

Sandy Lane Primary School

Sandy Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 2JG

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a period of significant change both in leadership and teaching staff. Some classes have experienced many changes of teacher. This has adversely affected teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Recently introduced strategies to improve the quality of teaching have not had time to fully develop. Therefore, although teaching and assessment are improving, they are not yet securely good across the whole school.
- The school is now improving, but outcomes are not yet high enough in writing and mathematics.
- Children do not make consistently strong progress during Reception Year. Consequently, some children are not fully prepared for Year 1.
- Changes in management over the past two years led to many new initiatives and procedures being introduced. However, these were not implemented across the whole school, resulting in, until recently, uneven practice.
- Many middle leaders are new to post and not yet holding others to account for pupils' performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly formed leadership team is ambitious to cultivate a school where everyone excels. Clear improvement in teaching and pupils' progress is already evident.
- Governors have supported the school well through a period of change. They use their wide range of experience to challenge and support school leaders to improve the school.
- Parents and staff are supportive of the new leadership team and recognise the positive changes that have been made.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and attend regularly.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is at least consistently good across the school by:
 - using assessment information effectively to tackle underachievement
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge, especially in mathematics
 - ensuring that recent improvements are sustained so that weaknesses do not recur.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - developing the role of leaders who are new in post
 - ensuring that all middle leaders have an equally good understanding of standards and progress across the school, and play a greater part in improving teaching and learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of provision in early years by:
 - making sure that all adults have the highest expectations about what children can achieve
 - ensuring that all adults make effective use of assessments of children's learning, so they can plan activities that challenge them to make progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that the school has provided a good quality of education. The many staffing changes since the last inspection, including at leadership level, have had an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inconsistencies in teaching have had a negative impact on pupils' outcomes. Results of the Year 6 national tests in 2017 show that pupils had not made sufficient progress over time in writing and mathematics.
- Many middle leaders are new to post and, as a result, they have not had time to have a strong influence on their area of responsibility. Subject leaders have developed detailed action plans; however, it is too early to measure their impact.
- In the past, assessment of pupils' progress and attainment has been over generous. Following moderation by the local authority and the introduction of new systems to track progress, a much more accurate system is in place, enabling leaders to hold staff accountable for any underachievement.
- Until recently, many staff had not received effective professional development. The new leadership team is addressing this by introducing appropriate training. It is, however, too early to measure the impact this is having on improving staff performance.
- The new leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has acted swiftly to improve the school. Subsequently, teaching and learning and pupils' progress are already showing rapid improvement.
- The leaders of mathematics and English have a clear understanding of what actions need to be taken to further develop these subjects. Even though they have been in post for only a short period of time, these new leaders have already provided effective support for staff, implemented new schemes of work, and evaluated the quality of teaching across the school.
- The newly appointed pupil premium lead has ensured that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils makes a positive difference to their progress. Pupil premium funding is now being used effectively to provide additional staffing, appropriate interventions and enrichment activities. Consequently, there is evidence that disadvantaged pupils are currently making similar, or better, progress than other pupils across the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. A range of enquiry-based themes linked to history, geography and design technology is enjoyed by the pupils. Inspectors observed pupils fascinated by the differences between modern and older toys, and discussing why they had changed so much over time.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Art, cooking, sign language and drumming are just a few examples of the opportunities pupils have. These clubs are always well attended.
- The additional funding the school receives for physical education and sport is used effectively. Pupils have access to sports clubs, events and competitions involving other

schools in the area. The funding is also used to support the development of staff who work alongside specialist coaches to deliver outdoor games.

- Pupils learn about British values, including the rule of law, democracy and tolerance. They are aware of the origins, customs and cultures of other faiths and beliefs, and understand the similarities and differences between themselves and others. This helps to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has given timely and effective support. It has worked alongside the governing body to ensure that an experienced interim headteacher was appointed prior to the present headteacher starting. This has enabled previous underperformance and weak teaching to be addressed quickly.
- In a short space of time, the new headteacher has won the confidence and support of both parents and staff. 'Since September there is a really positive vibe around the school playground. I feel my children are gaining a good all-round, inclusive education at this school,' is just one of many similar comments made during the inspection. However, a minority of parents feel that communication about their child's progress could be better.

