Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sandridge School

Woodcock Hill, Sandridge, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 9EB

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Sandridge School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is welcome at Sandridge School. Pupils thrive in this inclusive community. The many happy, smiling faces reflect pupils' pride in their school. Expectations are high. Pupils rise to them, so most achieve well. They are eager to learn and to share their learning with others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) learn well alongside their classmates. Consequently, the curriculum prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education.

New pupils settle in quickly, including those joining at different times of the year or at different stages of their learning. In the early years, children respond to clear routines and guidance. Typically, pupils behave sensibly because they understand that this is the right thing to do.

Pupils know that school is a safe place. They are taught how to keep safe, including out in the community and online. Pupils appreciate clubs such as crochet club and sports. They value their leadership responsibilities, for example as house captains and librarians. Older pupils act as 'buddies' for their younger peers. Some pupils say that they would like 'even more' opportunities to contribute to the wider school community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum is ambitious, broad and thoughtfully designed. Learning builds logically on the content previously taught. Programmes are adapted to meet pupils' needs, including for the increasing number of pupils with SEND and those pupils who speak EAL. Most pupils achieve well, including in reading and mathematics. In the early years, children quickly begin to build the basics of early reading, writing and numeracy.

Continuing to improve pupils' capacity to write at length, for different purposes and audiences, is an ongoing priority. Most pupils enjoy writing. This is often reflected in the quality of their work in English. However, implementation of the high expectations of the school's approach to pupils' writing is still embedding in some subjects. Consequently, the quality and depth of pupils' written work are sometimes not as strong as they could be.

Staff check pupils' learning carefully so that any gaps or misconceptions are corrected promptly. Pupils with SEND are supported to learn effectively through well-considered adaptations and interventions. Their individual support plans are thoughtfully implemented and reviewed regularly.

Pupils who speak EAL settle into school seamlessly as they build their spoken and written language skills. Typically, they achieve well from a wide range of prior educational experiences. However, the school is still developing staff expertise to identify the precise support that a few of these pupils need. This means that, occasionally, pupils do not catch up as quickly as they could.

A love of reading is reflected in pupils' enthusiastic response to the school's well-delivered reading curriculum. They delight in the opportunities to read on the school's own refurbished and well-equipped library bus. Parents sometimes join in, too. In the early years, children get involved in the stories and rhymes that adults share with them. Children's pride shines through as they practise their letters and sounds. Older pupils understand the positive difference that regular reading makes to their creative writing. If any pupils need extra help with their reading, they are supported to keep up.

Pupils behave well. They enjoy school, so most pupils attend regularly. When a few pupils do not attend as often as they should, the school steps in quickly so that their attendance improves. Positive relationships flourish in lessons and around school. In the Reception class, children learn and play cooperatively together. They love to share their ideas with each other.

Pupils in all year groups are supported to become confident and resilient learners. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Fundamental British values are woven through the inclusive culture of the school. Pupils speak thoughtfully, for example, about values such as democracy and the importance of respecting individual differences. These values are reflected routinely in pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school.

The cohesive and collaborative school team, including governors, works closely together to secure continuous improvements. The team understands what is working effectively and what needs to change. Staff are proud of their school. They appreciate the thoughtful support for their well-being. Well-used professional development opportunities continue to improve their practice.

Adults are on hand if pupils are worried or vulnerable. Typically, parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching writing is not fully embedded. Occasionally, in subjects beyond English, expectations are too low. This means that the quality of pupils' written work is sometimes not as strong as it could be in communicating effectively for different purposes. The school should ensure that staff model high expectations routinely and provide suitable opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- The school is still developing staff expertise to identify precisely the range of support needed by pupils who speak EAL. Consequently, while most achieve well overall, a few of these pupils do not catch up as quickly as they could. The school should check that all staff are confident to provide opportunities to ensure that all pupils who speak EAL maximise their potential to achieve well.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117148
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345170
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joy Archer
Headteacher	Lisa Roberts
Website	www.sandridge.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers before- and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. She also visited a sample of lessons with the headteacher, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: looked at safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors and the safeguarding governor. She also met with the school's special educational needs coordinator, a wider group of school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were reviewed, including school development plans, behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings and school policies.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took account of the school's own surveys and spoke informally with pupils, staff and parents around the school.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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