

# Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	114489
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378865
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Collard

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	430
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Dyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Dyer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Market Road Battle East Sussex TN33 0HQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 775987
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 775988
<b>Email address</b>	office@battlelangton.e-sussex.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	28–29 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378865



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Collard

Additional inspector

Howard Dodd

Additional inspector

Veronica Young

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty one lessons or parts of lessons were seen taught by 15 teachers or higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs). Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and various other activities, heard pupils read and looked at a wide range of documentation. Questionnaires returned by 155 parents and carers were analysed as well as those from staff and pupils in Key Stage 2.

## Information about the school

This much larger than the average-sized primary school serves both its local community and families from further afield. Since the present school building opened in 1986, numbers have significantly increased so five mobile classrooms have been added to house more classes, the last being in 2011. This year, an extra Reception class has been added bringing the total intake to three forms of entry. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below that found nationally. The school exceeds the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. A children's centre shares the same site but is managed by the local authority and was not part of this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This continues to be a good school. Since the previous inspection, all areas identified for improvement have been addressed. In addition, the school has built upon its strengths and developed teaching, leadership and the environment of the school. It is not yet outstanding because there is still some variability in the quality of teaching and leadership. Nevertheless, the school demonstrates that it has a good capacity to continue to improve.
- Achievement is good and pupils' attainment is above average when they leave. Younger pupils have good reading skills due to their understanding of how to break down words into the sounds. Good proportions of pupils in Year 6 are already attaining the levels expected of them when they leave and a significant proportion are exceeding that marker. Good progress is continuous through all years although there is some slight variability.
- Pupils are taught well by enthusiastic, knowledgeable and competent teachers. Planning for lessons is detailed although on occasions concentrates on what will be taught rather than what will be learnt by pupils. Marking is particularly strong in literacy although somewhat variable in other subjects. While support staff provide valuable interventions, they are not always deployed as effectively as they might be.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy each other's and adults' company. They play and work together well, sharing ideas and helping when there are difficulties. The atmosphere in and around the school is calm and orderly. The school is effective in ensuring pupils are kept safe.
- The experienced headteacher and deputy headteacher along with a supportive governing body provide a strong steer to school improvement. A new leadership structure has begun to have a positive influence on self-evaluation, the professional development of staff and plans for the future. This is helping to improve the quality of the staff's performance management. Nevertheless, this

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is still at an early stage of development so it does not yet provide a clear system of accountability.

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

- Raise the attainment and progress of all pupils to the highest level by:
  - improving the deployment and use of support staff so that their capabilities are fully exploited
  - eliminating any inconsistencies in teaching and identifying the learning opportunities in planning.
  
- Further develop the school's management at all levels to build upon the new leadership structures by:
  - developing further the role of senior and middle leaders so that all pupils' individual needs are identified and supported at an early stage
  - making clear the structure of leadership so that all leaders are accountable for their particular responsibilities.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Pupils, parents and carers rightly feel happy that their children make the progress they should. Pupils benefit from consistency in the quality of teaching through the school and therefore their learning moves on at a good pace. A good start is made in the Reception classes. On entry, children have skills broadly in line with those expected for their ages although increasingly as numbers have grown, there are more children who have additional problems such as in social or learning development. By the time they start Year 1, pupils have above average ability in communication, language, numeracy and social skills. Through Years 1 to 6 this good progress continues. This is confirmed both from the work seen as well as from the school and national data. For example, pupils can articulately respond to questions, some of which are really searching, and can also apply themselves diligently to their written and research work. This is particularly evident when pupils are asked to work independently or in pairs. There is usually a working 'buzz' of excitement and pupils settle quickly to the task in hand, producing both a significant quantity and quality of work. The slight variability in progress comes about when teaching does not lay out such high expectations and so pupils are not fully challenged. This is linked more to individuals than being endemic to any particular group of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress to their peers.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 rapidly develop different skills in reading and are able to decode and sound out letters of words that they do not understand. Consequently, reading skills are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Through the rest of the school, pupils' attainment across a broad range of subjects, including English

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and mathematics, increases as they move up each year. For example, pupils increasingly use a more complicated range of information and communication technology equipment well and so can apply this very appropriately to the projects, research and other work they are doing. Pupils develop an interest in a wide range of topics. In a lesson about marine reserves with older pupils, for example, they showed that they were able to talk competently about how conservation methods help in the natural world. Specialist teachers, including for French, music and physical education, broaden pupils' ability so that they are prepared well for their next stage of education.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching throughout the school has continued to be good since the last inspection, a view endorsed by pupils, parents and carers. There are some examples of excellent teaching and best practice which help inspire others to do as well. A management policy of moving teachers to different classes has meant that every year group has a good range of expertise in different learning styles. Teachers use this flexibility well in lessons by changing activities when pupils lose interest, for example. They also use practical methods to enthuse pupils and are confident to try out new ideas, such as the use of more creative approaches presently being trialled in Year 3. Equally, teachers will alter and adapt their original planning if they feel it is not working. This was seen to good effect in one science lesson where the activity was not clearly understood by the pupils and the teacher set up a different activity to develop their understanding. In the Reception classes, the much better use of the outside classroom and area, an issue at the last inspection, has helped ensure that children have a broadened and active range of experiences across all areas of their learning.

