

Inspection of an outstanding school:

Sandy Hill Academy

Sandy Hill, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 3AT

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

Sandy Hill Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff fully embrace the school motto of 'Aspiring to achieve, determined to succeed'. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve extremely well. Children in Nursery and Reception quickly learn how to behave through carefully crafted routines. High expectations underpin all activities. Pupils rise to these expectations.

Pupils are proud to attend this exceptional school. They demonstrate strong levels of commitment to their education. Pupils flourish in vibrant lessons. They relish the opportunity to excel in their favourite subjects. Pupils learn to celebrate difference. They understand that some pupils may need a slightly different approach, and respect this deeply. The morning welcome and check-in with staff are valued highly. Relationships are very strong.

The behaviour of pupils at this school is excellent. They demonstrate strong levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Good manners are viewed as vitally important. Pupils are protected from bullying and feel safe at school. There is an abundance of opportunities to develop talents and interests. The school values, woven through all activities, teach pupils to be self-motivated and to think deeply. Pupils learn to be aspirational and resilient. They are intensely supportive of each other.

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

Leaders and staff share an ambitious vision to provide pupils with an exceptional education. The curriculum is broad and rich. It is coherent and well sequenced. As a result, pupils' learning builds very well over time. In all subjects, leaders have precisely identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn. Pupils succeed because of the attention to detail and the dedication of the whole school community.

Leaders support staff to develop expertise in the subjects that they teach. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to ensure pupils learn the curriculum effectively. Teachers

skilfully break down learning into small steps. Teachers recap previous learning regularly. This helps pupils remember crucial information. Mathematics teaching is highly effective. Children in the early years develop curiosity and confidence with numbers. Carefully structured activities deepen their understanding of patterns and shapes. A strong focus on developing mental arithmetic helps pupils develop problem-solving skills and mathematical fluency.

Staff use assessment highly effectively. They quickly identify misconceptions or gaps and help pupils keep up with their learning. Leaders expertly identify pupils' additional needs. The most able pupils think deeply about their work. Staff support and inspire all pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, to achieve their very best outcomes.

The teaching of early reading is a significant strength of the school. Reading is at the heart of every classroom. Vibrant displays throughout the school make reading really appealing to all pupils. Children learn to read from the start of Nursery. A plethora of activities are thoughtfully designed to help children practise reading. Expert leaders ensure that highly trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme. Carefully planned intervention lessons help pupils keep up with learning to read. Pupils practise reading books that match the sounds they know. As a result, they quickly become confident and fluent readers. Daily story time is a joy. Staff engage children in the early years with actions and rhymes.

Leaders prioritise the wider development of pupils. Character development is thoughtfully woven through the curriculum. Leaders actively encourage pupils to take on positions of leadership in their class and in the wider school community. Older pupils aspire to be a member of the school parliament. This teaches them about responsibility, citizenship and democracy. From the minute they join the school, pupils think deeply about aspirational careers. Some pupils recently visited a local university to explore potential apprenticeship and degree courses. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) course promotes safety, care, achievement, resilience and friendship. It is thoughtfully planned so that pupils learn age-appropriate knowledge and skills each year. Pupils learn how to maintain healthy friendships and relationships. A key part of the programme teaches pupils to value difference and celebrate diversity.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. Staff are passionate about working here. Many feel a deep sense of moral purpose to provide the best possible education and care for pupils at the school. Staff appreciate the investment leaders and trustees make in their continuing professional development, and the consideration given to their workload and well-being. Trust officers and local governors have an accurate view of the school and provide significant support and challenge to school leaders. Leaders are not complacent. They know the strengths of the school, and strive to improve constantly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in PSHE. Leaders prioritise safety as a significant part of the curriculum. Importantly, pupils learn how to stay safe online as well as taking care of their physical and mental health.

Expert leaders ensure that staff are knowledgeable and receive regular training. Staff are aware of local issues that may affect pupils. They are alert to signs that might indicate that pupils may have problems. Staff know precisely whom to report their concerns to. Leaders record and follow up these concerns diligently. Individual cases are monitored carefully to ensure effective and timely help is sought.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 outstanding in February 2017.

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	136318
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10229076
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Penny Shilston
Headteacher	Bridget Rundle (Head of School)
Website	www.sandyhill.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher, who is in her third year in post.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders of the school, members of staff, pupils and parents.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body. She also held a telephone conversation with the chair of the trustees.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard pupils read.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with staff, pupils and parents to gather their views. They considered 68 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 51 free-text comments. The inspector also took account of 43 responses to the staff survey and 244 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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 2023