

Sandcross School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125110
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340718
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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	583
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elana Watkins
Headteacher	Judith Constable
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. All classes were observed and inspectors visited 22 lessons, taught by 20 different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing body and the governor responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessment data giving information about pupils' progress and samples of their work. Policies and procedures for safeguarding were checked, together with planning and records of monitoring of teaching and learning. Joint observations and reviews of the learning environment were carried out with senior staff. Conversations took place with some parents and carers before school on the second day. Account was taken of the 233 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 43 questionnaires completed by staff and 106 questionnaires completed by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- effectiveness of measures taken to improve the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- effectiveness of steps taken by the school to improve attainment in writing, particularly boys' writing effectiveness of the school's actions to improve attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Information about the school

Sandcross became a large primary school in January 2009 through the amalgamation of Sandcross Junior School and Orchards Infant School. It operates on two sites with the Early Years Foundation Stage, comprised of a Nursery class and two Reception classes, and two Year 1 and two Year 2 classes being located in nearby Alexander Road. There are four classes in Year 3 and three classes in all year groups from Year 4 to Year 6.¹ Most pupils are of White British heritage and a few are learning English as an additional language. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, autism, dyslexia and physical difficulties. There have been many changes in staffing and governance over recent years. The headteacher joined the school in January 2010.

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

Sandcross provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. After a period of change, which has been managed well, pupils are settled and happy. Links with parents and carers are good and they are pleased with the education the school provides. The recently appointed headteacher has the full support of the school community. A real strength of the school is pupils' excellent behaviour. They are polite, welcoming and enjoy their time at school.

From their starting points, which are below those typically expected, children get off to a satisfactory and improving start in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. Their attainment is improving so that it is closer to the expected level by the end of the Reception Year, except in reading and writing. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and school records show that attainment is on track to be higher than last year, when it was below average. In Key Stage 2, pupils also make satisfactory progress from starting points broadly in line with the national average to reach attainment in English and mathematics in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. As a result, achievement is satisfactory. Initiatives to support young pupils with reading are having a positive impact. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers. Improving writing, particularly boys' writing, has been a school focus over recent years. The impact of this work is beginning to be seen in improved attainment at the end of Year 2 but not yet at the end of Year 6. Opportunities for pupils to write for many purposes and at length are not extensive enough and marking does not always give specific guidance on how they can improve their work. The school expects more pupils to attain average levels in mathematics by the end of Year 2 this year.

' The school's view of its performance tends to be too positive. Good practice in teaching and learning is evident but it is not consistent throughout the school and consequently teaching is satisfactory overall. The needs of all pupils are not met well enough in lessons. Teachers do not always use strategies like 'talking partners' to involve all pupils in learning and sometimes talk too much themselves. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in enrichment. In some classes, written work indicates very little variation in the work set for pupils of different abilities. Capacity for improvement is satisfactory because the school leadership has managed change well and has been successful, for example, in raising attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. However, leaders and managers, including governors, have not been monitoring and evaluating the school's work with sufficient rigour in order to contribute fully to strategic planning and bring about rapid and sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics, especially in writing, so that it is above average by the end of Year 6 by July 2011 by:
 - improving the spoken language and vocabulary of younger children and those at risk of achieving below their age expectations
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and for a wide range of purposes
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of all leaders and managers in order to bring about sustained and rapid improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum so that they are good by:
 - using assessment information to match work more accurately to pupils' needs so that there is sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly in English and mathematics
 - providing helpful feedback, especially in marking, so that pupils know how to improve their work
 - using a range of strategies, like 'talking partners', so that all pupils are fully involved in learning throughout the lesson.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily because they enjoy learning and have good attitudes to their work. They are keen to participate in lessons, especially when given opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and reasoning skills. They work well independently, in pairs and in teams, and respond well to practical activities.' For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed working together as a small group to produce video footage of themselves as presenters of information connected with their topic on Egypt. All groups of pupils, including boys, make satisfactory progress because of the actions taken to improve the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The progress of pupils learning English as an additional language is similar to that of other pupils because the school provides satisfactory support when necessary. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was similar to the national picture in 2009.

' Pupils know they can talk to an adult if they are worried about anything. They are very active in a range of activities, including participating in the Bike It Project. They are knowledgeable about what constitutes a healthy diet and appreciate healthy and tasty school dinners. Pupils contribute well to their own and the wider community by taking on roles like school council members and playground friends, and visiting local residential homes at Christmas time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but pupils' knowledge of the diversity of British society is not well developed. Excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT)

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gives a special opportunity for pupils to learn about the wonder of nature by the establishment of a web cam in a nesting box. Pupils watch the birds build their nest, lay eggs, the birth of the chicks and the mother's care of her offspring. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory because their personal development is good, their basic skills are in line with the national average and their attendance is average.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are very good and pupils learn in calm and harmonious classrooms. Pupils are very positive about their teachers and say that they are helpful and kind. In good lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work together to respond to the challenge to justify their reasons for decisions but this is not consistent in all lessons. A good example was in a lesson on formal and informal letter writing in Year 3. Where time limits are made explicit, lessons move along at a good pace. Younger pupils, in particular, engage very well with story-telling when the teachers gives them opportunities to participate using actions in re-telling stories like Billy Goat Gruff. However, although writing, particularly boys' writing, has been a focus for improvement

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

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for many years and remains so, there is not enough evidence of writing in pupils' books and not enough opportunities for vocabulary development in some lessons, including in mathematics. Assessment information is not used well enough to challenge all pupils to do their best. Marking is inconsistent and so pupils do not get sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

There are meaningful cross-curricular links through history-based topics like Egypt and the Romans but there has been no whole-school curriculum review since the school's amalgamation to ensure no overlap in topics and progression in the learning of skills. Music provision is good with many pupils enjoying learning to play instruments and performing in the orchestra. There are regular opportunities for pupils to sing together, including in the choir, which they enjoy. All pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning French, which contributes satisfactorily to their understanding of other cultures. The provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional health is good and has led to pupils developing good personal skills. Visitors, visits and a range of well-attended clubs contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum.

