

Seascale Primary School

Crofthead Road, Seascale, Cumbria, CA20 1LZ

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils and their families highly value this school. This is because staff encourage pupils to work hard and develop new interests.
- Following a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most pupils make good progress during their time at school.
- By the time they leave in Year 6, most pupils' abilities in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to aim high.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together closely to plan activities which are usually at the right level so that pupils learn well.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They also learn how to stay safe in environments beyond school. The school works extremely well with parents and external agencies.
- Behaviour is outstanding. From an early age, pupils develop a strong desire to find out things for themselves. They spontaneously help others in lessons and around school.
- Attendance is consistently above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils take great pride in their school and the local community.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of stimulating experiences for pupils within and beyond school. They develop a love of the arts and sport and are encouraged to excel.
- The school is extremely well led and managed by the dedicated headteacher. Staff share her vision of bringing out the best in every pupil.
- School leaders, including the governing body, work well as a team. Their successful actions have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work is not always adapted quickly enough when pupils find tasks easy.
- The quality of marking in pupils' books is inconsistent. Pupils are not always given enough time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Reading logs do not always inform pupils, parents and teachers of how well pupils are reading both in school and at home.
- Some middle leaders are relatively new and are at an early stage in developing their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff; groups of pupils; senior staff and leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; members of the governing body; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils’ standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils’ work in their books.
- There were 40 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspectors took into account alongside the responses to the school’s own parental survey. Two letters were received from parents. Six responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were taken into account.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Colin Scott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Seascale is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased in recent years. There are an increasing proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the usual times.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average overall but much higher in some year groups than in others.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- There have been some unavoidable disruptions to staffing since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education (LLE) and provides support to other local schools. The headteacher will retire at the end of the summer term 2014.
- A new Chair, and vice-chair, of the Governing Body was appointed in the autumn term 2013.
- The school has achieved the Green Flag Eco School Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that it is outstanding in order to further raise pupils' attainment and achievement by:
 - quickly adapting pupils' activities when pupils find the work easy to ensure they are always fully challenged, particularly the most able
 - ensuring teachers' marking is of a consistently high quality to inform pupils of how they can improve their work and giving pupils time in lessons to respond to advice and correct and edit their work in order to learn from their mistakes
 - improving the use of pupils' reading logs so that pupils, parents and teachers are better informed of the progress being made at home and school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by developing the skills of relatively new middle leaders in measuring pupils' progress and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Links between school and home are good and this helps children settle quickly into school routines in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children start school with skills that are similar to those typically expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children well for learning in Key Stage 1.
- Since the previous inspection, standards reached by the end of Year 2 have risen. Published results from teacher assessments in 2012 and 2013 show that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are much higher than average. Pupils' progress in these subjects from their previous starting points is at least good.
- In recent years, standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been above average. However, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 were broadly average. This represented a slight decline compared to previous years and reflected the nature of the cohort. For example, there were an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and several pupils joining this year group during Key Stage 2, some with lower starting points. Whatever their starting points, however, most pupils make good progress.
- Current data and pupils' work show that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This demonstrates good and for some, outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Achievement in reading is good across the school. In the most recent Year 1 phonic screening check (a check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make), the majority of pupils met the expected standard for their age and school data show a higher proportion are on track to do so this year. Across the school, pupils have many opportunities to read and explore books; they regularly read for pleasure and for research purposes.
- Across year groups and in different subjects most pupils usually make good progress. Unavoidable disruption to staffing has led to some slower progress among some current Year 5 pupils. The school has taken swift action to address this and these pupils are now receiving good quality teaching and their progress is accelerating.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress, and some do even better because their different needs are quickly identified. Excellent support from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies helps each of them to make at least good progress in reaching their challenging targets.
- The school provides very good support for the very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium so that they make similar progress to their peers.
- The most able pupils are challenged to aim high. Almost half the current Year 6 cohort is working at the higher Level 5 across reading, writing and mathematics and a few are working at Level 6 in reading and mathematics. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.

The quality of teaching is good

- Only good or better teaching is the norm at this school. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils from an early age to develop a desire to find out things for themselves.
- Classrooms and outdoor areas are organised well and teachers plan the content and timing of activities to develop the interests of pupils. As a result, the resources and content of lessons often capture pupils' imagination. As a result, they are eager to learn.
- This was seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children demonstrated an amazing knowledge of dinosaurs and were highly motivated to take on the role of an explorer and hunt for dinosaur footprints in the outdoor area. They screeched with excitement as they found more and more footprints which the teaching assistant then skilfully used to encourage pupils to add single digit numbers together. They checked their answers by counting the footprints which

helped them to correct errors and make good progress with their numeracy skills.

