

# Seaham Trinity Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134657
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	381709
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Wilkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ray Bushby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Princess Road Seaham SR7 7SP
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Clive Petts  
Karen Holmes  
Deborah Bailey

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 14 class teachers. They also observed a range of intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the designated School Improvement Adviser. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, behavioural records and safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires, returned by 182 parents and carers, 84 pupils and 25 staff.

## Information about the school

Seaham Trinity is a much larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a very few at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. Close to double the average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the average, with a few with a statement of special educational needs. There is a much higher than usual proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school meets the current floor standard. The school hosts Place2Be, a national school-based counselling service, dedicated to improving the emotional well-being of children and their families. The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club. Since the school was established a little over three years ago, staffing is now more settled after the challenges presented by the merger of three schools.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- Seaham Trinity is a satisfactory school which has made a number of important improvements since the previous inspection. The high quality of care and the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promote their good behaviour and occasionally exemplary behaviour of older pupils.
- Overall, progress is satisfactory, but it does vary in different groups, subjects and for boys, as a result of uneven challenge and pace in their lessons. Year 6 pupils thrive in their English lessons when progress is rapid and sustained. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those who are potentially vulnerable and the very few learning English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress as a result of the quality care and support that they receive.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, although some imaginative and inspiring teaching was observed which continuously probed pupils' thinking and understanding. In other lessons in Years 1 to 5, the pace of learning slows, because the work is too hard or too easy for some. Insufficient use is made of written feedback in books to ensure pupils know what to do next to improve.
- Pupils are keen to learn, enjoy school and feel safe in the warm, friendly atmosphere. This is reflected in their above average attendance. The good curriculum provides a developing range of learning experiences and provides well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to recognise risk and danger and keep themselves safe. All parents and carers value how very effectively their children are kept safe and happy.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The positive leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, ensures that a cohesive staff share the same vision and ambition to continually improve. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure disruptions in staffing have had the minimum effect on pupils' learning and development.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching for all groups of pupils in Years 1 to 5, to accelerate progress so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring that in all lessons, work is adapted to match more closely the needs and interests of every pupil, especially boys, to increase the challenge and pace of learning
  - building on the existing imaginative practice that exists in the school to increase the amount of good teaching
  - sharpening the rigour of self-evaluation systems to ensure that action taken to improve teaching and learning is having the intended impact, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - making certain teachers' written feedback in pupils' books provides them with well-defined steps on how to improve.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Essential improvements, particularly over the past year, are leading to improvements in progress and attainment, especially in English. Currently achievement is satisfactory, but improving. Careful checking of pupils' progress has accurately identified priorities for improvement, for example, practising early letter and sound relationships and improving writing. In Year 6 English, lively and imaginative approaches ensure that progress is rapid and sustained. Good teaching in Year 6 ensures that the gap between attainment in English and mathematics closes successfully. The same is true for boys' overall attainment which rises and becomes much closer to the national average for boys. Despite these improvements, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, because the challenge and pace of learning is too variable across Years 1 to 5.

In lessons, pupils happily share their ideas and opinions with partners or with the whole class. Young children in the Nursery and Reception classes willingly explain what they are doing, although there are times when they do not always listen carefully enough. Concerted action to ensure that curriculum experiences are richer and more memorable is stimulating the imagination of pupils. For example, a group of older pupils were totally absorbed describing the suspense as the young graffiti artist ran off in the dark to avoid arrest by the police. Children settle quickly and happily on arrival in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While children make satisfactory progress from starting points often well below those typical for their age, their skills are not developed quickly enough to ensure they reach national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Suitable opportunities are provided for children to develop early reading and writing, but these are not practised regularly or systematically enough to enable rapid progression. Adult-led activities do not always promote sufficient interest and opportunities are missed to develop independence.

By the end of Year 6, attainment in English is securely average and broadly average in mathematics. Although cohorts vary, this represents rapid and sustained progress in English during Year 6, with quickening progress in mathematics. This is the result of imaginative lesson planning, high expectations of what can be achieved and accurate assessment of

prior learning. Attainment is rising by the end of Year 2. Current attainment in mathematics is improving, with the gap between mathematics and English predicted to close by the end of current Year 6. The gap between boys and girls attainment is also closing. Although rates of progress are accelerating as pupils move through the school, inconsistencies remain and improvements have not yet been sustained over time. Attainment in reading by the age of six and at the end of Year 2 is below and sometimes well-below expectations. The teaching of sound and letter relationships and making sense of words is not systematic enough. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is average and considerable progress has been made in capturing the interests of young readers and successfully fostering a school reading culture. Pupils relish opportunities to read aloud, research evidence and enjoy literature.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, because their needs are identified early and appropriate programmes assembled to meet their needs. Excellent partnership working with the Place2Be ensures that excellent care and support are provided for those pupils who are potentially vulnerable to remove barriers to learning. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and their particular needs are met. The inspection found that, although there are clear signs of improvement, rates of progress are not quickening fast enough in Years 1 to 5.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory with a few outstanding lessons observed. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and enjoy good relationships with them. Almost all parents and carers responding to the questionnaire think that their children are well taught. Inspectors found that improving the quality of teaching was being positively addressed and managed by senior leaders. Staff work conscientiously to stimulate pupils' interest in their learning. In the best lessons, planning is clear and concise and reflects an accurate understanding of the abilities and needs of each pupil. If progress wavers, personalised support is provided by teachers and support assistants. Pace is brisk and questioning constantly probes knowledge and understanding. Regular opportunities are provided to broaden learning through independent working and 'partner talk'. This helps to promote perseverance and a determination to succeed. Increasingly, lessons are a better match to the needs and interest of pupils. However, progress information is not used consistently enough to shape activities to match all pupils' learning needs. Approaches sometimes do not enthuse or excite pupils and lessons involve too much 'teacher talk' and so opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Good opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise their reading, writing and numeracy skills are not fully exploited.

