

# Southmead School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113139
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	362826
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Edwards HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	253
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jasmine Chesters
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Gillett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Wrafton Road Braunton Devon EX33 2BU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 812448
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. When Southmead School was inspected in June 2009 it was judged to require special measures. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and 11 teachers. They met with governor representatives, members of staff, parent representatives, young leader representatives and pupils. Inspectors also looked at a range of school policies, improvement plans, records of pupils' achievements, their progress, and the work in pupils' books.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well teaching supports pupils to engage with their learning and make good progress towards reaching their challenging targets.
- How well assessment information is used by the school to accelerate the progress groups of pupils as well as individuals make in their learning.
- How well the governing body is providing strategic direction and challenge to the school.
- How well does the evidence provided by the leadership of the school confirm the school's continuing capacity to improve.
- The support provided by the school for newly appointed teachers.

## Information about the school

Southmead is slightly larger than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are from a White British background, with only a small number from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above that found nationally. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal starting times is above average. The school has developed a close association with a nearby Royal Marines Base (RMB) in the last year. Just under half of all pupils come from this base.

At the last inspection, the school was deemed to require special measures because of inadequacies related to declining achievement in English and mathematics, weak self-evaluation and failing to demonstrate an adequate capacity for improvement.

**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

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Southmead is now a good and improving school. With the full support of the governing body, the headteacher has worked with great care and determination to bring about the necessary improvements that were identified at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher's high expectations for pupils, her willingness to accept advice and support, and her determination to bring about change have inspired confidence and trust from leaders and managers, at all levels, as well as from parents, carers and the wider community. As a result, all staff work effectively as a team in supporting pupils' well-being and development.

The care and support provided by the school to promote pupils' learning, personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are known as individuals and speak confidently of the school's ability to support and guide them effectively in their learning and when they have concerns. The school has developed strong partnerships with other organisations and services in order to overcome barriers to learning encountered by some pupils, and to enhance provision to further underpin pupils' good achievement and excellent pastoral care. The school also enjoys highly positive relations with parents, carers and the wider community. Those parents who spoke with inspectors during their visit say communication systems are very effective throughout the school. This is because when parents do have concerns these are dealt with swiftly and in confidence. Information about pupils' learning and their progress is provided regularly.

Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. In such lessons pupils show enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning as they develop appropriate skills and habits to become independent learners. Often the youngest and oldest pupils demonstrate outstanding progress because lessons are planned to match pupils' interests. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national average overall, although it is stronger in English than in mathematics. This is partly because reading and writing have been a more recent focus in the school. Pupils make good progress in their learning at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and achievement is good by the time they complete Key Stage 2. However, the quality of teaching does vary, especially in the middle years, where teaching sometimes misses opportunities to involve pupils actively in lessons. As a result, some pupils fail to fully engage with learning and their progress slows.

Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is nearly always good because of the positive relationships established between adults. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and enjoy lessons, especially when there are practical activities to complete. The school has excellent quality assurance and safeguarding systems in place that comply with government requirements and these are very carefully implemented and reviewed regularly.

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A well-planned curriculum ensures all pupils benefit from stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences as well as good opportunities for pupils to reflect on and contribute to their learning. Their contribution to the local community is a particular strength of the provision. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination is excellent. Regular assessments of pupils' progress are used to hold teachers accountable. Targeted intervention programmes are carefully planned and provided for those pupils who need the most help. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and focused on improving provision as well as improving pupils' outcomes. As a result, the school is demonstrating a good capacity for further improvement because governors and senior leaders possess an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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

- Continue to accelerate the progress all pupils make in mathematics so that more pupils achieve in line with national expectations and above.
- Match all teaching to the best in the school by:
  - sharing best practice amongst teachers
  - focusing clearly on the interests of all pupils
  - providing precisely for what pupils need to learn throughout lessons.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

From often low starting points pupils are now reaching standards that are in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. The rigorous analysis of pupils' test results helps teachers to identify more accurately pupils' individual learning needs. A strong sense of community, founded on good relations between pupils and adults, means pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good, especially when stimulating activities allow them to play an active part in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, relative to their starting points, because the assessment of their needs is accurately carried out and activities are well organised to match their individual learning needs.

