. Almost half of the pupils eat a school lunch. There is a good take-up of extra-curricular clubs such as dance, athletics and football.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but variable. There is a stronger profile of good and better teaching than was the case at the time of the last inspection. Systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are now in place and are updated regularly. All teachers use a combination of pupils' self-assessment, peer assessment and some marking by themselves to monitor understanding and progress in lessons. However, there is too much reliance on pupils assessing their own understanding and that of their class mates and not enough rigorous checking by teachers. Consequently, not all teachers know how well pupils are doing in lessons. This causes misunderstandings and misconceptions to persist over time and compounds previous gaps in knowledge. The indiscriminate use of small, individual whiteboards for pupils to write answers on during oral sessions, for example in mathematics lessons, means that teachers too often have no way of knowing which pupils have understood what has been taught.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school recently moved to a thematic approach based on developing pupils' skills which is enabling staff to develop links across subjects. The additional half hour each day devoted to reading activities is not delivering results, mainly because it is not sufficiently focused and well enough planned to drive forward pupils' reading skills and foster their enjoyment of reading and books. For example, in one class, although the groups in the class are named after famous children's authors, none of the pupils the inspector spoke to could identify who the authors were or name any of their books. During the half hour observed in this class, opportunities were missed in abundance to move pupils along at a pace.

Care, guidance and support are real strengths of the school. Its arrangements for safeguarding, child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments are robust and all records are very well maintained. Staff and governors take their roles in these aspects very seriously and fulfil them well. Pupils are well looked after on a day-to-day basis.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The appointment of new senior staff and the stronger focus on the management roles of all other teachers have brought about improvements in behaviour, the quality of teaching and the monitoring of pupils' progress. The headteacher, senior teachers and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

governors know that there is still much to be done but all are determined to see the school move forward. They have not shied away from taking difficult staffing decisions when this has been necessary to secure better teaching and better outcomes for pupils.

The school is developing good community links through its various partnerships and these are beginning to impact on the quality of the curriculum for pupils. The school's work in promoting community cohesion has been recognised nationally and regionally. Governors are knowledgeable and are capable of holding the school to account. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements in respect of equal opportunities and safeguarding. There is still work to be done to improve the performance of more able pupils and boys' proficiency in reading.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and carers. It employs a range of approaches to keep parents and carers informed and to engage them in the work of the school; however, the response is not always as good as the school would wish.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are happy, well cared for and enjoy what they are doing. They are forging good relationships with the adults who care for them and are making satisfactory progress, overall, across a range of measures. On entry to the Nursery, children's level of personal and social development is broadly in line with expectations for children of this age. This is evident in the way that most of them engage in cooperative play. Although the girls' language skills are broadly in line with expectations, the boys' skills are considerably lower. In Reception, the pace of learning

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

picks up. Currently, children are making good progress, especially in aspects of early reading. Across both year groups children are well behaved and are very enthusiastic about their activities. There is an appropriate mix of adult- and child-led activities. Careful monitoring of children's progress takes place and the planning provides for the needs of individual children. Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and welfare requirements are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of the 16 questionnaires which were returned from parents and carers, two contained negative comments about the school's recent focus on higher standards. Inspectors, however, judge that the school is right to sharpen the focus on higher standards for all pupils and to raise expectations. Of the parents and carers inspectors met at the entrance to the school on day 2 of the inspection, most were very supportive of the work of the school but a small number expressed concern about the behaviour of a minority of pupils. Inspectors explored this issue and found the behaviour of pupils to be good. The school is an inclusive school: staff work hard and diligently to support all pupils, including those with greatest need. The inspectors agree with parents and carers though that the needs of the more able pupils must also be taken into account.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sandbach Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 138 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	81	2	13	1	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	69	5	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	50	5	31	2	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	50	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	56	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	56	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	75	2	13	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	63	4	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	69	3	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	44	6	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	50	7	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	63	5	31	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandbach Community Primary School, Sandbach CW11 4NS

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently to see how well you are doing and to check whether the school needs any further help. Thank you so much to all of you who spoke to us and told us about the things that you enjoy doing. We really enjoyed meeting you. I am delighted to tell you that we decided that your school no longer needs extra help. These are the important things we found out about your school.

- You behave well. We did not see any bad behaviour while we were in your school.
- You told us that you feel safe in school. That's good. You understand about bullying and you know what to do if it happens to you.
- You enjoy doing jobs around the school, taking on responsibility and taking part in activities with other schools, fundraising and helping others. We were really impressed by the jobs on offer on the 'Job Centre' board. We would have liked to apply for the Bark Chipping Maintenance Officer post or the Horticultural Vacancy/Plant Waterer post but unfortunately both were filled!
- The adults in the school look after you well and make sure that all important papers are kept up to date.

We think some of you could do even better! We have asked your headteacher and the other adults to make sure that those of you who can do harder work, do so. We have also asked them to help you get to higher standards in your work, but especially in English. We would like them also to help improve the attendance of the small number of you whose attendance is not as high as it should be.

We know that you will continue to work hard and will help the adults when they make the changes needed so that your school can get even better. Thank you again for sharing the two days with us.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Westington

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.