

Inspection of Sandford Hill Primary School

Clayfield Grove, Sandford Hill, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5AQ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 15 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are at the heart of every decision. Everyone works together to support pupils to be 'thoughtful, respectful and hard working'.

The school wants the very best for all pupils. Leaders are continuing to develop the curriculum further, so that pupils experience a rich and exciting learning journey. This supports the school's aim for pupils to grow into responsible, well-rounded citizens of the future.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They rush to hold doors open for staff and visitors. On the playground, they enjoy playing with their friends and taking part in a range of activities, especially cricket. Pupils work hard and, in most instances, listen well and take an interest in their learning.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent. They look forward to the warm welcome they receive at the school gate, as well as the bagels in the classroom. Pupils get along with each other and they appreciate the support they get from the staff. Positive relationships are the bedrock of this school.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of school life. They appreciate the 'family feel' of the school and how they are kept informed about their child's learning and progress.

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

In many subjects, the school has mapped out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn in and across year groups, including in early years. Teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it. As a result, new learning builds on what pupils already know. The school has identified that aspects of writing and the reasoning element of the mathematics curriculum need to be improved. Currently, the school is developing these aspects of the curriculum to improve further how well pupils achieve in these subjects.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge in a range of curriculum areas. They explain new learning clearly and in a logical manner. Teachers model subject-specific language accurately, which pupils are starting to mirror when explaining their own understanding. Additional adults are used well across the school. They provide appropriate support to pupils without doing the work for them. Staff use digital technology well to support the delivery of the curriculum.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Staff teach phonics effectively because they have been well trained. They regularly check on how well pupils are learning new sounds and remembering previously taught sounds. If required, staff give pupils extra help so that they can keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. The school promotes a love of reading through the English and early years curriculums,

regular reading sessions and story times. This is helping to foster a love of reading among pupils.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of school life. Teachers know the pupils well and consider their individual needs when planning lesson activities. Staff are always on hand to step in if a pupil needs extra help. The nurture provision supports pupils with social and emotional needs. The provision helps pupils to manage their feelings and supports their inclusion in lessons and all aspects of school life.

The school's values are lived out by leaders, staff and pupils alike. Pupils say that the values help them to get on with their friends and encourage them to be a better person. The school enriches the curriculum with an impressive range of experiences. These include a variety of trips, an extensive array of after-school clubs and a broad range of visitors. Pupils have a growing understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and how this links to voting in school. However, their knowledge of different faiths and cultures is less developed. Pupils speak confidently about mental health and the importance of regular exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

School leaders, supported by the governors, have secured improvements in the curriculum and various aspects of school life. They are not complacent and constantly strive to improve the quality of education that pupils experience even further.

Staff are proud to work in the school and enjoy coming to work. They value the training they receive and say that this supports them to do their job better. Teachers say that workload is manageable and give examples of how leaders have made decisions to reduce it, such as through the introduction of 'live marking'. Staff say that leaders are considerate of their well-being and they feel genuinely cared for. As a result, staff are motivated to do their job to the best of their ability.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The writing curriculum is not yet fully developed. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could in writing. The school should continue to develop the end-of-unit writing expectations, highlighting the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in each unit of work.
- Mathematical reasoning is not yet embedded across the school. As a result, some pupils are not able to explain their mathematical understanding as well as they

could. The school should further develop the curriculum so that pupils can explain their mathematical knowledge and understanding effectively.

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	124030
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10228573
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	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Austin
Headteacher	David Wardle and Sarah Martin (Co-headteachers)
Website	www.sandfordhill.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2008, under section 5 of the Education and Skills Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a nursery, which admits three-year-olds.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club on the premises. This provision is operated by an external provider.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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 lead inspector met with the two headteachers and with five members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development, and additional funding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, physical education, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Two groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on personal development learning walks around the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments received during the inspection. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray	Ofsted Inspector

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