

# Southover CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114510
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311628
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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 on roll</b>	
School	323
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carol Taplin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Noel Fadden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Potters Lane Lewes BN7 1JP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 473015
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 487212

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the impact of changes made by school leaders to raise standards for more able pupils in writing and science in Key Stage 1. The inspector looked at teaching and learning and at pupils' behaviour. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Children's standards are generally above what is expected for their age when they start at this larger than average school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The substantive headteacher left the school on a year's secondment in September 2007. The deputy headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher for this period.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Southover's prospectus sets out its vision to be 'a school where everybody feels secure and happy; values each other's contributions and achievements; is inspired to learn and do their best; grows in self-confidence; has the opportunity to achieve their dreams; develops healthy minds and bodies; and enjoys their experience of school life'. It admirably achieves these aims. School leaders have been successful in establishing and maintaining what parents describe as a 'good and supportive environment' that stimulates pupils' enthusiasm and helps them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have a very keen awareness of the need to keep safe, eat healthily and exercise, and take up good opportunities to play active roles in the school and wider community. They speak, for example, with compassion and concern about the campaign to collect discarded spectacles for the poor in Africa. Pupils get on very well with each other, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They express confidence that on the rare occasions that pupils fall out with one another, 'teachers sort it out so it's okay the next day'.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils confirm that teachers 'make learning fun'. Activities in lessons are varied and are often completed against a countdown timer on the interactive whiteboard which ensures everyone works at a brisk pace. Subjects are imaginatively linked together so that, for example, pupils use and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average, with a high proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in the national tests. This means that pupils are prepared very well for the next stage of their education. Although this represents good achievement for pupils of all abilities, as they are making good progress overall, they do not all make such steadily good progress throughout the school. More able pupils, in particular, do not do as well as they should in Years 1 and 2, especially in writing and science. This is because work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities. Sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets constrains writing opportunities for the most able.

The school is led and managed well. Governors have helped ensure a smooth transition for the temporary arrangements. The acting headteacher and leadership team have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School leaders' monitoring has identified that pupils do not do as well in Key Stage 1 as they do in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, and action taken this term illustrates the school's good capacity to improve. More detailed planning has been arranged to better guide science teaching in Years 1 and 2 and to give more opportunities for younger pupils to develop their practical science investigation skills. School leaders' monitoring has been less effective, however, in pinpointing the reasons for and remedying the relative weakness in more able pupils' performance in writing in Key Stage 1.

The leadership team has had notable success in introducing very effective systems for involving pupils in assessing for themselves how well they are learning. Marking too is mostly detailed, so that, as pupils explain, 'it helps us know how to improve our work'. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. What particularly stands out at Southover is how well pupils know and use their individual targets. This contributes significantly to their achievement, especially in the older classes.

Parents are supportive of the school and of their children's education. They, and the pupils, strongly praise the wide range of clubs and other enrichment activities on offer and which enhance the school's good curriculum. Several commented favourably on the improvement in

provision for sports this year and many still refer enthusiastically to last year's Science Week as, as a parent put it, 'an excellent example of how exciting integrated learning can be'.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Parents are very positive about the way that their children have 'settled extremely well'. As one commented, 'I feel very secure knowing how kind and supportive the whole team are with the children'. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and attain standards significantly above the average for their ages. Their personal and social development is particularly strong. This is because staff generally have high expectations of what the children can do. Not all that they do is equally challenging, however. The simple 'cut and paste' exercise that children were given to do, sorting animals that are awake in the day and those awake at night, contrasted starkly with the high level of challenge in the lively discussion children had using a globe to show how day and night is caused by the spinning of the planet as it orbits the sun.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- ensure that more able pupils are consistently set challenging work, particularly in Key Stage 1
- more closely monitor teaching and learning to ensure that pupils of all abilities are making as much progress as they can in lessons.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southover C of E Primary School, Lewes BN7 1JP

Thank you for making me welcome today, and particularly those who helped me on my brief visit. I know that you and your parents are very proud of your school and I think you have every right to be. Southover is a good school and it is well run.

I was impressed with how very well behaved you are, how well you get on with each other and how enthusiastic you are in lessons. I was pleased to see how many hands went up to answer when your teachers asked you questions. You told me how much you enjoy all the interesting activities at the school and I can see that many of you take part in lots of clubs. Staff look after you well and they give you plenty of help so that you know what you need to do to do even better, especially in the older classes. I was impressed to see how many of you knew and made such good use of your individual learning targets.

You do well at Southover. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception classes and standards are above average by the end of Year 6, but you do not all make such steady progress throughout the school. This is because, as some of you told me, you often do similar work, which means that the work is sometimes too easy for some of you. I have asked the school to look at this, to make sure that some of you are given harder written work, especially in Years 1 and 2. I have also asked school leaders to come in to your lessons more to check that you are all doing as well as you could.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Best wishes, Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector