

# Inspection of South Malling CofE Primary and Nursery School

Church Lane, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2HS

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 20 and 21 May 2025                                                 |
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Personal development      | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Early years provision     | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a school where everyone is valued, cared for and respected. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Pupils are kind to each other. They enjoy spending time together, reflecting one of the school's star values of compassion and friendship. The school is ambitious for all pupils to learn well and succeed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same opportunities as their peers. Pupils are proud of their achievements because successes are celebrated. The curriculum is supplemented with culture-rich experiences, such as visits to the theatre and the opera house.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils have positive attitudes. They are taught to understand their emotions and develop strategies to self-regulate and reflect on their behaviour. Pupils try hard to be the best they can. They support their peers to do the same. This results in a calm and purposeful environment, where pupils learn and play well together.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum is broad, progressive and well structured. Knowledge, skills and vocabulary are carefully sequenced to help pupils learn well. Starting in the early years, there is a sharp focus on oracy and vocabulary. Skilled staff support children to communicate confidently. Older pupils are taught to explain their thoughts and understanding through coherent sentences. This enables pupils to be clear and detailed when talking about their learning.

The curriculum for phonics and reading is well established. Teachers are experts in early reading. They are quick to spot pupils who might be falling behind and put support in place to help them when needed. From the early years, children enjoy stories and rhymes. They begin to understand that letters make sounds. Teachers give pupils books that include the sounds that they have been taught in phonics. This helps pupils develop reading fluency and quickly become confident readers.

The writing curriculum is carefully sequenced to build knowledge and skills progressively as pupils move through the school. However, some staff are not yet confident in how to implement the curriculum effectively. This means that, for some pupils, their grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge is not secure.

There is a culture of positive behaviour throughout the school. Staff promote this through a consistent approach that pupils understand. Staff guide pupils to reflect on their actions and understand the impact they have on others. This helps pupils make well-considered choices. As a result, pupils follow school routines and behave well in class and around the school.

The school has appropriate ambition for pupils with SEND. Pupils' individual needs are quickly identified. This helps teachers plan effective adaptations in lessons for these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school places importance on pupils attending school regularly and works diligently to improve pupils' attendance. For many pupils, this work has been successful. However, there is a minority of vulnerable pupils who are still absent too often. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

The school provides a strong personal development offer. Pupils are taught to be responsible and respectful citizens through the work they undertake in their community and beyond. For example, pupils identified the places in Lewes that the community can walk in clean air through the 'Dodge the Smog' project. Pupils are proud to take on leadership responsibilities, including representing the school. For example, the school's 'eco-warriors' presented their work on 'bug boxes' to other schools at a local conference.

Governors are engaged in school life. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff enjoy working at this friendly school. They appreciate that leaders and governors are mindful of their workload and well-being. Staff feel supported by the school and valued for their contributions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In places, the writing curriculum is not implemented as well as it should be. This means that some pupils do not have a secure understanding of grammar, punctuation or spelling. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge that they need to teach writing confidently and expertly so that more pupils achieve and exceed the expected standards in writing.
- Some pupils who are disadvantaged and some of those with SEND do not attend school as much as they should. This means that they miss important learning and other valuable aspects of school life. The school should ensure that it strengthens its approach to improving attendance of these vulnerable pupils.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

|                                            |                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 114509                                                            |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | East Sussex                                                       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10379751                                                          |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                           |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled                                              |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11                                                           |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 238                                                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Mandi Ramshaw                                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Charlotte Roberts                                                 |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.southmalling.com">www.southmalling.com</a>    |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- South Malling CofE Primary and Nursery School is a voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Chichester. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2025.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum and spoke to pupils. Inspectors sampled pupils' writing.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss aspects of the school's work, including behaviour, attendance, personal development and provision for pupils with SEND.
- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors considered pupils' views during meetings with them and talked to pupils when visiting lessons and at other times of day, such as lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke with some parents on the morning of the first day of the inspection.
- Staff's views were considered during discussions with them and through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

## Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Hilditch

Ofsted Inspector

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