

Inspection of a good school: South Malling C of E Primary and Nursery School

Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2HS

Inspection dates:

28–29 January 2020

Outcome

South Malling C of E Primary and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at South Malling. Relationships are a real strength of the school. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for by all adults. Pupils told me that there was no bullying and that adults always help if they have a worry. Many parents wrote about how nurturing and supportive the school is.

Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They show great respect towards each other and towards adults. Staff are very ambitious for every pupil to 'reach for the stars'. They know each pupil as an individual and work hard to help all pupils to learn well. Teachers make their lessons interesting, so that pupils want to learn. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and say they learn a lot in different subjects.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to take on extra responsibilities. They learn about the importance of democracy through elections to become a school councillor, eco-warrior and sports leader. Pupils appreciate the variety of clubs, especially the sport and music activities available. They relish the many opportunities to perform, such as at the summer family celebration event.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for their pupils and are developing a curriculum that is broad and interesting. They have reviewed the way subjects are taught and how pupils increase their understanding of subject vocabulary. For example, in science pupils learn the meaning of key words such as repel, attract, pole and gravity. Plans are in place to ensure that new learning builds on what pupils already know and understand. This can be clearly seen in reading and mathematics lessons. However, leaders acknowledge that not all subject leaders check how well plans are being taught across the school. As a result, in some subjects, teaching is not always building on what pupils already know.

Pupils develop a love of reading. Leaders have ensured that reading is at the centre of the curriculum. Texts for topics are carefully chosen. Teachers read to pupils regularly. Key stage 2 pupils are motivated by challenges to read a certain number of books and enjoy belonging to a book club. Reading skills are taught daily. Pupils are mostly given reading books that are matched well to their ability so that they can practise their skills. The teaching of phonics is generally effective. However, adults' expertise in teaching phonics varies. Leaders know this, and further training is planned to ensure greater consistency.

The development of physical education (PE) over the last three years has been significant. A new curriculum has been developed and, as a result, pupils are keen to participate in PE and represent the school. Leaders are determined that pupils know and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and have created 'change for life' clubs. They have also widened the opportunity for pupils to take part in a variety of sports, for example basketball, cricket and netball.

Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a strong start. They are safe and relationships with adults are secure. The Nursery and Reception teachers work closely together. There is a strong emphasis on the development of early reading and mathematics. Well-planned and interesting activities enable children to develop their skills and understanding. For example, children in the Nursery were using mops and water to develop their early writing. Meanwhile, in the Reception class, children were playing tidlywinks to add two numbers together. Children are busy and settled. They play and learn happily together.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported with their learning. The inclusion leader ensures that there are effective interventions in place. Teachers make sure that work is carefully planned to help pupils succeed. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND achieve well.

Pupils understand and are highly respectful of different cultures and religious beliefs. As one pupil said, 'Treat people how you want to be treated.' The school's values help pupils to know what is right and what is wrong and to develop an understanding of fundamental British values, such as respect and tolerance. Teachers' consistent high expectations of behaviour mean that pupils are focused in lessons and learning is rarely interrupted.

The well-being of staff is important to senior leaders and governors. They ensure that all staff are well supported and use time efficiently. In turn, staff are motivated, and all say they are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe. They complete careful safeguarding checks for staff, governors and volunteers and ensure that all staff receive effective safeguarding training. Leaders keep them updated on any safeguarding issues affecting the school. As a result, staff are alert to signs that something may not be right and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's well-being. Records show that leaders are tenacious in following up concerns

with external bodies. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibility for safeguarding and undertake annual training to keep up-to-date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have access to a broad and interesting curriculum. Some subjects are carefully planned, sequenced and implemented, such as mathematics and reading. However, this is not the case in all subjects. Senior and subject leaders need to ensure that the recently developed well-considered plans in foundation subjects are securely implemented across all classes. This work is underway but needs to intensify.
- Leaders prioritise teaching pupils to read. In order to strengthen the teaching of reading further, leaders need to ensure that all staff, particularly those in early years and key stage 1, have a good understanding of how to teach phonics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged South Malling C of E Primary and Nursery School to be good.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	114509
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10122255
Type of school	Nursery and Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mary Burr
Headteacher	Joanna O'Donoghue
Website	www.southmalling.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 June 2016

Information about this school

- South Malling is an average-sized primary school, with a nursery.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection I met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who is also the inclusion leader. I also met with six governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- I did deep dives in reading, mathematics and science. I visited lessons, spoke to subject leaders, looked at a range of pupils' work, talked with pupils and met with teachers. I heard some pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation, development plans and records of attendance. I also reviewed curriculum plans.
- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing records, training and actions. I looked at the single central record and spoke to the designated safeguarding leaders, pupils and staff.

- I considered the 126 responses made by parents to Ofsted’s Parent View, including 126 free-text responses. Additionally, I took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff. There were 37 responses to Ofsted’s online pupils’ survey.

Inspection team

Becky Greenhalgh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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