Pupils have a strong part to play in the development of the school. They speak with knowledge, confidence and pride about their school. Pupils say they feel very safe and happy in school. They know who to talk to if they have concerns. Incidents of bullying are infrequent and unacceptable behaviour, on the rare occasions it does occur, is dealt with swiftly and appropriately. As a result of the introduction of the 'Young Leaders' initiative, pupils have a strong voice in decision making relating to the environment and health issues and contribute very well to wider community issues. Through surveys in school and within the local community pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to contribute to the work of the school, their community and apply their social and literacy skills in a real-world context. Pupils' attainment has steadily improved throughout the school in English and mathematics, with pupils' reading skills being particularly strong. The 2010 end-of-year test results demonstrate pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 to be in line with the national average.

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The school is rigorous in the monitoring of pupils' attendance and does all that it reasonably can to ensure pupils attend school regularly. However, circumstances often beyond its control mean that attendance is satisfactory. Systems to track pupils' progress are monitored rigorously and provide leaders with accurate information that helps to identify pupils at risk of underachievement.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

All pupils and their families are made to feel part of the school community and encouraged to contribute in any way they can. Excellent attention is given by all adults to the care, guidance and support of pupils. Academic guidance to ensure pupils make good progress in their work is exemplary, particularly for the youngest children and oldest pupils. This is because teaching is focused on raising pupils' achievements through well-targeted learning opportunities that engage and stimulate pupils to learn. Teaching assistants are well trained to work closely with small groups or individuals. They are effectively managed and play a significant role in the outstanding support and assessment of pupils' learning. The quality of the marking of pupils' books is exemplary for older pupils. This provides pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on, and respond to, the written comments provided by teachers on their work as well as those of their peers.

In the best lessons, teachers' very good subject knowledge is used to effectively question pupils, extend their thinking and develop their independence. They plan lessons that

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stimulate as well as challenge and provide for the learning needs of all abilities. This was particularly the case in a Key Stage 2 lesson where pupils spoke confidently about how prompts displayed around the classroom helped them to include dialogue, actions and description in their writing and which then helped them to improve the standard of their written work. The good use of marking to guide pupils and help them understand how they could improve their work further is a particularly strong feature and makes a significant contribution to why pupils are making good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.

Occasionally in some lessons, where teaching is less strong, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher talk and planned activities fail to interest or engage all pupils, so that the behaviour of some interrupts the pace of learning for the rest. At these times, pupils' progress and their learning slow.

Curriculum provision is good and strengthened by the use of trips, visitors, role play and independent research opportunities. The indoor learning environment is enhanced with colourful displays that reinforce and celebrate the school's values and are used effectively to display pupils' learning and the breadth of their involvement with local, national and international communities. Through the strong links with the nearby RMB base, pupils are frequently provided with a range of well-constructed activities that are successfully being used to develop an understanding of the humanitarian work of the armed forces as well as pupils' self-esteem.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked determinedly, with the close support of the governing body, to empower her workforce and build a school that has the achievement and welfare of pupils firmly at its centre. Searching self-evaluation, combined with consistently high expectations of pupils and each other, has resulted in rapid improvements in outcomes for pupils. Through well-focused training and support middle leaders have grown in confidence and developed a very clear vision for the school's continuing improvement. Leaders act upon advice and follow up actions swiftly which is why outcomes for pupils, particularly in English and mathematics, have improved. All staff are highly motivated and work collaboratively to provide an inclusive learning environment where pupils can learn and thrive. All staff are appropriately trained and kept regularly up to date in safeguarding pupils and are vigilant in the keeping of records.

A robust system for monitoring pupils' learning and tracking their progress provides essential information to leaders and managers about the school's effectiveness. Leaders'

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highly developed analytical skills are used to devise plans and target support for pupils, which is also why the school's work in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is very effective. Pupils' progress and assessment information are being used to rapidly increase academic and personal outcomes for pupils. This is shared regularly with staff and governors. The governing body has undergone significant restructuring in the past two years and is now fully involved in evaluating the school's work. Governors deploy their skills and abilities to good effect and are rigorous in ensuring all pupils and staff are safe. Through regular training the governing body is providing confident strategic leadership that is holding the school effectively to account.

The school does much to support good community cohesion. For example, the building of a community cafe on the school premises last summer now provides an excellent opportunity for families to network and host a wide range of activities within the community. Communication with parents, carers and stakeholders has continued to strengthen and underpins the excellent care, guidance and support provided to all pupils and their families. The school provides good value for money and is demonstrating a good capacity to improve even further.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good, and often outstanding, progress across all the areas of learning because teaching is very well matched to the interests and learning needs of individual children. Trusting and supportive relationships are quickly established with children and their parents and carers and often well in advance of starting school. As a result, children settle quickly, are happy in school and develop good language skills and positive attitudes to learning. The carefully planned ongoing assessment of children's learning results in a thorough understanding of each child's abilities and their next steps in learning.

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Consequently, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has gained the full confidence of parents and carers.

The outstanding progress and good outcomes seen particularly in children's communication, language and literacy and emotional development for 2010 are a result of the outstanding provision. The learning environment, both inside and out has been carefully designed to stimulate children's desire to learn. Every opportunity is taken to engage, support and extend children's learning through play. For example, following time spent with their teacher learning letters and sounds, children were eager to practise reading words they had 'found' independently outside on a bench, while two boys inside showed sustained concentration practising writing numbers and letters.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has shown enormous enthusiasm and commitment to his role. He has worked very closely with senior colleagues, under the direction of the headteacher, to create an outstanding learning environment for children. He demonstrates a secure knowledge for how children learn, is reflective towards his work and highly ambitious for further improvements. The children's welfare is a top priority. Robust safeguarding ensures all policies and risk assessments are in place. All staff are confident in working with children because of the high-quality training and support they receive on a regular basis.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The inspection began as a monitoring visit and was converted into a section 5 inspection because the school has made good progress in the past year and has been removed from special measures. Consequently, it was not possible to send an inspection questionnaire to parents to canvass their views about the school. However, the inspection team has extensively sought parents' views around the school and spoke to 24 parents during the course of the inspection. Findings confirm that parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the school's work and the progress that has been made in the past year. For example, the approachable attitude of the administrative staff and headteacher to make herself available, along with the recent building of the community caf?? as a place to meet other parents, has been welcomed.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and 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 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



18 March 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of Southmead School, Braunton, EX33 2BU**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently.

We were impressed with your good behaviour and your enthusiasm to learn in lessons, especially when you had practical activities to do. I have seen many good improvements in your school since I made my first visit less than two years ago and have decided that Southmead is now a good school. This means your teachers and all those who work in the school support you in your learning effectively. You now make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in your work so that by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6 your achievement is good, particularly in reading and writing. The support and guidance you enjoy are exceptional because your headteacher, staff and governors do all they can to make sure you are able to learn and provide you with enjoyable learning experiences. Many of you have parents who have to go away for long periods of time because of the work they do. Your school is very aware of how upsetting this can be and is working hard to ensure you have lots of opportunities to enjoy coming to school as much as you can.

I enjoyed talking to some of your 'Young Leaders', who told me the school is a safe place and that you learn about staying healthy and take regular exercise and try to eat a healthy diet. We noticed that you work well together in lessons and have plenty of opportunities to go out into the local community to learn. You say the marking of your written work is very helpful which enables you to improve even further.

We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all your teachers share with one another how they teach their best lessons so that you can all enjoy exciting learning opportunities. Also, we would like you to make even better progress in mathematics so that your skills in this area are at least equal to your reading and writing skills.

You can help by making sure you always try your best in lessons.

Finally, I hope the choir's work with the BBC goes brilliantly well. I will look out for you when you are on television in the autumn! I wish you well for your futures.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

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