Pupils' keenness to think for themselves, analyse a problem or argument and explain their thinking shows the high expectations staff have of older pupils. Pupils listen carefully and reflect on their own ideas and consider alternatives with a partner. Their resilience and willingness to manage their own learning is a strength of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Marking is positive and constructive, but does not consistently provide clearly defined steps for improvement to ensure that pupils know how to achieve their targets.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' enthusiasm and polite, friendly attitudes contribute to a positive atmosphere in classrooms and around school. Staff ensure all pupils are included and have the opportunities to achieve success. The breakfast club gives pupils a calm and safe start to the day and contributes well to their readiness for learning. Their behaviour in classrooms is orderly and calm, although at times the play of younger pupils in the yard can be lively and active. Pupils state that bullying is rare and that any inappropriate behaviour is promptly managed and dealt with. As a consequence, boundaries for their behaviour are well defined and pupils are very aware of the consequences of their actions. A very large majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agree that behaviour is good. Pupils report that they feel safe, are well looked after and secure in their attractive new building. They are taught to recognise risk or danger and are given the confidence and skills to avoid possible dangers or harm. As a result, all pupils are given an equal and fair opportunity to thrive and learn. Pupils' keenness to learn is evident in their willingness to contribute to a wide range of sporting, artistic, cultural and community activities. They take pride in the responsibilities they hold, such as acting as playground buddies.

Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to promote the benefits that regular attendance and prompt arrival brings. The current above average attendance is the result of a sustained pattern of improvement. The very positive involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development, including those in sometimes challenging circumstances, contributes well to their children's well-being and development.

### **Leadership and management**

The positive and purposeful leadership of the headteacher gives a clear direction for the school's continued improvement. His leadership has won the confidence of parents, carers and staff. Accurate self-evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement has established the correct priorities for improvement. The legacy of underperformance and underachievement inherited as a result of the merger is being successfully tackled though the full impact has yet to be seen. Increasingly, the sharing of best practice, the nurturing of staff skills, well-focused professional development and the effective use of partnership working with local authority specialists are successfully addressing the inconsistencies in the rates of pupils' progress. Systems to evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve learning are sometimes insufficiently rigorous. Consequently, not all lesson planning is well informed. Subject leaders have a secure grasp of their subjects, but their overview of pupils' achievement is occasionally incomplete. The governing body provides good support through its regular involvement with school life. Increasingly, it is challenging the school to improve its performance. The incremental improvements since the previous inspection show that the school has an increasingly good capacity to continue to improve.

Safeguarding procedures meets requirements with recommended good practice adopted. The school is quick to address any discrimination through its actions to improve the achievement of boys; the school is strengthening its commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities. The curriculum is good because it provides a broad range of interesting, first-hand experiences and often rich opportunities for lively, good quality learning, such as when younger pupils write about the adventures of 'Six Dinner Sid', the black cat. The good and varied opportunities for pupils' personal development contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The highly effective use of partnership working is an emerging strength. A developing range of experiences, including a residential experience in France promotes the pupils' awareness and understanding of the diverse world that exists around them, both nationally and globally.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Seaham Trinity Primary School, Seaham – SR7 7SP**

I want to thank you all for the friendly welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. We really enjoyed our time talking to you.

Seaham Trinity is a satisfactory and improving school, which has a number of very positive features. We were really impressed with the good relationships your school has with your parents and carers and the way your staff continually encourage and support you to do as well as you can. We were pleased to see your good behaviour and the high-quality care you receive from staff, including in the Place2Be. You clearly feel safe and happy because of this. You take pride in helping your school to improve and taking responsibility for others at playtime.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that the school improves at a faster rate and this can be seen in your improving skills in mathematics, especially of boys. We have asked the school to eliminate inconsistencies in the rate of your progress, especially in Years 1 to 5. We want staff to provide more activities which can excite and interest you and are better matched to your needs and abilities in order to constantly test your thinking. We have also asked that staff share their best practice to speed up your progress. In addition, we have also asked that staff make certain you know what to do next to improve your work.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can.

All the very best for the future

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts  
Lead inspector

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