

Seabridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134898
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	381756
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Bentley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Dannatt (Vice Chair)
Headteacher	Sandra Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
School address	Roe Lane Newcastle ST5 3PJ
Telephone number	01782 297361
Fax number	01782 297361
Email address	office@seabridge-primary.staffs.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Bentley Additional inspector

Patrick Cook Additional inspector

Simon Blackburn Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors sampled nine and a half hours of teaching in 19 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Pupils' work was looked at in a range of books, pupils were heard reading, and discussions were held with pupils about many aspects of school life including what they needed to do to improve their work. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the teaching staff, and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. The scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included an evaluation of pupils' behaviour. The inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 162 parents and carers, 101 pupils and 38 members of staff.

Information about the school

Seabridge School is an above average-sized school. Almost all the pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average; the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has numerous awards including: The International Schools Award; Schools for Health status; Dyslexia Friendly Status; Activemark; Artsmark Silver; and the National Standard for Enterprise Education Award. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school runs a nurture provision. The post of Chair of Governors is currently vacant.

The Seabridge Care Club and Creche are onsite. They are not managed by the governing body. They were inspected separately and their inspection reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Attainment is above average, and pupils achieve well. The school's overall effectiveness is not outstanding because leaders and managers have not ensured that teaching is of a consistently high enough quality to ensure that pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good overall progress through the rest of the school. Attainment in reading is consistently above average.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons, and are sensible and courteous in school. Attendance is above average and punctuality is a notable strength. School leaders prioritise pupils' care and safety and all pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teaching is good. Some outstanding examples lead to a very purposeful learning atmosphere where teachers' excellent subject knowledge and planning ensure that pupils confidently progress and rapidly develop their skills. However, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to precisely meet the needs of different ability groups or when setting improvement targets, and their marking does not always show pupils clearly how to improve their work.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leaders have a very clear vision for the school's future development that is endorsed by governors, staff, and parents and carers. They have identified the right things to move the school forward. Performance management procedures have had a good impact and the leadership of teaching is good, but lesson monitoring by middle leaders does not always focus enough on pupils' learning and they do not always ensure that teaching is improved promptly enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Move the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the school's assessment policy effectively, so that pupils know how well they are progressing and consistently use targets and recommendations to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers follow up the targets they set for pupils, to check that improvements are made.

- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation procedures by:
 - making sure lesson observations and book trawls focus carefully on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels provide the resulting feedback to teachers within sharper timescales
 - embedding the roles of middle leaders and making sure they fully contribute to tackling areas of inconsistency in performance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire consider that their children make good progress. All feel that the school helps pupils to develop good skills in communication, reading, writing, and mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work and the lessons observed confirm the school's evidence that, overall, pupils are making good progress across the school.

From starting points that are around those expected nationally, children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and have achieved or exceeded the goals expected by the time they move into Key Stage 1. Performance in writing and reading is usually above average thanks to the emphasis the school places on early language development and the consistently good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). At the end of Year 2, attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and has improved since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English, including reading, and mathematics.

Good achievement in reading starts in Reception. After learning the phoneme 'ai', children confidently wrote words such as 'tail' and 'mail' in their daily letters and sounds session. However, pupils' mistakes in early letter formation sometimes go uncorrected. Less-able readers are heard reading regularly and demonstrate very enthusiastic attitudes towards reading. While they consistently apply their good phonic skills, the books they read are not always suited to their ability level to help them fully develop their fluency and confidence.

Lesson observations and pupils' work books show that planning is not always tailored well enough to consistently challenge pupils. Some books show that pupils are not always given the chance to apply their mathematical skills in their topic work, or to

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work at different levels. In Year 6, an increasing proportion of pupils make accelerated progress because the teaching focuses on giving good feedback to them about what to do and how to improve their work.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, thanks to support that is closely targeted to their individual learning needs. Occasionally, they are not clear about what they need to do to improve because the comments in teachers' marking are difficult for them to read. The teaching assistants are highly committed to ensuring that pupils develop their basic skills.

Quality of teaching

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are stimulating places for young children to learn in. They are encouraged to 'give it a go'; this teaching approach helps them to develop extremely positive attitudes to learning at a very young age. The outdoor environment offers a safe, practical working area for children to experience a very wide range of interesting activities. Reception children enjoyed finding words that were hidden in the outdoor area. The teaching of phonics is carefully planned with activities that are matched to children's learning needs. This helps them to make good progress in developing these basic skills.