Governance of the school

- Following a review of governance, the governing body has reconstituted with several new members. Governors have a broad and well-balanced range of skills and expertise, which they use well to challenge school leaders to improve the school.
- The governing body has been instrumental in generating the rapid change at the school, following some well-founded concerns. Governors have worked closely with the local authority to support staffing changes. Consequently, it is now a rapidly improving school.
- Governors carefully monitor and review the use of additional funding, both for pupil premium and the physical education and sport grant. They check that these funds have a positive impact on pupils' development and progress.
- The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding. All members of the governing body have undertaken appropriate training. In addition, the governor responsible for safeguarding regularly monitors the school to ensure that its procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully implemented.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because leaders and governors have established a culture in which staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously.
- Staff are vigilant, and pupils are kept safe. All staff receive regular training about safeguarding issues and their understanding of procedures is checked during weekly staff meetings.
- The single central record is compliant and all records regarding safeguarding are up to date.
- Parents and pupils receive useful guidance on how to deal with the dangers of the internet. For example, pupils worked with the local police to discuss their online experiences and gained useful insight into how to be a responsible digital citizen.

Parents attend briefings led by school leaders, which offer hints and tips on keeping their children safe online. Parents and pupils mirror the high levels of knowledge and vigilance shown by staff.

- Parents, pupils and staff all agree that pupils are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too much variability exists in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have strengthened teaching through regular monitoring, targeted training and coaching, but improvements are not fully embedded.
- Because of weak teaching in the past, staff are having to identify gaps in pupils' learning and re-teach certain concepts before being able to move on. This has slowed pupils' progress.
- Some teachers do not have good enough subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics. As a result, they are unable to deepen pupils' understanding by asking challenging questions. There are also inconsistencies in the use of correct mathematical language by staff, which causes confusion for some pupils.
- Recent improvements in the teaching of writing are beginning to improve pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils read challenging and high-quality texts in class. They use these to analyse different methods for writing and mimic the styles of famous authors. While standards are rising, too few pupils currently write at the expected standard for their age.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils are appropriately challenged, and teachers pick up on and respond quickly to their learning needs. For example, in one mathematics lesson, the teacher quickly adapted the teaching to ensure that it helped pupils to improve their reasoning skills.
- In most classes, the needs of pupils of different abilities are met well in English and mathematics. In mathematics, the pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'chilli challenge', which they say enables them to choose work to make them really think.
- Leaders, supported by the governing body, have helped a new team of teachers settle quickly in the school. Expectations of the quality of teaching are high. Leaders are working tirelessly to ensure that teaching is effective throughout the school.
- Until recently, pupils were unaware of how to improve their work or what the next steps of their learning would be. Pupils have welcomed the newly introduced marking and feedback system, describing it as 'awesome' because it helps them understand how well they are doing.
- In the past, assessment in both English and mathematics was inaccurate. A new system has been introduced, enabling much closer tracking of pupils' progress. Indications are that a high proportion of pupils are now making strong progress. This is confirmed by the standard of pupils' work seen during the inspection.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well mannered and friendly, to each other, to adults and to visitors to their school. They hold doors open for adults and are eager to engage visitors in conversation and wish them a good day. There is a welcoming atmosphere around the school and pupils respond quickly to staff requests.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying such as cyber bullying. They say that bullying happened in the past but does not any longer. They assured inspectors that if bullying did happen, it would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as when cycling or when they are using the internet.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and appreciate the support and guidance that adults in school give them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves calmly around the school. They behave well in lessons and any disruption to learning is rare. Pupils listen well to staff and each other.
- The new headteacher introduced a reward system that promotes positive behaviour. This has had an immediate impact with no incidents of poor behaviour being recorded this school year. Pupils and parents believe that behaviour at the school is now very good.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and almost all groups have attendance rates that are close to the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has improved significantly this year. Absence is followed up systematically and good attendance is rewarded.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education. Too few meet the expected standards in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The proportion of Year 6 pupils meeting expectations in mathematics in the tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was below the national average.
- Leaders have addressed historical issues and there is evidence that pupils are catching up quickly. The introduction of a standardised approach to teaching mathematics is supporting improvement, and attainment in mathematics rose slightly in 2017 from previous years. The school's assessment information, as well as evidence in pupils' books and from lessons, shows that current pupils are making strong progress. Year 6 pupils are on track to make much better progress than has previously been the case.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils meeting age-related expectations in reading is also rising. In 2017, it was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of