Key features of the good curriculum planning are the way pupils are provided with good opportunities to see connections between subjects and innovative ideas are used to interest and motivate pupils. On occasions, however, it does not identify the intricacies of the learning that will take place for individuals and concentrates on the delivery of the lesson. This inhibits the highest levels of challenge for all pupils. Where intervention takes place, such as for those who have special educational needs, this is generally effective. In some cases teaching assistants are not deployed as well as they could be. For example, in one lesson, these pupils did not have the opportunity to play all the computer learning games that others had and so lost an opportunity to reinforce their learning. Those with particularly strong talents in any area have opportunities to extend their learning through other activities. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted well. In lessons, teachers build strong relationships with their class and promote social interaction, morality and an understanding of each other's similarities and differences. A project for older pupils for instance on the Mexican 'Day of the Dead' was very sensitively handled with the focus used being about the death of old technology rather than of family members.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils behave well, not always perfectly, but usually with care and consideration

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towards others. Inspection evidence confirms that this has long been the case. In lessons, in the playground and when moving around the school there is little need for adults to intervene. Nevertheless, in the pupils' questionnaire a minority indicated that there is some bad behaviour and a very small number of parents' and carers' questionnaires also noted this. There is no disruption in lessons or in other activities. Even though all pupils are clearly aware of the effects of bullying, on just a very few occasions this does happen. In a number of discussions with pupils to follow this up, they said that they feel safe and, when there are disturbances or incidents of bullying, these are generally handled well by adults. The school keeps detailed notes and follows up individual cases effectively. However, there is not enough of a strategic lead on inclusion to ensure that all pupils know and understand the consequences of their actions and to provide a well-developed and wide range of support programmes. Conversely, pupils are extremely well aware of the possibilities of 'stranger danger', cyber-bullying and when walking out on their own. They are happy to discuss their own fears and worries and to share these with adults.

**Leadership and management**

The highly experienced and respected headteacher is ably supported by a strong deputy headteacher. The staff team unanimously agrees that there is a shared vision and strong direction aimed at providing the best for the pupils. This view is also shared by almost all parents and carers. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. There has been a strong emphasis on developing the quality of teaching and the expertise of teachers to raise achievement for all groups of pupils even further. Weaker aspects, though, have been correctly highlighted. For example, the school has rightly identified that the use and deployment of support staff could be more effective. In the Reception classes there are occasions when teachers' time is stretched while in other classes support staff are underused. The professional development of teachers has evolved well. First through teaming teachers with different levels of expertise in year groups, and then by developing phase leaders to monitor, support and evaluate how effective this has been. While senior and middle leaders have distinct roles these are not always understood by all and so line management systems and accountability are unclear.

Effective management changes have resulted in teachers becoming more accountable for the progress their class makes and this is linked well to performance management. The curriculum balances the need for the teaching of basic skills while successfully providing a wide range of opportunities to extend learning across all subjects. Pupils say they enjoy many activities. The good focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to be tolerant and respectful of others.

The competent governing body provides a good level of challenge and questions any forward decisions. Through a training programme, governors have improved their expertise over time and now have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Regular tracking of safeguarding issues is undertaken rigorously and at the time of the inspection all matters pertaining to the vetting of staff were

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fulfilled. The many positive features, along with recognition of what needs improving and how this may be achieved, indicate a school that is rightly confident in its own good capacity to continue to improve in the future.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Battle and Langton Church of England Primary School, Battle TN33 0HQ**

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We very much enjoyed joining you in your lessons and discussing what you do. You will not be surprised to know that we think yours is a good school as so many of you said this was the case. I have included the main points from our report below.

- Throughout the school you make good progress and attain well by the time you leave in Year 6. This prepares you well for the next stage of your education.
- You told us that behaviour is good in the school. We agree and, although not always perfect, you understand the right things to do and get on well with each other most of the time. Perhaps on the few occasions when this does not happen you could make sure that you tell your teachers.
- You think you are taught well and we agree with this too. Your teachers plan exciting activities and try hard to make sure you are always challenged by the work that you are given.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know how to make the school better and have a clear idea of how to go about this. The changes they make are having a positive effect on moving the school forward.

Even in good schools there are things that can help to make the school the best. We have suggested a couple of things. Firstly, we have said that to make you all achieve as well as possible, support staff need to be used as effectively as possible. Secondly, we have asked that the jobs of all leaders needs to be made very clear so that everybody understands what is expected of them.

Finally, we wish you all the best for your future education. Continue trying as hard as you can so that you can take advantage of all the school has to offer.

Yours sincerely

David Collard  
Lead inspector

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