The teaching seen during the inspection reflected some variation in practice. It does not always cater well enough for the differing levels and starting points of all the pupils. In the good or better lessons, pupils are challenged well. In the very best teaching, learning is tailored precisely to their learning needs and is adjusted during lessons so that all pupils, from the least to the most able, are challenged to make outstanding progress. Pupils' books also reflect these variations. Marking is carried out conscientiously, but teachers do not consistently provide feedback or expect the pupils to respond. As a result, some are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers and the teaching assistants promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by providing good opportunities for pupils to reflect and work together. Different subjects are brought together in topic-based work that includes good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Pupils' work is celebrated in a wide range of high-quality displays around the school. Pupils told inspectors that this values their achievements. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire rightly think the teaching is good and nearly all would recommend the school, and the pupils agree.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

From a very young age, pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes towards learning and almost all enjoy school very much. As a result, attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Pupils' social development is a particular strength and they are actively encouraged to take responsibility. They respond very well to

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opportunities in the curriculum to work together to develop their social learning skills in lessons. They told the inspectors that they like working together in groups to find things out and to learn more together, and say, 'We are like a big family here.' Parents and carers strongly feel that their children are kept very safe. Nearly all pupils said they feel extremely safe in school; they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe both in and out of school. They are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, particularly keeping safe from cyber-bullies. They know how to prevent bullying from taking place and confidently gave inspectors various examples of how the school supports them.

The school's effective behaviour policy is implemented consistently by senior leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants also manage behaviour consistently well. The school is highly inclusive. Nurture provision is successful in making sure pupils who need the support make good progress and achieve well. No pupils have been excluded for a considerable period of time. Pupils were extremely well behaved in all the lessons observed, demonstrating that good learning habits have been well established over time. Older pupils set excellent examples as very good role models for younger pupils. Inspectors observed how pupils are consistently encouraged to develop and apply their skills and understanding; they showed resilience to challenge and contributed eagerly.

Assemblies are used very well to reinforce the behaviour policy. Good behaviour is rewarded and pupils clearly value this approach. Parents and carers were proud to tell inspectors the school lives by its motto: 'Working together to be the best we can'.

Leadership and management

The school has developed its provision and pupils' achievement since the last inspection, and demonstrates a good capacity to improve further still. The headteacher and other senior leaders work effectively with all the staff and the governing body, and have developed and established an exciting vision for the school. All pupils and their parents and carers are welcomed and valued. Morale is very good. One member of staff wrote, 'All staff are passionate about creating a learning climate where collaboration, ownership and self-drive are paramount.'

The headteacher and staff have accurately evaluated the quality of provision and drawn up good action plans to address the identified inconsistencies. Leaders monitor teaching regularly, although the resulting records do not always focus enough on the impact the teaching is having on pupils' rates of learning, and occasionally feedback is delayed. As result of shared professional development and dialogue, teachers have implemented a system for target sharing with the pupils, but this is not applied with full consistency.

The curriculum is good and pupils told inspectors that it provides regular opportunities for them to contribute and further develop their interests within exciting topics. It supports and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The pupils also benefit from the links with a school in Tanzania

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and enjoy a wide range of visits and residential trips. The large majority of parents and carers say they would recommend this school to others.

The governing body is extremely effective. It is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses because its monitoring teams now check the provision regularly, challenge different aspects of performance and monitor whether pupils are progressing well enough. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination is challenged and, as a result, the school is a happy place to be.

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).

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



5 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seabridge Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 3PJ

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. Thank you also for sharing your thoughts in conversations with us, and through the questionnaire you completed. You go to a good school that continues to improve, and you make good progress thanks to good teaching. These are the best things about it.

- You really enjoy coming to school and feel very happy there.
- You behave extremely well, get on with everyone and show very positive attitudes towards learning in lessons.
- You told us that all the adults in school take really good care of you, and you feel very safe indeed.
- Your attendance is good, and your punctuality even better. Very well done.

The headteacher and teachers ensure that you enjoy your work and you get to learn about some exciting things. We were impressed by how well you all show that you want to learn. The headteacher agrees that some things still need improving to help you to make even better progress. I have asked your teachers to always give you work that builds upon what you already know and can do; to tell you what you can do to make your work even better; and to give you time to make the improvements. I have also asked all the leaders in the school to thoroughly check that this is happening, so that you all make the best possible progress. You can help by always trying your best and following the teachers' advice in class and in their marking.

We wish you every success in the future now and for the rest of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Bentley
Lead inspector

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