

Seaton Delaval First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122223
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	368246
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy Batley
Headteacher	Mr Oliver Flitcroft
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed seven class teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They analysed 57 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at: pupils' progress and achievement data; intervention and support programmes; documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils; school policies and plans for improving the quality of learning. They scrutinised pupils' current work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss his reports.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and the rate of progress made by all groups of pupils, including girls and the more-able and in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching across the school and its effectiveness in accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement and attainment.
- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in exploiting the available provision to promote good learning and development.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders in bringing about and sustaining the school's improvement and enhancing the outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than the average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils is known to eligible for a free school meal. Around one-third of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, but there is a higher than average percentage with a statement of special educational need. Since the last inspection, nursery provision has been established. The on-site Children's Centre with pre-school provision is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report. The school extends its services in that it provides a before- and after-school club and community activities. Since the last inspection the school has experienced a period of unsettled staffing. The headteacher took up his post in April 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Seaton Delaval is a satisfactory and steadily improving school, because the headteacher has taken positive action to improve the quality of learning to get the very best out of all of the pupils. He is incisively supported by the governing body in tackling the legacy of underachievement and staffing turbulence. As a result, there is an increasingly positive climate for learning in the school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's enjoyment and experiences at school. One parent summed up the views of nearly all by writing, 'A wonderful, welcoming and friendly environment which nurtures learning and development'. They especially value how really safe their children are kept.

The majority of children enters Nursery with skills below those typical for their age. Children settle quickly and happily and make satisfactory progress in Nursery and Reception, although opportunities to explore and investigate when outside are limited. Attainment by the end of Year 4 is in line with national expectations, which represents satisfactory progress overall, but the pattern is uneven. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress, because imaginative and inspiring teaching successfully motivates pupils. For example, pupils were seen totally absorbed accurately identifying number pairs. Their good achievement, enjoyment and improving skills are evident. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those new to learning English also make satisfactory progress. The positive action taken is leading to better outcomes for pupils including girls, but there is too little variety in the learning activities and challenge to pupils in Years 3 and 4, particularly for the more-able and in mathematics. While some good and outstanding teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall, because the demands made of pupils are too variable. For example, although pupils' progress is rigorously checked, insufficient use is made of assessment information to shape activities to match individual abilities and needs. Marking is regularly completed and although it is constructive, it does not always spell out clear steps for improvement. Pupils' personal development is good, because the school takes care of everyone. Their behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary in lessons.

The headteacher is determined to eradicate underachievement and accelerate the rate of improvement. The governing body provides much expertise and a good balance of support and challenge. The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for continued improvement is accurate. Good use is made of partnerships to enhance the quality of pupils' learning experiences. The satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements is being steadily strengthened but, as the school is aware, there remains more to do. Middle leaders do not yet help to drive improvement effectively and rapidly enough or play a central role in the robust checking of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise achievement and attainment, especially in Years 3 and 4 and in mathematics, by:
 - building on existing good teaching to increase the proportion of teaching which challenges, excites and engages pupils
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure all activities are consistently matched to pupils' abilities, needs and interests, especially for the more-able
 - ensuring marking consistently provides well-defined steps for improvement.
- Ensure that middle leaders develop their roles effectively by implementing school priorities swiftly and consistently and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.
- Develop the range of outdoor provision in Early Years Foundation Stage to boost development and progress by ensuring that:
 - more opportunities are provided for children to initiate their own learning, exploring and investigating the environment around them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' progress and their achievement and enjoyment in lessons are satisfactory, given their lower than expected level of skills and experience on entry to the Nursery. Progress rates are improving as a result of better-quality learning. Nevertheless, they do vary across age and abilities and in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Current school information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress and achieving well. Gaps in achievement, such as between boys and girls, are being closed because activities are stimulating and teachers' questioning constantly probes and challenges pupils' thinking. More pupils are on course to reach higher levels. In Years 3 and 4, teaching does not always test pupils' thinking, as activities are not matched closely enough to abilities and interests. As a result, progress is slower and more uneven.

The good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the pupils' good behaviour and the really good relationships they have with adults and each other. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and at play and willingly take on responsibilities such as when acting as a member of the playground squad. They feel safe, because as one pupil remarked, 'Teachers take care of us'. Pupils report that bullying is rare. They are safety-conscious, such as when taking steps to avoid infecting a computer with a virus. Pupils are confident that adults are on hand and always willing to help with a worry or fear. They understand the benefits of eating healthily and keeping active and fit. Pupils are keen to help to improve the school and value their decision-making roles, such as suggesting improvements to the school behaviour code. They make positive contributions to the wider community, for example contributing to the National Trust's efforts to raise funds to purchase and refurbish the nearby Delaval Hall.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but with examples of good and occasionally outstanding teaching in Years 1 and 2. When lessons are lively and demanding and assessment information is used effectively to pinpoint gaps in pupils' understanding, pupils' progress quickens. The effective use of open-ended questions adds to the quality of challenge to pupils' thinking. For example, pupils were observed in an English lesson desperate to find the bottle containing Blackbeard the pirate's letter. When activities are mundane and insufficient challenge is presented to pupils' thinking, progress is slower. Too much time spent on the same task leads to some pupils losing interest, especially the more-able. The developing use of assessment is adding to the quality of intervention and support, especially for those potentially vulnerable and challenging pupils. However, not all pupils are given a clear sense of what they need to do to improve through feedback in the marking of their work.

