

# Inspection of Sandbach School

Crewe Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 3NS

---

Inspection dates:	18 and 19 March 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Burns. This school is a single academy trust, overseen by a board of governors, chaired by Peter Sherratt.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils and students in the sixth form are well supported to settle in quickly at Sandbach School. They understand the school's values. They value the positive relationships that they have with staff.

Pupils are kind to each other. They are polite and respectful. They are proud to support the school's 'anti-bullying, anti-racist and anti-misogynistic' culture. Students in the sixth form act as excellent role models for younger pupils.

Pastoral leaders support pupils to follow the school's behaviour policy. As a result, pupils behave well and learn without distraction. The atmosphere in the school is calm and orderly. Pupils respond positively to the high academic aspirations that the school has for them. Most pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well. Students in the sixth form often achieve exceptionally well.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities that help to prepare pupils for their futures. For example, careers events help to build pupils' aspirations. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, such as sporting activities and performing arts. These help pupils to develop and nurture their talents.

Pupils benefit from a range of leadership roles. The 'SENATE' and house captains organise diverse activities, such as a house darts competition or providing technological support to older people in the community. Many pupils contribute well to the community. Students in the sixth form are exceptionally well prepared for the responsibilities, opportunities and challenges that they may face in the future.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that helps to build pupils' knowledge over time. The school is successfully supporting an increasing number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 to study a suitably broad range of subjects. Most pupils are prepared well to move on to destinations that meet their needs, including further education, apprenticeships, employment or training.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain information and ideas to pupils clearly. In most subjects, teachers design engaging activities that help pupils to practise and apply their learning. Pupils develop a rich body of knowledge across the curriculum.

In the sixth form, students proactively deepen their interest in the subjects they are studying. Students benefit from the passion that their teachers demonstrate. They quickly gain and use a wide range of knowledge to undertake complex tasks extremely well.

Typically, teachers check what pupils know and understand. They use this information to shape future learning. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not routinely check for misconceptions or gaps in learning. As a result, pupils sometimes move on to new learning before they are ready.

The school accurately identifies the additional needs that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have. Staff make effective use of the helpful information that they are given about these pupils. Staff expertly use a range of strategies to adapt the learning for pupils with SEND where needed. Pupils with SEND learn successfully across the curriculum.

The school has prioritised reading. Most pupils read confidently and fluently. However, processes for checking how well pupils read are not as robust as they should be. This means that a small number of pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge do not benefit from the high-quality reading support that the school provides.

Pupils in Years 7 to 11 display positive attitudes to their learning. They follow instructions quickly and engage with the activities that teachers provide for them in lessons. Sixth-form students are exceptionally committed to their studies and conscientious in class. They regularly demonstrate high levels of focus and a desire to develop and hone impressive learning habits.

Staff understand the barriers that affect how regularly a minority of pupils attend school. They work closely with these pupils and their families to help them live up to the school's expectation that pupils should attend school regularly.

The school's programme for pupils' personal development is well designed. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They can recognise the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils develop important life skills through a variety of clubs, such as the Combined Cadet Force. They benefit from a well-thought-out programme of careers education, which raises their awareness of local employment. In particular, students in the sixth form are exceptionally well prepared to make informed decisions about their futures.

The school has developed a culture where everyone is valued and included. Leaders understand what aspects of provision are working well and which could be strengthened further. They ensure that staff at the school have access to high-quality training and support for their well-being. This helps them to carry out their roles in school. Those responsible for governance carry out their statutory duties effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, the assessment strategies that teachers use do not help them to identify accurately what pupils know or can do. This means that some pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. The school should ensure that teachers

systematically check what pupils know so that any gaps in learning can be addressed and rectified.

- The school's systems to identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge are not as refined as they should be. This means that sometimes, pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read do not benefit from the carefully tailored support that they need. The school should ensure that it identifies the reasons why pupils struggle with reading so that they can benefit from well-matched support.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137491
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10337690
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,507
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	266
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Peter Sherratt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Burns
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sandbachschool.org">www.sandbachschool.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a stand-alone academy.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- An inspector met representatives of the local governing body, including the chair.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, physical education and design 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.
- 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents and carers shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the minutes of local governing body meetings, the school's development plan, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Lesley Nixon, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Phil Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Young	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025