- There is a systematic approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Pupils have lots of fun sounding out letters and then blending them to make words. When practising spellings when writing the words, pupils did not hesitate to help each other if they were struggling and clearly enjoyed learning from each other.
- Pupils develop a love of books and a Year 6 boy explained why he prefers fiction to non-fiction. 'I can use my imagination,' he told an inspector, 'and pretend I'm there, in the story.' Individual reading logs are used by pupils, parents and staff. Although they are regularly updated, they do not always have enough detail in them to provide more help for pupils when, for example, they have struggled with difficult words.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrated how well they could take notes from a video clip about hurricanes. The concentration was intense as the pupils jotted down key words. Teaching assistants were put under pressure to ensure they recorded information as those they were supporting whispered a range of vocabulary in quick succession. Skimming and scanning techniques were then used by pupils to retrieve information from articles before they embarked on their own writing. Pupils made outstanding progress with their writing.
- Occasionally, work is not always adapted quickly enough when pupils find work too easy. This means that sometimes pupils are not always fully challenged, especially the most able.
- Teachers mark pupils' workbooks regularly, but there is an inconsistency in the quality of written advice given to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils are not always given time to correct and edit their work in order to learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From an early age, young children learn to value each other and their school community. There is an exceptional atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school.
- A number of parents who have moved their children here from other schools told the inspector that their children have settled extremely well and the school is 'truly amazing.' This is also reflected in responses on Parent View.
- Pupils have an extremely good attitude towards learning and behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school. School records and staff questionnaires indicate that this is typical. Consistently above-average attendance illustrates these highly positive attitudes.
- Pupils take pride in their school and in wearing their school uniform. Some staff say they are prepared to travel long distances to work here because the pupils are so polite and helpful.
- The older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for the younger children and act as outstanding role models. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 train as play leaders to encourage younger pupils to keep active at lunchtimes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe and learn how to keep themselves safe including when they are online. All parents agree that their children are well cared for at school. They have an excellent understanding of different forms of bullying such as name-calling and are extremely confident that they could turn to any adult if they felt this was happening.
- Pupils' experiences are increased through an impressive range of trips taking them beyond their local community. Residential trips to Robinwood outdoor activity centre ensure pupils gain first-hand experience in how to stay safe in locations beyond their local community.
- Located on the boundary of a nuclear plant, the school has worked closely with Sellafield staff to ensure precise plans are in place should an emergency situation arise. Alongside regularly practising fire drills, it is second nature to the pupils to practise what they need to do in the case of a radioactive or similar emergency.
- Pupils are proactive in their work for the local community. They have instigated meetings with the Highways Agency and Parish Council to review road safety near to the school. As an Eco-school pupils have a detective-like approach to checking that all measures are taken to ensure

materials are recycled whenever possible.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is an exceptionally strong leader and as a Local Leader in Education is highly respected for her work in supporting other schools. She has very accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for further improvement and has developed a highly committed and extremely hardworking staff team.
- Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly and pupil progress is closely tracked to make sure that salary increases are awarded only when teachers help pupils to learn well. Teachers' professional development is closely linked to school priorities.
- Some middle leaders who are relatively new to their roles are at an early stage in developing skills to measure the progress being made by pupils and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Teaching which is less than good is not acceptable and when this has been evident, support is immediately put into place. The local authority has been involved in supporting staff and helping to drive improvements in teaching when needed.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to use and apply numeracy and literacy across other subjects and topics and, as such, fosters good progress. It is enriched by a wide range of after-school and lunchtime activities. All Year 5 pupils learn to play the trumpet together and there are opportunities to learn to play other instruments with visiting musicians. The new primary school sports funding has broadened opportunities and as a result, more pupils are now participating in a more diverse range of sport activities, for example, pupils now learn to play golf and represent the school at county-level competitions.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and supports pupils to make an excellent contribution to the positive atmosphere in school. Pupils are aware of different religions and cultures and this is made real for them with, for example, their residential trip to Bradford and York.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and future developments because they visit school as often as they can and receive accurate, detailed reports from both school leaders and pupils. The Chair of the Governing Body has been instrumental in encouraging an increased level of governor involvement with their link classes and subject areas. More efficient systems to record and share their observations from these visits have now been established.
 - Governors have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and know how this compares with other schools. This enables them to challenge school leaders effectively. The governing body carefully checks the progress of the very few pupils supported by pupil premium funding to make sure that spending has a good impact on improving their achievement. It has a good overview of the quality of teaching and checks that how well staff carry out their duties is directly linked to the salary structure and any pay awards.
 - Governors undertake statutory duties, making sure safeguarding meets requirements so that pupils and staff are safe. Their planning for the appointment of a new headteacher and other new staff has been well supported by the local authority.

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	112163
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	439558

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Denvir
Headteacher	Gillian Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2009
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