

Inspection of a good school: Sandal Castle VA Community Primary School

Barnsley Road, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 6AS

Inspection dates:

16–17 October 2019

Outcome

Sandal Castle VA Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak highly of their teachers and staff. There is a real family feel to the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Many parents who talked to us said that the pastoral care across the school is superb. Pupils are happy. They say that they feel safe and that teachers do all they can to help them learn more each day. Nearly all pupils behave well. They are polite, hold open doors for each other and regularly welcome visitors with a beaming smile or even a handshake!

Staff expectations are high. Pupils achieve highly in reading and writing. In the past, pupils have not done as well in mathematics but this is changing. Pupils are challenged more in their mathematics lessons now.

There is very little bullying. Pupils say that it is simply not allowed in school. They say that teachers take bullying very seriously. As one pupil described, 'There is no messing about when it comes to bullying, it just gets sorted.'

Leaders are committed to creating a school that is rich in the arts and sport. Pupils can attend up to 25 different sports clubs. All pupils learn to play five different musical instruments before the end of Year 6.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum that places reading at the heart of every subject. Staff and pupils have a very clear understanding about how each lesson fits into the bigger picture. Pupils often use their knowledge and understanding from previous years to help them overcome a new learning challenge.

For the last couple of years, Year 6 pupils have made progress in reading that is well above the national average. This is because pupils who need support with reading are spotted swiftly. Staff talk with enthusiasm about children's reading books. They know which books are best for pupils to read. Class libraries are full of interesting books that

excite pupils. Staff encourage pupils to borrow different types of reading material such as comics and non-fiction books. Teachers read aloud to their pupils with energy and enjoyment. Pupils say that this is one of the best parts of their day. One pupil spoke for others by saying that when the teacher reads to the class, it makes her 'feel like she is in the book'. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. They love reading. The learning environment in Reception includes lots of places to read, including a fully made-up bed where children can snuggle and read a favourite book.

At the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' attendance. This continues to be an area of focus for staff. Too many families take extended holidays. This means that pupils miss out on important learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are absent from school more often than other pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. The special educational coordinators in school ensure that all staff know how to support pupils with their learning, especially pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND successfully learn how to work independently. They are fully involved in the life of the school, taking part in sporting fixtures, forest school and games at playtime.

In lessons, pupils listen carefully, follow routines well and enjoy working with a friend. Pupils are excited to raise their hand and volunteer an answer or opinion. There is hardly any low-level disruption.

Staff morale is high. Staff who talked to us were glowing about the help and support they receive from the headteacher and other leaders. Staff say that leaders have a good understanding about when the busy times are. As a result, leaders provide staff with additional time to complete important tasks such as report writing. Staff who are new to the profession welcome the chance to begin their new jobs in June. They say that this helped them to get to know the pupils and complete lots of extra training.

Pupils have a strong understanding about the environment and climate change. They develop empathy and awareness of those less fortunate than themselves and support a wide range of charities. The school's ethos of 'respect, love and care' ensures that pupils think carefully about their actions, what it means to be a Christian and how they can support others.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff with responsibility for pupils' safety do their job well. They help to train staff so that everyone knows what to look out for to ensure that a pupil is free from risk or harm. Leaders and families keep each other informed about how pupils are feeling. This helps to ensure that pupils who may be worried or have a concern receive special care and attention.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and out and about in the community. Leaders invite a wide range of professionals into school so that pupils learn about the risks linked to drugs,

mental health and other issues they may face when growing up.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders continue to focus on pupils' attendance. It is a high priority in the school's improvement plans. However, overall absence and persistent absence are too high. Leaders must ensure that they analyse patterns and trends of persistent absence in the same way that they do for overall absence. This will help leaders identify groups of pupils who do not attend as often as they should, such as pupils who speak English as an additional language. Furthermore, leaders must continue to work closely with families so that parents and carers understand the detrimental impact that extended periods of absence can have on a pupil's learning.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics over time has been average. This is considerably different to pupils' strong progress in reading and writing. Leaders should continue to improve the quality of education so that pupils' achievement in mathematics improves further.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Sandal Castle VA Community Primary School to be good on 23–24 June 2015.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108270
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10088970
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	607
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Donna Richardson
Headteacher	Nichola Russell
Website	www.sandalcastleprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- Children attend full-time early years provision in the Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- We undertook deep dives into the following subjects: Reading, mathematics and PE. This involved a meeting with subject leaders, visits to a sample of lessons in these subjects, listening to pupils read, work scrutiny of books and other kinds of work produced by pupils who were part of classes observed by inspectors, and discussion with teachers and a group of pupils from the lessons observed.
- An inspector observed a member of staff supporting three individual pupils during reading interventions.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers and administrative staff,

and governors.

- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the Diocese of Leeds.
- We scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and with subject leaders.
- We held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- We observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and bullying logs.
- We took into account the 11 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. No pupils or staff completed Ofsted's inspection questionnaire. We considered the school's own information relating to the views of staff and parents.

Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andy Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019