

Sandhurst Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118282
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312866
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline White HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	173
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Cunningham
Headteacher	Peter Edgesmith
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rye Road Sandhurst Cranbrook TN18 5JE
Telephone number	01580 850288
Fax number	01580 850788

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Inspection number	312866

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

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

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Sandhurst Primary School is smaller than average and serves a rural area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. Pupils' social backgrounds are mixed. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are three pupils with a statement of special educational need; the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above average. A relatively high number of pupils join and leave the school at other than the usual times.

There are 20 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory and improving school rightly takes pride in being a caring and happy place where children come first. Parents appreciate all that it does for their children's care and well-being and are very supportive of the school. Some parents have raised concerns about the public footpath running through the car park that prevents the school from locking the gates to the area. The school shares these concerns and has reported them to the local authority.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel secure and well looked after. Their personal development and well-being are good. This is reflected in the confidence and trust they place in their relationships with each other and staff.

The school has emerged from a testing period of staff changes. The main impact has been felt in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils join the school with typically expected skills. By Year 6 in 2007 standards dropped dramatically to well below average and pupils made inadequate progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The school is aware of the urgent need to improve this. The headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to ensuring pupils achieve well. Standards are rising in Key Stages 1 and 2 with pupils now making satisfactory progress. The quality of provision in the EYFS is good with standards above average.

Satisfactory leadership and management are evident in the recovering standards and the implementation of effective systems to monitor pupils' progress. A robust tracking system ensures teachers know the levels at which pupils are working. When progress is reviewed action is taken if pupils have fallen behind with their work. However, some teachers are still gaining expertise in using information about pupils' learning to increase challenge in lessons. The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school, know its strengths and weaknesses and recognise there is more to do in raising pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate but functions primarily at senior leadership level.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is good practice to learn from, but not all teaching is consistently good enough. The pace and challenge of learning are not high enough in some lessons. Pupils benefit from a satisfactory curriculum that offers a stimulating range of extra activities; some are not sufficiently engaged with learning as there are too few opportunities to develop creativity and understanding independently in lessons. Care, guidance and support are good overall with guidance more effective in some subjects than others. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class gives children a good start to school life because successful arrangements make sure children are familiar with the surroundings and routines before the term starts. Children experience a secure and safe environment where they are valued and respected because welfare, safety and personal development are high priorities. This enhances children's confidence to be independent and try new experiences. The lively and colourful classroom stimulates children's interest in taking part in the good range of activities provided to develop children's learning, both indoors and outside. During self-chosen 'Plan-do-review' sessions, adults make good use of incidental opportunities to extend children's understanding and skills through appropriate interventions. Children enter the Reception class with skills similar to those typically expected. A number of children have speech and language difficulties but most display good

attitudes and so make a successful start to learning. Children make good progress in all areas, except for numbers as labels and for counting. Progress in aspects of literacy is very good. Children move into Year 1 with skill levels similar to or above those expected for their age. Leadership of the EYFS is good because assessment is used well to identify what children need to learn next and to plan activities to ensure they take each step as they are ready.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure all teachers and teaching assistants use assessment information to match learning objectives closely to pupils' needs so that the pace of learning and challenge in lessons is increased.
- Develop self-evaluation at all levels of leadership with a sharp focus on pupils' achievement.
- Intensify pupils' engagement with learning by extending opportunities for creativity and independent learning in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 declined steeply in 2007 as pupils did not make adequate progress. However, the current picture of achievement and standards is far more positive. Unvalidated 2008 data and lesson observations indicate pupils are making satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and standards are recovering. There has been good improvement in all core subjects. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. Good quality learning and development ensure children make good progress in the EYFS to achieve above average standards.

The school cares a great deal about every child. This is now expressed in a robust focus on the achievement of every individual. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and effectively contribute to the happy and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. All pupils understand the code of conduct displayed around the school and are polite and courteous to visitors. Play leaders help pupils to play well together and understand right and wrong.

The school ensures that pupils feel safe and understand key issues such as 'Stranger Danger' and how to stay safe in the home and at school. The worry boxes in each classroom are highly visible and encourage pupils to share how they feel, and pupils know whom to talk to if they have concerns. The school council is an effective voice for all pupils and successfully helps to deliver new ideas such as the quiet area in the playground.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Understanding of different religions and cultures is promoted through visits to places of worship, ministers who visit for assemblies and arts week. Links are developing with international communities through trips such as the Comenius project, enriching pupils' understanding of different traditions. Contribution to the local community is good with events such as the Friendship Club to engage pupils with older members of the local community.