The school is a caring community, which knows its pupils and their families well. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils settle well into school. Good support for pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour and emotions has a positive impact on their learning. Satisfactory action taken to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is beginning to make a difference, particularly by enabling Year 1 pupils to catch up with their peers in reading. Monitoring of absence is satisfactory and the school contacts parents and carers immediately if any pupil is absent without reason.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has begun to build a clear vision for the school's direction and to share her ambition successfully with the staff. Responsibility for leadership and management is widely shared, although some leaders' roles are underdeveloped, particularly in terms of monitoring and evaluation of provision and outcomes.' The governing body is supportive of the school but governors do not check on the school's performance rigorously enough. Safeguarding is satisfactory because statutory requirements are in place and implemented satisfactorily but there is not enough detailed review of this provision. Links with parents and carers are good and they are

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supportive of their children's learning in many ways. Links with a range of specialist agencies have a satisfactory impact on pupils' achievement. Other worthwhile links with a range of organisations have a positive impact on many curriculum areas. Discrimination is not tolerated and the school is committed to treating all pupils equally. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the progress of different groups of pupils. The school itself is a very cohesive community. It has audited provision for community cohesion satisfactorily and has a draft policy and plan in place to extend its work in this area. Strong links are established at the local level, there is a good link with a school in Kenya, but links with other communities in the United Kingdom are not well established.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers are very positive about the school's arrangements for the admission of their children. Parents and carers made many positive comments, including describing the staff as 'second mummies', and praised the care of their children. Children enter this stage of learning in the Nursery or in the Reception classes. Strong liaison exists with the feeder nurseries to ensure children settle happily. Routines are well established. The school explains well to parents and carers how their children will learn through play and oral and practical activities. Provision in the Nursery is good. In the Reception classes, it is satisfactory and improving. Children have satisfactory opportunities to choose what they would like to do. A good range of indoor resources is available. The outside area is not yet fully developed so that it mirrors the indoor provision. Children are able to move freely between the various areas and their behaviour is good. Adults support learning

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satisfactorily at this time, by encouraging children to develop their curiosity and skills.

' Children's starting points are below those expected for their ages, particularly in their personal, social, emotional and language development. Teaching is satisfactory and children engage well with their learning and make satisfactory progress. A clear focus on learning letters and sounds means that children are catching up satisfactorily in their literacy skills, particularly girls, by the end of the Reception Year, although reading and writing remain relative weaknesses. The school is aware of the need to ensure that boys make better progress and plans topics that appeal to boys like 'Dinosaurs'. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language are supported well so that they make similar progress to their peers.' Adults develop children's language skills satisfactorily through questioning and the modelling of language, and opportunities for children to participate in role-play situations, like selling afternoon tea in the Crab Caf'. All children have useful individual learning journals to record their progress and staff use this information satisfactorily to plan children's learning. Transition arrangements to Year 1 are good because the school ensures that there is continuity in experiences for the children to help them settle well. Leadership and management are satisfactory because, although effective action has been taken to improve provision, the full impact of this work is still to be realised.

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

Almost all parents and carers are positive about the school. The concerns of a few parents and carers relate mainly to how the school communicates with them about their child's progress and how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Most parents and carers were positive about both these aspects in the questionnaires and discussions. Inspectors consider that in both areas, and on their other concerns, the school's actions are satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 233 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 583 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sandcross 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	133	57	95	41	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	139	60	90	39	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	108	46	114	49	9	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	114	49	107	46	8	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	145	62	84	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	101	43	122	52	6	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	110	47	115	49	7	3	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)	102	44	111	48	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	101	43	120	52	3	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	39	117	50	14	6	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	80	34	140	60	4	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	99	42	122	52	3	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	130	56	98	32	2	1	2	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



16 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sandcross School, Reigate RH2 8HH

Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work in books and on display, seeing you in lessons and talking with you. Your school helps you all to make the expected progress in your learning and provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of the things about your school that it does well: "....."

- You have a good understanding of how to stay safe. You know who to talk to if you are worried about anything.
- Your school develops you well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You know how to stay healthy and enjoy a wide range of physical activities.
- You enjoy a curriculum that has some good features. You enjoy the clubs that your school provides.

We have asked your teachers to help you to reach higher standards in English and mathematics by ensuring that you learn at a faster pace in lessons and giving you clearer guidance on how to improve your work, particularly through their marking. We would like you to have more opportunities to write for different purposes and to write at length. We would also like the school to help you to develop your vocabulary, which will help you attain higher standards in English and mathematics. We have asked teachers and governors to check up more often and more thoroughly on how well the school is doing so that it can improve further.

We would like to send you our best wishes that you continue to enjoy school and to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Richmond Lead inspector

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