pupils reaching a high standard in reading also rose, although it remained below the national average.

- In 2017, Year 6 pupils, including the most able, made less progress in writing than their peers nationally. Too few pupils left the school able to write at the expected standard for their age.
- The progress both of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the average for other pupils nationally. Following improvements in 2016, notably in reading, the progress of these groups dipped in 2017. However, recruitment of additional staff and carefully focused interventions are having a marked impact on these pupils. The school's information and evidence from their work show that these pupils are currently making strong progress across the school and the difference in achievement between themselves and other pupils is diminishing.
- In 2016, key stage 1 pupils were performing at least broadly in line in reading and writing and better than other pupils nationally in mathematics. As in all other year groups, progress slowed dramatically during 2017. As a result, the proportion of pupils meeting at least the expected standard fell below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Work sampling and evidence from classroom activities confirm that the present Year 2 pupils are currently making better progress.
- Since 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 had been rising, and by 2016 was above the national average. However, in 2017, the proportion dropped to below that of other pupils nationally.
- In 2016, the proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average. Current data shows that this proportion dropped to below the national average in 2017.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Not enough children reach a good level of development in early years and are not, therefore, fully ready for Year 1. Many children leave Nursery with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, but do not then make consistently good progress through their Reception Year.
- The recently appointed phase leader has an accurate picture of the provision across Nursery and Reception. An action plan has been created to address the identified areas for development. However, there has been too little time for this to have had a positive impact on children's progress.
- The Reception class curriculum provides a broad range of activities for the children. However, these activities are not always demanding enough to have a beneficial effect on children's learning and progress.
- Nursery provision is strong. Staff ensure that activities match the needs of children. They intervene quickly and use skilful questioning to help children progress. For example, staff observing a group of children matching numbers with pictures asked individuals to explain their answers. This helped the children deepen their knowledge and understanding.

- Clear classroom routines and high expectations of behaviour are evident. Children share well together and respond quickly to requests from adults to listen carefully.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. All staff in early years are appropriately qualified and have had paediatric first-aid training.
- Parents told inspectors that their children have started well in early years. They speak positively of the transition into early years, of how staff ensure that their children settle well and that communication with them is good.

School details

Unique reference number	133619
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10032863

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	538
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr Brian Poxon
Headteacher	Mr Neil Davies
Telephone number	01344 423896
Website	www.sandylanebracknell.com
Email address	secretary@sandylanebracknell.com
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable turnover of staff. The headteacher and over three quarters of the teaching staff have left. An interim headteacher joined the school in April 2017 and an interim leadership team was put in place. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2017 and a new leadership team was formed.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the proportion with an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2016. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in early years are taught in one Nursery and two Reception classes. Nursery children attend either the morning or afternoon session.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons across a range of subjects. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at a wide range of documentation, the school's procedures for getting an accurate view of its own performance and pupils' work in books.
- Meetings were held with school staff, members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority, and parents and carers.
- Discussions took place with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with other pupils during lessons and at playtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors took into consideration 40 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account 122 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and 120 responses via free text.

Inspection team

Brian Macdonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Jenner	Ofsted Inspector

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