Effective strategies are in place to raise attendance and discourage family holidays during term-time. The Parent Support Advisor is establishing good links with families and helping the school to tackle lateness and absence.

The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through a strong personal, social and health programme and the wide provision of sports and exercise opportunities. The development of information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy and literacy skills to secure future economic well-being is satisfactory with an increasing focus upon embedding ICT in learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching in the EYFS is good because well planned activities that challenge and excite the children are coupled with high expectations.

In good lessons, teachers' expectations are high. Use is made of what pupils have learned before to set work that is challenging and stimulating. Well focused teamwork with teaching assistants helps to reinforce and support learning so that pupils succeed. Teachers evaluate pupils' learning throughout the lesson, revisit key learning points, fill gaps in understanding and enable pupils to take the next learning step as they are ready.

Not all lessons are consistently challenging for pupils. Assessment information is not used well in all lessons to ensure a close match between learning objectives and pupils' needs. This leads to variation of pace and challenge and missed opportunities for pupils to reach for their own highest standard. Some teachers focus too much on their performance rather than tuning in to how well pupils are learning. The quality of marking is improving but good practice is not yet sufficiently shared.

The menu of support available for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been extended; teaching assistants are increasingly adept at tailoring provision to meet needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Quite rightly, the school is developing a more creative curriculum that places a greater emphasis on learning through practical experiences and making links between different subjects. This 'work in progress' should help to intensify pupils' engagement with learning but it is yet to impact strongly on pupils' experiences in lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The introduction of Reading Recovery and the focus on developing basic skills have contributed to recent improvements in standards in English, mathematics, science and competence in using ICT.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the impressive range of after school clubs which cater for interests such as gardening, interactive music and art as well as a full range of sports. Some pupils take advantage of a very welcoming breakfast club to ensure they get off to a good start to the day. Outside school activities are further extended through good links with cluster schools and other local organisations. Visitors and theme weeks enrich the curriculum and help pupils to put their learning into context. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through residential trips and adventurous activities which help to develop self-reliance and teamwork.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel secure in their school because pastoral care is good and staff know and support them well. Good systems exist to ensure that pupils remain safe. The quality of relationships is an important factor in pupils' sense of well-being and belonging.

The school works well in partnership with others to the benefit of pupils, especially those with special needs and talents. A strong liaison with the neighbouring nursery school is developing. All learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported. Academic guidance has strengthened significantly. Most pupils are aware of their learning targets. Older pupils feel that these help them to improve their work. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly. Effective interventions are put in place to help pupils catch up if they fall behind. Information for parents about how well their children are doing is clear and helps them to work in strong partnership with the school to support their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is some very effective leadership of subjects that is not sufficiently shared to ensure the school improves consistently on all fronts. However, teamwork is becoming a strength and systems for promoting improvement are far more robust. The school evaluates itself satisfactorily. Staff and governors are involved in improvement planning which is more focused on raising achievement. Leaders at some levels are still acquiring skills in self-evaluation and expertise in identifying the strategic messages from the day-to-day work of the school. Governance is good. Governors are well known in the school community and meet regularly with staff, pupils and parents. They listen carefully to feedback from all contributors and play an effective part in monitoring the work of the school and influencing its strategic direction.

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

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sandhurst Primary School, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 5JE

Following our visit to your school this week, the inspection team would like to thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite. We enjoyed our visit very much and think that you are right to enjoy your school. We were impressed by your good behaviour and your efforts to learn. The best things about your school are the way in which you are cared for and your personal development. We think these aspects of your school are good. Your school is successful in making itself a place where everyone feels they matter and belong. Many of you take part in the exciting range of extra activities provided and this adds to your enjoyment of school and develops valuable skills that will help you through life. Your school has been through a difficult patch with some staff leaving and new staff joining. These changes affected your work and your test results, but all the signs are that you are making better progress now. Your teachers intend to make sure this good work is kept up. You will help by continuing to try hard. I have recommended that your teachers aim to challenge you more in your lessons and give you more opportunities to be creative and work independently. I have also suggested that all staff should look carefully at how well their actions are helping you to achieve the highest standards possible. We think you are right to appreciate your school and value the relationships that you have with each other. Keep up the focus on learning well in ways that inspire you to want to know even more, and, together, you will continue to improve your school.

With best wishes for the future,

Jacqueline White Her Majesty's Inspector