

# Southover CofE Primary

Potters Lane, Lewes, BN7 1JP

**Inspection dates** 26–27 September 2013

|                                |                      |             |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good        | 2        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good        | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good        | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Most children start school with skills that are those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Year 6 reach standards which are above average. This represents good achievement from their starting points.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Adults skilfully question pupils to help them deepen their understanding.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They enjoy school and feel very safe. Parents and carers have a high regard for the way the school cares for their children.
- The school is well led by the headteacher. He has a clear vision for improvement, shared by all leaders and staff. As a result the school, including its teaching and achievement, continues to improve.
- The good level of challenge provided by governors is helping to strengthen the school further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to raise pupils' good achievement further. Not all marking gives pupils clear guidance on the steps they need to take to improve their work.
- Standards in writing, although improving, are not yet as good as those in reading and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers as well as three assemblies. Four lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Short visits were made to observe the teaching of literacy.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. In addition, the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' progress for the previous three years, and pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at the school's checks on how well it is doing and school improvement documentation, planning, assessment information, documentation on the management of teachers' performance, and school policies and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.
- Inspectors took account of 73 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 replies to the staff questionnaire. The views of parents and carers were sought at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

## Inspection team

David Webster, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Rogers

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Southover C of E Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes two single-age Reception classes. Pupils are taught throughout the rest of the school in mixed-age classes.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure teachers provide regular and helpful guidance in marking so that pupils know the steps to take to make their work even better
  - providing time in lessons for pupils to check how well they are doing and to improve their work.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - providing more regular, challenging opportunities for pupils, especially the more able, to apply their writing skills in all subjects
  - raising expectations of presentation and handwriting for younger pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children arrive in the Reception classes with knowledge, understanding and skills typically expected for their age. They enjoy learning and achieve well due to good care and support and good teaching over time.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English and mathematics and there are an increasing number of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics.
- However, progress in writing is not yet as rapid as in mathematics and reading, particularly for the more-able pupils. As a result standards, especially at the higher levels, are lower than those in reading and mathematics. Pupils are not always given enough challenging opportunities to put their writing skills into practice across different subjects, and younger pupils are not always encouraged to improve their presentation and handwriting skills.
- Standards in mathematics have risen since the previous inspection because teaching is of high quality and pupils have been given more problems to solve, which has extended their thinking and helped them to learn more effectively.
- Standards in reading have also risen due to a successful drive to improve teaching. Pupils across the school show a genuine interest and enjoyment in reading. However, standards in the national screening check for phonics (linking letters and sounds) in Year 1 are below the national average. The school is addressing this through additional staff training.
- Teachers' detailed analysis of pupils' abilities, checking of their progress, and provision of well-tailored support all undergird strong progress.
- The small numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because learning tasks and adult support are well suited to their needs.
- In 2012 the very few pupils supported by the pupil premium funding attained lower standards than the other pupils in English and mathematics. Their attainment was below that of their peers by over six terms in English and four terms in mathematics. The school has used this funding well to provide effective additional support through small-group work and one-to-one tuition and school records show the gap in attainment is now being narrowed.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection evidence, including the work in pupils' books, shows that the quality of teaching is typically good, and on occasions it is outstanding.
- Where teaching is good or better, careful matching of activities to pupils' needs and interests ensures pupils are fully involved throughout the lesson. High expectations and strong relationships move learning along at a brisk pace, and effective questioning explores pupils' understanding, corrects their misconceptions, and extends their knowledge. Effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures the right level of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are highly positive and they are keen to do their best.
- In the most successful lessons teachers promote highly effective learning through skilful provision of demanding independent and collaborative work in which all pupils are effectively supported and challenged. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher's challenge to pupils to think through and investigate for themselves the use of brackets in mathematical operations resulted in a thirst for learning and rapid progress. In a Year 5/6 physical education (PE) lesson, led by a primary sport-funded coach, pupils again made rapid progress as they developed their control in football dribbling in response to a variety of demanding, well-paced activities.
- Although teachers mark work regularly, marking does not consistently suggest to pupils how they can improve, and there are not enough opportunities for them to respond to the

improvements which teachers suggest.

- Pupils make good overall progress in writing but it is not as brisk as that in reading and mathematics. This is because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills and expectations of presentation and handwriting for younger pupils are not high enough.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to lessons and are skilful in providing extra specialist help through support programmes carefully matched to pupils' needs. As a result disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are helped to reach their full potential.
- Examination of the work of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage shows that teaching over time provides a wide range of lively and interesting activities both in the outdoor areas and in the classroom, resulting in good progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. In some lessons behaviour is outstanding, with pupils demonstrating a real love of learning. Just occasionally some pupils can be less focused on their learning when activities lack challenge and interest. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate of others. In assembly they celebrate awards and the achievement of others. They welcome the opportunity to take responsibility, for example as house captains and 'playground friends', and in helping children in the Reception classes. They raise funds for a range of charities.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in and outside school, for example in their use of the internet and of local roads. All say that they feel very well looked after by adults, and regard school as a place where they are able to flourish: 'The teachers make you feel more confident with yourself' said one girl.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including name calling and cyber bullying. They told inspectors that bullying was extremely rare in their school, and that if it did occur it would not be tolerated.
- Pupils enjoy their time at school. As a result attendance levels are well above the national average.
- Parents and carers appreciate the individual care and attention shown to their children. The strong pastoral system and effective partnerships with external agencies ensure that there is effective support for pupils with additional social or emotional needs.
- Children in the Reception classes are well supported to become confident learners and settle quickly and happily in their first days in a new environment.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and members of the governing body have a clear vision for the school as a community focused upon developing the whole child and continuously seek to improve the quality of education its pupils receive. They are very well supported by senior leaders and staff and through strong partnership with parents and carers.
- The areas for development identified at the last inspection have been fully tackled. The school has good capacity to move forward in all areas of its work.
- Checks on how well the school is doing are accurate because they are based on detailed, regular and rigorous analysis. The school improvement plan sets out clearly the actions necessary for improvement and how they will be measured.
- Senior leaders robustly check on the quality of teaching across the school, have high expectations of teachers and take effective action through the management of staff performance to improve any area of weakness. This has led to increased consistency in the quality of teaching and has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Staff share good practice and work together

well, and this is supported by an effective programme of ongoing training for governors and support staff.

- Regular checks on pupils' progress give clear information about how well everyone is doing so that staff can quickly identify and support pupils who may be underachieving. The school checks the impact of its support for different groups of pupils and is effective in ensuring they make good progress.
- Provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, as well as for those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, is very well led.
- The curriculum strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enriched by a variety of memorable experiences, including visitors and visits which extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom, for example through a residential experience, a Victorian day, and science week. All, including the most able, benefit from high-quality opportunities in music, drama and sport.
- The local authority, appropriately, provides light touch support for this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is made up of knowledgeable governors who offer a range of professional expertise, support the school well and make regular visits to find out first hand about its life and work. They ask searching questions and hold school leaders to account well. They take full account of data and other regular and detailed information about the progress of pupil groups provided by the headteacher and other leaders. They review data about pupils' achievement and challenge the school to make rapid further improvements. They have a good understanding of how the pupil premium and primary sport funding money is spent and ensure this is used in the best interest of pupils. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and recognise that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and the school's priorities. They check on the link between the achievement of these targets and salary progression. Safeguarding is given a high priority and all statutory requirements are met. Governors ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and that discrimination is not tolerated in school.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School  |                      |  |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

## School details

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 114510      |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | East Sussex |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 427288      |

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

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <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> | 325                              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body               |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Carol Taplin                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Steve Elliott                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 8 November 2010                  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01273 473015                     |
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