

Inspection of Sandiway Primary School

Weaverham Road, Sandiway, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2ND

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in school. They make friends easily and get on well together. They said that staff are caring and kind. They are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and do their best to help them. Leaders deal with bullying effectively. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards staff and towards each other. They behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a clear understanding of leaders' high expectations, which are clearly laid out in the 'ROCK' behaviour guidance. Pupils can explain the importance of 'Respect, Ownership, Care and Kindness'. They appreciate the way that staff recognise their efforts when they model these values.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are ready and eager to learn. However, until recently, leaders have not provided a curriculum that is sufficiently broad or ambitious for pupils in key stages 1 and 2. Expectations of achievement in many subjects have not been high enough. Over time, some pupils with SEND have not received the support that they need to give them access to all aspects of the curriculum. As a result, some do not achieve as well as they should. Conversely, pupils in the early years achieve well.

Pupils value the varied choice of clubs on offer. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities to develop their musical and sporting talents. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to take on additional leadership responsibilities.

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

Amid the upheaval in leadership and staffing over recent months, governors and trustees have acted with determination to begin to tackle long-standing weaknesses in the quality of education at the school.

In the past, pupils did not experience a broad and balanced curriculum across key stages 1 and 2. School leaders have benefited from the expertise in the academy trust to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, which is now fit for purpose. It is increasingly aspirational for all pupils, including those with SEND. It is beginning to deepen pupils' knowledge of a wider range of national curriculum subjects.

For each subject, leaders have set out the important knowledge that they want pupils to acquire. They have mapped out the order in which new information should be taught. This is beginning to help pupils to make connections to previous learning.

Although the recently revised curriculums set out ambitious aims, in some subjects they are far from being reached. Subject leaders do not routinely check how well teachers are implementing curriculums. This results in some inconsistency across classes and subjects. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and lack the expertise to guide teachers' practice. This hampers teachers in designing learning

effectively. For example, leaders have not trained some teachers in how to check that pupils are learning the curriculum content as intended. Occasionally, teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. This is especially true for some pupils with SEND.

Leaders have recently introduced appropriate systems to ensure that teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND. However, over several years, teachers did not identify these needs sufficiently well. Some staff have not received sufficient training to adapt the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND can follow the same curriculum as their peers.

In the early years, children have a positive start. With a strong emphasis on spoken language and vocabulary, staff design meaningful learning activities that ignite children's interest and imagination. Children are happy, and stimulated by their environment, where they practise what they have been taught with increasing independence. For example, they use their knowledge of phonics well when reading and writing. They learn well and are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' learning to read. There is a well-structured phonics programme. Staff have been trained to teach the programme using consistent routines and strategies. Pupils gain confidence by practising reading with books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Leaders keep a careful check on how well pupils know and remember sounds, and provide extra support for pupils who fall behind. Almost all pupils become fluent and accurate readers by the end of Year 2.

Leaders have recently launched a new approach to promote pupils' love of reading across the school. Most older pupils are confident readers and enjoy talking about their favourite books and authors.

Pupils are articulate and confident. They have a strong understanding of how to stay physically healthy. They understand that they should treat everyone with respect, regardless of differences. Despite this, pupils have too few opportunities to discuss and debate ideas. They lack understanding of important concepts such as democracy. Consequently, their awareness of the wider world is limited.

Trustees and members of the local academy board have been instrumental in turning around the fortunes of the school. Their commitment and expertise have bolstered the school through the recent period of leadership instability. They have developed a clear and suitably ambitious plan to improve the quality of education for pupils.

The recent turmoil at the school has caused the relationship between school leaders and some parents and carers to be strained. Some parents express their deep dissatisfaction with the actions of trustees. However, inspectors found that leaders are taking appropriate actions to improve the school. Conversely, other parents are very positive about improvements they have seen in both communication and provision for pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have strengthened their systems and procedures in response to a safeguarding audit carried out by the local authority.

Leaders ensure that staff receive training so that they remain alert to the signs that might indicate that pupils may be at risk of, or suffering from, harm. The safeguarding team maintains a clear oversight of vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders have ensured that some staff have been trained to provide pastoral support for any pupils who may need it.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn how to stay safe online and learn that consent is one of the features of healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders do not check how well teachers implement curriculums. This means that they are unaware of what is working well and which aspects need to be strengthened. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive training to check the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and to enable them to influence and improve the practice of teachers.
- Teachers have not received sufficient training in adapting their teaching approaches to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND struggle to gain access to the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained well to adapt their approaches to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, so that these pupils can have access to the curriculum with confidence and achieve well.
- Pupils do not receive a well-planned programme for their personal development. This means that they do not develop their understanding of how to contribute as active citizens. Leaders should ensure that pupils have more opportunity to voice their opinions and develop the contribution they make in their school and community.
- Over time, leaders have not checked the quality of the curriculum carefully enough. This means that they have not gained an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and have not taken appropriate actions to address weaknesses in the quality of education for pupils. Leaders should ensure that staff at all levels develop their understanding of the accountability they hold for improving the quality of the curriculum and for setting and meeting clear priorities to improve the school.

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](#)' 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	146131
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10257104
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Emma Zouhbi
Headteacher	Deborah Bertram
Website	www.sandiway.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sandiway Primary School converted to become an academy in October 2019. When its predecessor school, Sandiway Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2011, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Sandiway Primary School is part of the Create Learning Trust.
- There have been several changes to school leadership in recent months. A new SEND coordinator was appointed in the autumn term, and the recently appointed headteacher took up position at the school at the start of the spring term.
- School leaders run a breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with two members of the local academy board, including the chair of the board. Inspectors also spoke with the chief executive officer and the director of education of the Create Learning Trust.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at lunchtime and in breakfast club. They spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviours and safety.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping children safe. They reviewed documentation, checked attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered aspects of several other subjects in the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and considered their views, which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents shared by school leaders and trustees, including the school development plan, external reports and audits, the minutes taken at local academy board meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Lobodzinski

Ofsted Inspector

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