

Seahouses First School

Main Street, North Sunderland, Seahouses, Northumberland, NE68 7UE

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few pupils by the end of Year 2 attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement because pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 do not make enough progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers are sometimes not ambitious enough for pupils and do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for them, especially the most able. Too often, work is unmarked and pupils do not know how to make it better.
- Teachers do not have good subject knowledge about the new National Curriculum because they have not had high-quality professional development.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not routinely make best use of their time in lessons to support pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders do not play a big enough part in school improvement. Their impact on improving pupils' achievement is limited.
- Senior leaders and governors do not ensure that the actions within the school's improvement plans drive the school forward with sufficient urgency. Plans also lack detail about how progress will be checked.
- Governors do not routinely challenge the school about the progress that the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils make.
- There is no whole-school system to record incidents of poor behaviour so any trends or patterns are not understood or addressed.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision for children in the early years is good. Communication between school and home is exemplary. As a result, children make good progress.
- Safeguarding is secure. Pupils enjoy school. They behave well and feel safe.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) and early reading skills is good in the early years and Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- The school's work was observed together with a number of documents including information about pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding, behaviour and leaders' monitoring of teaching.
- In addition, the inspector looked at work in pupils' books with the two middle leaders and also records of the learning of the children in the early years.
- The inspector held discussions with school leaders, teachers, two representatives of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with groups of pupils and the inspector listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, the school's most recent survey of parents on the school's website and held informal discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector took account of the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This first school is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs is smaller than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding has fallen year-on-year and is half the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The school is part of the Alnwick Partnership of Schools. Northumberland County Council is currently consulting on the reorganisation of the Alnwick Partnership of Schools.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception class and part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- There is an onsite pre-school facility, Busy Bees Seahouses CIC Ltd. It was judged to be good at the time of its last inspection. The inspection report can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact that leaders, at all levels, have on raising achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils by:
 - increasing the rigour of the school's action planning for improvement and introducing regular checks on progress
 - checking on pupils' progress in lessons regularly and more rigorously
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are able to use a wide range of evidence (including pupils' work in books) to identify ways for pupils to improve their learning
 - deploying teachers and teaching assistants appropriately in lessons so they are best placed to support pupils' learning and progress more effectively
 - ensuring that governors routinely and rigorously check on the performance of disadvantaged and more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and leads to high achievement for all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what all pupils, irrespective of individual differences, can achieve
 - teachers plan appropriately challenging work, especially for the most able pupils
 - all staff increase their subject knowledge through high-quality professional development, especially in relation to the increased demands of the new National Curriculum for mathematics
 - all pupils' work is marked regularly and provides pupils with a sharp understanding of how to improve it
 - teachers keep their pupils' targets up to date and share these with pupils so they know the next step to improve their learning.
 - introduce a whole school system to record incidents of poor behaviour in order to identify and address any trends or patterns so that these can be dealt with.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leaders have failed to ensure that achievement is good enough, especially for the most able pupils.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has not ensured that all of these pupils make good or better progress.
- Leaders have implemented an assessment system to track regularly the attainment and progress of pupils. The checking of the standard of pupils' work within the Alnwick Partnership of Schools, including Seahouses Middle School, has ensured accurate assessment information for each child. However, this is not being used by teachers in classrooms to drive improvement.
- Pupils and parents told inspectors that there are occasional incidents of poor behaviour, for example name-calling. The school has not implemented a system to record all such incidents. This means that any trends and patterns remain unidentified and no coordinated action is taken to remedy matters.
- The early years provision is much improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- The role that middle leaders have in monitoring attainment and progress in the subjects they lead requires improvement. Although some monitoring has taken place, it does not regularly identify any strengths and areas for development. Individual subject action plans do not contribute to whole-school planning.
- Pupil progress targets which are set by leaders lack ambition. Similarly, targets that are set in teachers' performance management are not ambitious either, because they are not precise enough to hold teachers to account for their work.
- Leaders' judgement of the standard of teaching in the school is inaccurate. No areas for improvement have been highlighted for any member of staff and none involve any observations of the teaching of mathematics.
- The quality of the curriculum requires improvement because teaching staff are not knowledgeable enough about the demands of the new National Curriculum. In mathematics, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills and knowledge to solve problems and there are too many pages of repetitive and unchallenging calculations in workbooks. Pupils do not use their mathematical knowledge and skills often enough in other areas of the curriculum.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences effectively; it ensures that good relations are fostered and that discrimination in all its forms is rejected. It prepares pupils for life in modern Britain well. Pupils have respect and tolerance for those from other faiths and cultures. They understand the democratic process through, for example, question and answer sessions with their local member of parliament. However, equality of opportunity is not yet good because the most able pupils and pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium funding do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The primary physical education and sport funding has been used effectively to increase the range of sporting opportunities for pupils and the expertise of teaching staff through the work of a specialist coach who works within the Alnwick Partnership of Schools.
- Historically, the local authority has not challenged the school robustly about the standards pupils reach and the progress pupils make. Recently, following the appointment of a new School Improvement Partner, the level of challenge has improved. He has carried out checks in the school and found that the most able pupils are not making good progress, teaching is inconsistent and additional adults are not always deployed effectively. The local authority's support in improving the provision in the early years has resulted in better teaching and higher pupil outcomes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has not made sure that teaching is good and that all of the pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
 - While governors understand the need to link teachers' performance and pay progression, this is not carried through in practice.
 - The governing body has an inflated view of the quality of teaching in some areas of the school and this hinders their work in holding staff to account.
 - Members of this very small governing body have an inaccurate overview of the performance of the school at the end of the early years, Key Stage 1 and Year 4.
 - Governors have not challenged the school effectively about the progress that the most able pupils make. Similarly, the governors could not explain the impact that the pupil premium funding has had on outcomes for eligible pupils.

