

Seascape Primary School

Ellison Road, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 5NJ

Inspection dates 25-26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school. because:

- Children make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation as a result of outstanding teaching. They settle quickly, behave extremely well and thrive on the exciting range of activities teachers offer them.
- Pupils make good progress across school as a result of good teaching which engages them and allows them to apply and practise their skills.
- Attainment has risen throughout school, particularly in reading and mathematics, where attainment is now in line with the national average.
- The curriculum offers many stimulating activities for pupils, allowing them to enjoy a wide range of cultural experiences and to see the links between subjects.
- The headteacher has rigorously and skilfully implemented strategies which have improved the quality of teaching and raised attainment.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have taken tough decisions to eliminate weak teaching.
- There is a highly positive ethos in the school which allows pupils to work hard, behave well and feel extremely safe.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While progress is good and attainment has risen, attainment in writing remains below average, particularly for boys. Opportunities are missed for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Leaders who are new to their roles are not fully accountable for teaching and attainment in their areas of responsibility.
- There are too few representatives from parents and the local community on the governing body. Accordingly, existing governors are over-burdened with responsibilities. The school's attempts to engage more fully with parents are hampered by the lack of a strong parental voice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle managers and a group of parents. The lead inspector spoke to the school's Local Authority Improvement Partner by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the three responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on students' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Angela James	Additional inspector
Anne Humble	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Almost all pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school has achieved the Artsmark award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, further raise attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress in writing, particularly for boys, by:
 - offering even more opportunities for pupils to write at length in a range of subjects
 - applying the strategies which are successfully raising attainment in reading more rigorously to the teaching of writing.
- Further develop the effectiveness of those leaders who are new to their roles so that they are more accountable for attainment and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, by:
 - continuing to provide high quality professional development
 - involving them more closely in lesson observations and in the analysis of progress data.
- Encourage greater representation on the governing body of parents and representatives from the local community so that:
 - the functions of the governing body can be more efficiently accomplished
 - the school can develop more effective strategies to involve parents in the life of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding and they make excellent progress from their starting points, which are well-below national expectations. Excellent teaching allows them to make rapid early gains in linking sounds and letters (phonics) and reading.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen significantly since 2009 although it remains below average in English and mathematics. Attainment in reading which has typically been below average by the end of Years 1 and 2 is improving rapidly as a result of a clearly focused programme of teaching sounds and letters (phonics).
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen in recent years and standards in mathematics and reading are now in line with the national average. Pupils have made outstanding progress from their starting points. English overall remains below average as a result of lower attainment in writing. The impact of raised attainment in Key Stage 1 has not had time to impact on further improvement in Year 6.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked-after attain in line with similar pupils nationally. Progress for those pupils is good and the gap is closing overall. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The school's focus on developing pupils' appreciation of the arts and the environment encourages pupils' good achievement in art, music, history, geography and science.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers make learning stimulating, and explain clearly to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including research, role-play, games and investigations. Lessons have a measured pace which helps pupils to consolidate knowledge and assimilate new learning.
- In a lesson in a Year 3 class, good teaching enthused pupils about the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. He modelled the skills pupils were to use, asked probing questions to ascertain what they already knew, and challenged them to extend their writing skills. They used information and communication technology (ICT) well to record their ideas and plan their longer writing task.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a wide range of stimulating, engaging activities both indoors and outdoors, captures children's imagination, allows them to investigate for themselves and moves their learning on quickly in all areas of their development. There is excellent teaching which helps children to learn letters and sounds and how to make words from them.
- Teachers use questions well to check what pupils already know and that they have made progress. There are strong relationships and teachers and teaching assistants interact well with pupils to support and challenge them in their learning. Work is well-matched to the needs of groups of learners. Occasionally, work is less well-matched to the needs of individual learners.
- Marking is done regularly and is well used to tell pupils how successful they have been in specific tasks and how to improve their work. Older pupils, in particular, have a clear understanding of the level of their work and what they need to do to take the next steps in their learning.
- The impact of the planned curriculum is good overall. There are many activities which help pupils to see the links between subjects and to develop and apply important skills, including teamwork, research and writing. For example, work on topics such as rainforests, the Second World War and the Vikings, including trips to the Jorvik Viking museum and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, develops pupils' understanding of history, environmental geography and the arts.

- There is a strong focus on allowing pupils opportunities to solve problems and apply their skills in mathematics. While there are many successful and exciting opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum, including the use of dedicated ICT programmes, this approach could be developed further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school very much. They say that behaviour is good in their lessons. Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour over time and talked to many pupils during lessons, at break times and more formally in group discussions. This confirmed that behaviour has improved over time as a result of the successful introduction of rewards and behaviour management strategies.
- These clear guidelines enable the few pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult to respond well to a consistent approach and clear guidance. As a result, much excellent behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection and around the school.
- Pupils are extremely polite to adults and keen to talk about their work and their school. They are highly respectful of each other and are proud of their new school. They are aware of different forms of bullying and say that any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is uncommon.
- Pupils feel very safe and know that older pupils as well as the teachers and other adults in school, particularly in the Place2Be, will help with any problems if they arise. Pupils state proudly that the 'Chatty' council listens to pupils' concerns and ideas and has helped to plan and purchase improvements to the playground.
- Attendance is average. It has improved rapidly as the result of a concerted effort by the school to engage with parents and to involve pupils fully in their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has rigorously pursued strategies which have effectively improved the quality of teaching, raised attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress, and improved behaviour and attendance. She is ably supported in the drive for improvement by the governing body and by the deputy headteacher.
- Senior leadership provides the school with a clear vision for success and a sharply focused approach to driving school improvement. Effective self-evaluation ensures that the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and where it could improve further.
- Leaders and managers at all levels welcome the increased delegation of responsibilities that have made their contribution much more effective in improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment. While they are skilled at identifying and planning initiatives, for example in the successful development of pupils' reading, some new leaders are less proficient in evaluating and monitoring the success of these interventions. They are yet to become fully accountable for teaching and attainment in their areas of responsibility.
- Teachers' development is well-supported through the creation of effective teams, well-targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice. Performance management has been used skilfully to improve the quality of teaching and to develop leadership across the school.
- The school rigorously analyses pupils' attainment and progress. This enables the swift identification of groups and individuals who need additional support to close any gaps in their learning. Funding through the pupil premium has been used extremely skilfully to tackle the learning needs of individual pupils and to broaden pupils' cultural horizons. As a result, pupils have well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school is clear about what it has to do to improve further. The school has a clear commitment to and effective systems for promoting equality of opportunity and tackling

discrimination. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements.

- The local authority has provided effective support for the teaching of mathematics and English which has improved the quality of teaching in these subjects.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has acted decisively to tackle weak teaching and has made difficult and astute decisions to improve its quality. This has led to an improvement in teaching and governors are clearly aware of how this has had an impact on pupils' attainment and progress.
 - The Chair of Governors is extremely dedicated and committed and offers unstinting support to the school. She is instrumental in the improvement to the school.
 - However, there are too few representatives from the local community and too few parents on the governing body.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133701
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	406547

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Freda Maddison
Headteacher	Yvonne Ryle
Date of previous school inspection	7-8 February 2011
Telephone number	0191 5864186
Fax number	0191 5870886
Email address	seascape@durhamlearning.net

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