The good curriculum increasingly uses themes in imaginative ways to stimulate interest and provide more active learning, when pupils can apply and practise their skills, for example, by using role play to simulate an excursion for younger pupils, when they have to stop and use their own money to buy lollipops at an ice cream shop. This all adds to the level of interest, enjoyment and achievement. Activities to enhance the pupils' personal skills and experiences are having a very positive impact, for example, participating in the

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'Send my Sister to School' initiative and helping to improve equipment in village schools in Sri Lanka.

The good care, guidance and support are an emerging strength of the school, enabling all pupils to learn from the experiences provided. The school can point to some remarkable individual examples of real success in helping pupils to overcome barriers to their development and learning. Parents and carers appreciate the happy, friendly atmosphere created by the school's 'open' approaches. Good links with specialist support staff, for example the Sensory Support Service for the hearing-impaired, make a positive contribution to the development and happiness of pupils, including the potentially vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is an effective driving force in the school, systematically improving the quality of what is provided, in order to accelerate the rates of pupils' progress and raise achievement. Together, the headteacher and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and a clear view of priorities for improvement. Distinct signs of improvement can be seen as a result of the action taken to improve the quality of learning in lessons. The growing confidence of staff and developing expertise are now a consistent feature of the best lessons, though inconsistencies remain in the challenge presented to pupils in some lessons, especially for older, more-able pupils. Despite much encouragement, middle leadership does not add enough to the momentum of school improvement. Even with rigorous systems to check how well pupils are doing, insufficient use is made of the available assessment information to add to the variety and pace of learning and accelerate rates of progress.

Governance is good. An assured governing body demonstrates a determination to sustain improvements, playing an active part in shaping the strategic direction of the school. The positive engagement of parents and carers can be seen in the good quality of relationships they have with staff, such as when dropping-off or collecting children from Nursery and Reception. The close links with the local community and the local partnership of schools, add to the strong sense of belonging. The school has well-developed quality assurance procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment, which meet requirements and include secure checks on adults. Community cohesion is promoted well with a range of first-hand experiences and links which demonstrate to pupils the diversity that exists globally, for example, by organising the reconditioning of their laptops, before sending them to village schools in Sri Lanka. The school has appropriate procedures in place for tackling any form

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of discrimination that may arise. The improvements in the progress and achievement of pupils reveal the school's commitment to make certain all pupils are equally involved and are able to enjoy the same happy experiences and success.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle happily and quickly in the caring and friendly atmosphere in the Nursery and Reception. The weaker skills and experience revealed on entry include those related to speech, language and number. As pupils learn and develop, they make satisfactory progress overall, although their progress does vary across a range of activities. For example, in the teacher-directed sessions some good progress was seen because teachers make learning fun and constantly challenge children's thinking. However, there are times when child-initiated learning lacks purpose, especially outdoors, as too few opportunities are provided for children to find things out for themselves.

Children regularly practise letters and sounds and blend these into words, such as when identifying farm animals. Approaches to reading and writing development are increasingly intensive, quickening the pace of children's early acquisition of skills. Positive links with parents and carers support children's learning well, for example, by recording family holiday activities on a beach in Dorset. Yet, not all opportunities are exploited enough to add to the quality of learning experiences. Welfare requirements are fully met, ensuring that children are kept safe. Children behave well, respond really well to praise and are sensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Reliable systems are in place to check and assess children's development, although not all observations, including those of parents and carers, are held together in the same learning record. Despite unsettled leadership and management, effective day-to-day management by staff ensures that activities are well-planned.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just over one-third of all parents and carers returned the questionnaire with their views of the school. This is in line with the average level of returns. These views were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of experiences and enjoyment that the school provides. All parents and carers appreciate that their children are kept safe. The inspectors' findings support these views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about their children not making enough progress. Inspectors found that any progress and achievement issues were being positively tackled and managed by the headteacher. There are clear signs of improvement, but rates of progress are not quickening fast enough in Years 3 and 4.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seaton Delaval First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 221 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	75	15	22	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	75	16	24	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	57	26	39	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	54	24	36	5	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	42	63	23	34	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	52	29	43	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	67	19	28	1	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	48	30	45	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	52	29	43	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	51	29	43	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	40	32	48	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	58	22	33	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	64	21	31	0	0	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



25 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton Delaval First School, Whitley Bay, NE25 0EP

I want to thank you all for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave the other inspectors and me when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time talking to you.

Seaton Delaval is a satisfactory and steadily improving school, which has a number of strengths. Your school enjoys good relationships with your parents and carers and has made certain that school staff work closely with agencies to improve your learning. We were pleased by your sensible and responsible behaviour and the excellent care taken of you all. You obviously feel safe and happy because of this. You understand well the benefits that a healthy lifestyle can bring. You take much pride in helping the school to improve and enthusiastically join in all school activities. Some of you told us that your teachers make some of your learning fun. Your school is taking positive action to improve and this can be seen in your faster progress and improving skills.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to look at more ways of helping you to improve your work and make even faster progress. We would like staff to use the information they have on how well you are doing to arrange activities which can excite and interest you more. We have asked that when marking your work, you are provided with more detailed help to improve. In the Nursery and Reception we have asked that staff provide more opportunities for you to find things out for yourselves, especially when you are outdoors. Lastly, we have asked that subject leaders check on the quality of your learning more efficiently.

You can play your part by working as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Clive Petts
Lead Inspector

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