

# South Malling CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114509
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378873
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Velecky
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna O'Donoghue
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane Lewes East Sussex BN7 2HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 473016
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 473016
<b>Email address</b>	office@southmallings.e-sussex.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 December 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons taught by nine teachers and held meetings with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, documents, records and questionnaires filled in by pupils, staff and 110 by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does teaching have the quality to lift attainment and promote good achievement?
- How well has the school tackled previous areas of underperformance in mathematics?
- How effectively have leaders and managers coped with a period of rapid change?

## Information about the school

South Malling CofE Primary School has an average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Nine out of 10 pupils are White British; this is above average. Very few pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, the largest group of these pupils has speech, language and communication needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage grew in size this year and now comprises two Reception classes. The school underwent many staff changes in the last two years with numerous temporary appointments, although the situation is now more stable.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

South Malling Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features and is improving. Emerging from a period of high staff turnover and unforeseen budgetary constraints, the school has started to develop and improve. The successful promotion of good teaching has led to pupils making good progress; this is slowly having an impact on broadly average attainment levels, which are beginning to rise. The very effective inclusion of all pupils in every aspect of school life ensures that the achievement and personal development of all groups is good.

Outstanding care, support and guidance ensure pupils' personal development is good. Their very positive behaviour, cheerful outlook and warm relationships are a powerful testament to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show a keen interest in ethical issues, such as ecology, and have a clear set of personal values. The love of music that pervades the school contributes well to their strong spiritual development. For example, as pupils enter assembly, they energetically join in the jolly hymn singing that continues until all are present, providing an uplifting start to proceedings.

Lessons are generally lively and productive. The stimulating curriculum and teachers' enthusiastic delivery keeps interest high. Perceptive questioning of pupils involves all groups in learning and provides useful checks for teachers on pupils' understanding. However, marking is inconsistent and sometimes does not provide enough advice to pupils on how to improve. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress well and quickly adopt good behaviour and learning routines. The outside area is extensive but planning to use this area is imprecise so children do not make the most of it.

Outstanding work has been done by the school to engage with all families, even those that are initially reluctant to be involved. As a result, more parents and carers have become closely aware of their children's progress and are able to contribute themselves. Parents and carers rate the school very highly. One, typical of many, reported, 'We cannot state strongly enough how committed we feel the head and teaching staff are. They are professional yet warm, accessible and approachable.'

Accurate self-evaluation and decisive action, particularly by the headteacher, have enabled the school to move forward well, despite facing numerous barriers to progress, including many staff changes. However, a shifting staffing picture means that middle managers are currently insufficiently empowered to play their part in

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school improvement. Throughout the recent difficulties, the headteacher and governing body have tackled barriers to progress and maintained high ambitions; the school is now more stable and is poised to move forwards. Well-considered plans prioritise well what needs to be done and effective monitoring has led to improvements in key areas like teaching. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- By July 2012, raise achievement to be consistently good or better through further improvements in teaching, particularly promoting greater consistency in marking to increase pupils' awareness of the next steps in their learning.
- By September 2012, consolidate the leadership and management of the school by developing the roles of middle managers, enabling them to participate fully in school development.
- By July 2012, reorganise the Early Years Foundation Stage outside area to ensure children have opportunities to choose stimulating activities and track these choices closely so that each child's curriculum is well balanced.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Attainment across the school is starting to rise with greater staffing stability and improved teaching. The inclusive nature of the school means pupils facing barriers to learning, both personal and educational, quickly receive additional help. This ensures there are no significant variations in attainment between different groups of pupils. A strong focus on mathematics teaching has completely closed the former gap with English. On leaving Year 6, attainment is average and rising. Given their starting points, which have until recently been below expectations, this represents good achievement for all pupils, including those with speech and language difficulties.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is very engaging. They invariably behave well, enjoy lessons and are keen to participate fully. Teachers strongly focus on learning, questioning pupils perceptively to check on and consolidate their progress. Activities are often varied and rattled through at a good pace. A typical example was a brisk, well-focused Key Stage 1 English lesson where pupils were inspired in their efforts to write descriptions of characters through the appearance of teaching assistants in role as Mary and Joseph to answer their questions. Thorough analysis of assessment data identifies pupils in danger of falling behind and the school quickly puts interventions in place to boost their progress, encouraging good equality of opportunity for all and consistent progress.

The school provides a safe environment for pupils who report they feel secure and say there is very little bullying. They have a good grasp of how to be safe in their lives, whether on the internet or the busy local roads. Pupils know the significance of nutritious food, enjoy the newly instituted cooked lunches and usually manage to avoid excessively sugary snacks. They also appreciate the importance of exercise,

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and large numbers take part in the good range of additional sporting opportunities available after the school day. Many pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility around the school. Older pupils routinely look after younger ones, helping with reading and keeping an eye on them at playtimes. The school council is a good forum for pupils’ views and they happily report that their opinions are taken seriously and often acted upon.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils’ needs. Links between subjects permeate teachers’ planning, with writing given a high priority across a number of topics. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well used. For example, pupils used a programme to produce ‘newspaper’ reports and spreadsheets to collate mathematics and science data. Many projects start with a ‘wow’ day such as a Victorian dressing up to start a history themed project and a closing session where pupils worked alongside parents and carers to create Victorian toys to put on display. The wide range of clubs offered, from kit car building to sport and various musical opportunities, are very popular.

