

Seaton CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112277
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	395603
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Grainger
Headteacher	Michael Kidd
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith
John Ellwood

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Fifteen lessons and eight teachers were observed; teaching assistants were observed within lessons or leading small groups. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books; they talked to a small number of Year 3 and Year 6 pupils about reading and listened to them read. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, data on pupils' progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of monitoring and evaluation, and policies and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and health and safety. The 101 questionnaires received from parents and carers were analysed alongside those received from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Seaton Junior has an average number of pupils on roll compared to schools of a similar type. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. An average proportion of pupils is supported by school action. There are a small number of pupils looked after by carers who are not their own parents. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.

An acting headteacher has led the school since January 2012.

Awards gained by the school include Healthy School, Activemark, Arts Mark Gold, Eco-School Silver and Investors in People

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. It is not yet outstanding because although teaching is securely good there is not enough outstanding teaching. Staff provide a happy, secure and welcoming environment in which pupils receive outstanding care. As a result pupils feel very safe, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The acting headteacher, senior leaders and staff are strongly focused on improving teaching and pupils' achievement further.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in Year 3 and reach above average attainment by Year 6 in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 reaching above average levels (Level 5) is impressive and work in pupils' books reflects this strong level of achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive. Learning moves on at a good pace and tasks are challenging. A good emphasis on talk and drama has supported improvements in writing. Carefully selected exciting books and texts result in imaginative and creative writing of a good standard.
- Pupils' behaviour over time is exemplary and attitudes to learning are excellent; they enjoy discussing their work with each other and persevere exceptionally well with tasks. They play very sensibly and know how to stay safe. They take on their many roles of responsibility in school with maturity. They show great respect for one another.
- During a period of change of leadership, the acting headteacher and senior leaders, very well supported by all staff, have maintained high expectations and continuing improvement. Teaching and pupils' performance are managed well. They are closely monitored and teachers are held to account for the progress of

pupils. Well focused professional development supports improving teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that more is outstanding by:
 - providing even more opportunities where pupils are excited and engaged through solving problems and working independently
 - encouraging pupils to act upon and make improvements to their work in response to teachers' marking
 - making better use of pupils' individual targets so that they guide pupils' learning more closely in lessons
 - monitoring the provision of homework relating to basic skills and ensuring parents and carers are aware of how it is organised.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons pupils are keen to learn, attentive and concentrate well. They collaborate well and gain confidence in their learning through discussing their ideas with each other. Pupils' enjoyment of reading has improved and good quality imaginative writing has been stimulated with the introduction of exciting and memorable books that are studied in depth, for example, *'The Lady of Shalott'*.

Based on the school's accurate assessments of attainment in Year 3, pupils make consistently good progress from average starting points to reach above average attainment by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Apart from in 2011, attainment by Year 6 has been above average since the previous inspection. There was a dip in some, but not all, of the attainment indicators in 2011 because a few of the more-able pupils did not reach the levels expected of them, particularly in writing. However, the school analysed and tackled these areas quickly. More practical and relevant activities have increased pupils' confidence in mathematics. The well planned curriculum based on themes of real interest to pupils results in good quality imaginative and creative writing. The proportion of pupils on track to reach above average levels (Level 5) in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is impressive.

Pupils across the school make good progress, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. There is no significant difference between the progress of girls and boys although in writing there are variations between year groups. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by adults other than their own parents make good progress. Gaps between the performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the national average have closed rapidly. Parents and carers recognise that their children are making good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers are enthusiastic, motivate pupils well and adults have positive, supportive relationships with pupils. Teachers set high expectations of pupils and their secure knowledge enables them to recognise how pupils are thinking and ask pertinent questions that develop their understanding. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson on fractions, the teacher's excellent explanations and use of visual models, which pupils manipulated for themselves, helped them to understand the concepts quickly. Well-structured opportunities for talk in pairs are especially effective in mathematics lessons when pupils often grapple with challenging problems.

A common approach to lesson planning means that pupils are very clear about the purpose of lessons and they know how they can succeed. In the best lessons, pupils are involved in drawing up the success criteria, and they are referred to throughout the lesson so that pupils are constantly focussed on how to succeed. Teachers' good assessment ensures that they know how well pupils are making progress and that tasks are well planned to match pupils' different needs. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson, pupils took on the role of 'spying' on activities in Ancient Greece, and useful prompts supported the writing for the lower-attaining pupils. This lesson was also an example of the good attention paid to improving literacy skills through writing in a range of subjects. Teaching assistants are well-deployed to support the lower-attaining pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They are well briefed on pupils' progress and on how best to support individuals.

Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give useful advice on how to improve. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and make improvements. Although pupils have individual targets to which to aspire, these are not always used to guide their learning during lessons. Pupils thoroughly enjoy independent homework tasks related to the curriculum themes. Other homework on basic skills is provided but its frequency and impact is not monitored closely; a small number of parents and carers were unclear of how this type of homework is organised. Overall, parents and carers are right to consider that teaching is good.

In a few lessons pupils are highly motivated, excited and engaged because the tasks are very relevant to their interests and they have the opportunity to solve problems and work independently. This was evident in parts of a very strong mathematics class where pupils were totally absorbed in planning a new bedroom within a tight budget. Although most lessons are securely good, there are few with this outstanding level of excitement and challenge throughout the lesson.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are always very eager to do well and keen to support each other. They rise to the challenge of independent work and produce some very good quality homework. Pupils take great pride in their work, presenting their work with great care: handwriting, pictures and diagrams are neat and carefully formed.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary over time. There have been no exclusions or serious incidents in recent years. Attendance is consistently above average. Parents, carers and pupils responding to the questionnaires recognise the considerable strengths in behaviour and safety across the school. At lunchtimes pupils make the most of an array of activities. Play leaders are always busy and clearing up equipment is second nature. The school council has a strong role. It has been instrumental in improving activities at playtimes, raising funds for many good causes, and its members are involved in interviews for new staff. Pupils feel very safe in school and say that bullying is extremely rare and that everyone gets on very well. They know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and internet safety. They have every confidence that school staff will help when needed. The school's very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural values pervade its work and pupils develop respect for each other and others beyond the school community. The excellent care and support for pupils is evident in the progress made by pupils facing significant difficulties. Effective work with families and local support services help children to settle into school and make significant progress. The nurture room is used very effectively to provide additional support for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs.

Leadership and management

During a period of changing leadership, the acting headteacher and senior leaders have maintained a strong focus on raising achievement and improving teaching, alongside providing a highly supportive and caring environment. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress contribute to accurate self-evaluation, well-focused improvement planning and good levels of accountability. Professional development and performance management of all staff are focused on the school's priorities and lead to improvements. As a result learning in mathematics is more relevant, and enthusiasm for reading and the quality of writing have improved. The school has maintained good achievement since the previous inspection and capacity to improve further is demonstrated securely.

The governing body is highly supportive and brings a good range of expertise to the role. It is stringent in ensuring that statutory requirements are upheld, particularly in relation to child protection and the safeguarding of pupils. It is fully involved in monitoring the work of the school. It supports long-term strategic development well and is determined to appoint the right person to the vacant headteacher position.

The school is fully committed to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The progress of every child and all groups of pupils is analysed closely and any gaps are tackled and closed quickly. The broad curriculum engages pupils in learning about and communicating with children from different communities within and beyond the United Kingdom, encouraging respect and tolerance.

The curriculum is well planned to develop basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The use of themes such as the Groovy Greeks and Titanic, alongside exciting visits and trips have motivated pupils a great deal and led to improvements in writing and reading. The school has recognised that the time given to teaching science within the curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure maximum progress. High quality music and sport encourage good standards

among pupils. Pupils make the most of an excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities. The strong emphasis on personal development and memorable assemblies contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school's work with many praising the quality of care for individuals and the support and teaching their children receive.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton CofE Junior School, Workington, CA14 1HA

Thank you for the welcome you gave to Mr Ellwood and me when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to see you enjoying your lessons and many other activities. Thank you especially to those who talked to us and showed us around the school.

You are right to be proud of your good school. You are achieving well in your work because you are well taught and staff find ways of making learning interesting and provide books that are really exciting to read. Staff work especially hard to make sure you are all safe and exceptionally well cared for, especially those of you who may need extra help to settle in and do well.

You, the pupils, are a real asset to your school because you are very keen to learn. Your behaviour is exemplary and you show great respect for each other. You put a great deal of thought into your writing so that, as well as having neat and well formed handwriting, the content is well structured and imaginative.

The staff and the governing body are all working together with Mr Kidd to find ways to make your school even better. We have asked them to find ways of making good teaching even better so that more lessons are outstanding and give you the chance to work independently on activities that you find exciting and absorbing.

You can help by continuing to attend school every day and by keeping up your super-positive attitudes to school and learning. Do make the most of the opportunities your school has provided on-line to improve your literacy and numeracy skills even further. I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Lead inspector

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