- Governors ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, considerate and welcoming towards other pupils and adults in school. Pupils are attentive in lessons and are eager to learn. On occasions, when not sufficiently challenged, their concentration wanes and they do not complete enough work and do not make good progress.
- Pupils are happy in this caring, harmonious, community school. Pupils behave well in the playground, corridors and dining hall. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and appropriately by adults in the school.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are eager to take on roles of responsibility and take pride in being elected as a sports leader or member of the school council.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school fully meets all safeguarding requirements.
- Pupils and parents told the inspector that pupils are safe in school and well-supported by the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from everyday hazards through work completed in school and by visits from outside agencies such as the fire brigade.
- E-safety is strong. Posters, prepared by the pupils, are placed throughout the school and outline the rules and regulations for being safe when using modern technology.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the different forms that bullying can take. They say that bullying hardly ever happens, but when it does it is sorted out very quickly by the adults in school.
- Pupils are eager to come to school and are always punctual. Attendance, which is now broadly average, improved strongly following assertive action taken by school leaders.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teachers have low expectations of the most able pupils. The work that is set for pupils in mathematics, especially the most able, does not provide sufficient challenge. Pupils spend too long repeating calculations that they know how to do. They do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems, use their mathematical reasoning skills or develop their knowledge of the subject.
- The quality of teachers' marking does little to help pupils know how to improve their work. Some pupils' writing is unmarked and, as a result, this lack of feedback is limiting their progress. The quality of the presentation of their work has declined. Pupils make better progress in classes where teachers follow the school's marking policy and give pupils a chance to respond to their marking and improve their work.
- There is a whole-school system for target setting in writing but this is not used effectively by all staff because some teachers do not change these targets frequently enough. This results in pupils having targets they have already comfortably reached with no guidance of what they have to do next to make good progress.
- Additional adults are not always used effectively. Qualified teachers sometimes sit and watch other teachers deliver lessons to larger classes of children. This is not a good use of their time and limits the support which pupils receive.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Year 1 is good. Pupils have a secure knowledge of phonics. This enables them to read new words and correct their own mistakes. The teaching of reading is good and is very well supported by parents at home. Pupils enjoy reading. They read with expression and are able to answer questions about the book they are reading currently. This good start is not extended well enough into Years 2, 3 and 4 where underachievement is widespread, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils present their work very well in mathematics as adults insist that pupils write one digit in one square. Presentation is not as good in the pupils' writing and many of the older pupils do not write in the joined handwriting script that they have been taught.
- There is a notable difference in the provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs because teaching assistants provide well-organised and well-targeted support. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is inconsistent between key stages and progress for the most able pupils is not good enough.
- In 2014, pupils' attainment in the Year 2 national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average, having declined from previous years. None of the highest-achieving children at the end of the early years in 2012 reached the highest level at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014. The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the work set does not challenge or inspire them.
- Disadvantaged pupils were three terms behind their peers in writing and one term behind their peers in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupil premium funding is not well used to support this group of pupils in all classes. They do, however, make good progress in the early years and in Year 1 but not enough in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Pupils make good progress in the acquisition of phonics and early reading skills in the early years and Year 1. Pupils enjoy reading and parents support the school well by listening to children read at home. The proportion of pupils who reached the required level in the 2014 phonics screening check was above the national average and improved significantly from the previous two years.
- Those pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress because their individual needs are met. Pupils develop confidence and skills through well-focused one-to-one support from school staff, for example in reading, and from the additional professionals arranged by the school.

The early years provision is good

- Provision in the early years was a key area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Provision in the early years is now good.
- The early years leader, who is also the school's senior teacher, leads the area well, plans effectively and takes into account children's interests. As a result, she ensures the children make consistently good progress through good teaching and accurate assessment. She demonstrates a keen understanding of their future learning needs. From their different, but generally slightly below typical starting points, the large majority of children make good progress. Children settle very quickly into the early years and make good progress because of the very effective transition arrangements that have been developed and implemented by the leader.
- Children make good progress in the acquisition of writing skills because of the varied and plentiful opportunities for them to write both indoors and outdoors. Progress is not as good in the development of skills in number. Although there are numerous number-related resources provided in the early years, children do not choose to use them. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for children to have a go at problem solving.
- The school has developed a highly effective partnership with parents. Parents know what their children are doing in school, how well their children progress and what their children will learn next. Parents are keen to get involved. Every parent reads with their child at home, every parent attends parent/teacher consultation meetings and every parent contributes regularly to their child's learning journal.
- There is a joyous atmosphere in the early years. Behaviour is exemplary because the adults constantly model high expectations and children strive to meet them. At all times children are kept safe.

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	122214
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	449656

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roslyn Slater
Headteacher	Margaret Ayden
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2009
Telephone number	01665 720444
Fax number	01665 720444
Email address	admin@seahousesfirst.northumberland.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