Rigorous monitoring of lessons has promoted good practice and teaching has improved from satisfactory at the previous inspection to good. There are numerous strengths. Lessons are well planned to incorporate brief, varied activities that maintain pupils’ interest. Work is set to challenge all levels of ability and teachers’ questioning is frequently probing and stimulates thinking. Lessons are often great

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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fun and ensure pupils are motivated and engaged. They are, in turn, most receptive to teachers’ high expectations. An excellent Key Stage 2 English lesson used a music concert that pupils had taken part in as the basis for extended writing. In the opening moments, the teacher and class agreed that they should have three minutes to write three sentences, so pupils quickly settled to work silently and at rapid pace. Having set such high expectations, these were maintained throughout the lesson with excellent teacher/pupil relationships resulting in outstanding learning outcomes.

While most teaching is good or better, there are some inconsistencies, particularly in the marking of pupils’ work. Teachers’ comments vary in quality and many do not offer precise advice about how to improve. Pupils across the school have targets for improvement in English, although the approach varies between teachers. In mathematics, some groups do not have targets while the school rewrites them to be more useful to parents, carers and pupils.

Closely focused support and excellent attention to personal care enable pupils to make the most of the opportunities the school provides. Work with families, pupils and many outside agencies is deeply embedded so parents, carers and pupils have a high degree of confidence in the school to address any issue that may arise. The strong support provided for the pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable enables them to be well integrated into most school activities and to thrive. Transition of children into the school and older ones to secondary education is well managed and sensitively handled so pupils’, parents’ and carers’ anxiety is minimised.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the governing body, has enabled the school to weather a turbulent period when it faced uncertainties over staffing and resources. These instabilities have been largely resolved and the school is improving; pupils’ achievement is now good. Careful analysis of assessment information has proved an effective way of driving school improvement. For example, staff are now held more closely to account for ‘their’ pupils’ learning, promoting greater consistency of progress across subjects and year groups, and ensuring good equality of opportunity. The senior leadership effectively share their ambition for the school but acknowledge they have not been able to fully develop middle managers’ skills.

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The governing body undertakes regular checks on the school and understands it well. Members show good expertise and have been very supportive of the leadership and management team, for example in facing financial issues arising from mis-information given about the school budget. In consequence, the school provides good value for money. The governing body challenges the school and diligently fulfils its safeguarding duties. Parents, carers and pupils attest that the school is a safe place; safeguarding procedures are fully up-to-date and all requirements are met. Staff are well trained and know how to identify and report concerns.

Communications from school to home are comprehensive and use a wide range of media as well as workshops, drop-in sessions and coffee mornings. Parents and carers discuss key issues such as pupils’ diet and have led important projects, for example winning funding from a local wildlife trust. This successful partnership is developing the school grounds to provide a resource for environmental education. Other partnerships promote staff training by linking with a group of local schools. Close work with a number of groups, including the police, helped to defuse a serious local conflict.

The school is a calm, inclusive community and has developed good local and international links. Liaison with a school in Malawi led to a visit from a teacher from Malawi and a programme to improve ICT in the partner school through raising funds to train technicians. Links with schools in the United Kingdom are, as the school acknowledges, less well developed but plans are in place to build on work started with existing partners.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children move from lower than expected starting points on entry to reach average levels by the time they leave the Reception class; their attainment as they move into Year 1 has improved in recent years. They make good progress in all aspects and the varied experiences they enjoy are notably effective in promoting their knowledge and understanding of the world and their personal development. Children develop independence, learning to cooperate and behave well, and understanding sensible routines, like washing hands before eating snacks and not running around 'in case you bump into someone'.

Adults plan well to cover all the areas of learning. They understand children's needs; this is supported by comprehensive ongoing assessment of their development, a process that parents and carers also participate in. Teaching is good, but sometimes teachers keep children sitting too long on the carpet and their concentration suffers. The outside area is extensive and potentially an excellent resource, but it tends to be cluttered and its use is not planned so all pupils experience the full range of outdoor learning opportunities.

Good teamwork from all adults promotes a secure environment and a deeply caring ethos. Excellent, ongoing links with parents, carers and local pre-school providers ensure that children quickly settle into the setting. Strong ongoing relationships with families draw many parents and carers into deeper involvement with their children's development and learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

A higher-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaires. The overwhelming majority of questionnaires express highly favourable views of the school. All, who answered the question, agree that the school keeps their child safe. Almost all say that teaching is good, that unacceptable behaviour is well dealt with, that the school takes account of their views, that leadership and management are effective, and that they are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few parents and carers report that the school does not meet their child's particular needs and that not enough progress is made. During the inspection, the inspection team found that progress is good and that children's individual needs are fully met.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Malling CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	75	24	22	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	78	23	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	69	63	36	33	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	61	37	34	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	82	75	24	22	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	75	68	32	29	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	63	40	36	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	55	50	37	34	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	73	66	31	28	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	65	37	34	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	65	35	32	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	92	84	17	15	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	85	77	23	21	0	0	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of South Malling CofE Primary School, Lewes BN7 2HS**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school before Christmas. We enjoyed meeting and chatting to you, and would like to congratulate you on your good behaviour.

South Malling is a good school. Good teaching and your keen attitude to learning means you make good progress; your attainment is average. You are excellently cared for, so no one falls behind and those needing extra help receive it. Your personal development is also good and the inspectors thought that your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was outstanding. The way the school links up with your families is also outstanding.

These good things come about because the headteacher, senior staff and members of the governing body run the school well, overcoming any problems that may arise. We are asking the school to focus on making these improvements:

- Raise your attainment by making sure teaching improves even more, especially the marking of your work.
- Leaders and managers should involve all staff more in running the school.
- The outside area in the Reception classes should be organised and used better to help children learn.

All of you can help by maintaining your very positive attitudes to your education. Once again, many thanks for your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan  
Lead inspector

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