

Seascope Primary School

Ellison Road, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 5NJ

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes in mathematics are below average across the school. Results show that pupils' progress rates in mathematics by the end of Year 6 were among the lowest nationally.
- The most able pupils do not reach their full potential, particularly in mathematics, because work set for them is too easy.
- Middle-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils and some of those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as others. This is because staff do not check that their activities are helping them learn effectively.
- Attendance is low. A significant proportion of this is due to unauthorised holidays taken during term time.
- Exclusions are high in the additional resourced mainstream base.
- Current assessment information shows that pupils are not making enough progress in some year groups, particularly in mathematics, in order for them to catch up.
- Actions by teachers to challenge pupils' misconceptions are not specific enough to ensure that pupils make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have had to accommodate a significant number of staffing changes, and because of this the quality of teaching remains variable.
- Many leaders, including governors, are new to their posts and the actions taken to address areas for improvement have not been specific enough to have had an effect on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to read for enjoyment.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and staff are determined that the school should improve. All are committed to the welfare and care of the pupils.
- Children make good progress from low starting points in the early years.
- Almost all pupils are well behaved, polite, respectful and willing to learn.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly increase the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations and above in every class, particularly in mathematics at key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that expectations are high for all pupils, especially the most able
 - keeping a careful check that learning activities and additional support provided for middle-attaining pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are helping them make faster progress
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and ensuring that they are more able to identify and address any remaining weaknesses and misconceptions in pupils' numeracy skills
 - encouraging pupils' reading for enjoyment by ensuring that all children have access to books to read at home.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, and so accelerate the pace of the school's improvement by:
 - regularly checking that any actions taken to secure improvements across the school are measured for their effect
 - ensuring that leaders monitor attendance effectively.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

An external review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not been able to sustain good standards of education. Over time, outcomes for pupils have declined and now require improvement.
- Senior leaders and staff have worked hard to ensure the smooth and orderly day-to-day management of the school during a period of many staffing changes. Support for pupils' welfare and emotional needs is high on the agenda, and the school endeavours to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Plans for improvement identify the key areas of weakness. However, they lack clear and measurable steps to enable leaders to check how well the school is progressing. This has slowed the pace of school improvement.
- Senior leaders have worked resolutely to address some of the weaker aspects of teaching. They have had some success as there is now some good-quality teaching in every key stage. However, the turnover in teaching staff since the previous inspection has made it very difficult for leaders to ensure that all teaching is of a good enough quality. As a result, pupils have fallen behind and are not yet making rapid enough progress to overcome gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Middle leaders are very committed and enthusiastic. They all support each other well to bring about improvements. However, most are relatively new to their roles, so they are still developing the necessary expertise to check thoroughly that pupils are making the rapid rates of progress necessary for them to catch up.
- Leaders have ensured that the systems for the performance management of staff relate to whole-school priorities and personal development. However, the targets set for teachers are not specific enough or measurable enough to quickly improve the outcomes for pupils.
- Most of the responses to the staff questionnaire about the school were largely positive. However, almost one third of respondents included some negative responses regarding aspects of leadership, in particular the availability of leaders to support staff with behaviour management.
- The curriculum is improving. Leaders have adapted the curriculum to support the varied needs of the pupils in school. The development of the outdoor provision has provided pupils with physical activities to focus their energy during breaktimes when behaviour is sometimes more boisterous. Mini-police projects are helping to meet the needs of the community by tackling anti-social behaviour. There is evidence of a range of subjects taught through topics. However, the quality of the work in pupils' books is not consistent in developing writing across the curriculum and challenging the most able. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered effectively through the different topics studied. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain through focused assemblies and regular discussion of current affairs.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to provide some additional support for pupils and exciting outdoor activities such as picking vegetables and making soup in The Barn. Leaders check the standards attained by pupils known to be eligible for the funding. However, they do not take enough care in ensuring that the funding is as effective as

possible in helping these pupils to catch up.

- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium funding effectively to encourage pupils to be fit and active at breaktimes and lunchtime, through a wide range of activities and resources. Teachers also have the opportunity to work alongside specialist sports coaches. This is helping to improve their skills and confidence to teach a range of sporting activities.
- Leaders and managers have recently recognised that some records and policies need updating and they are taking steps to address this.
- The local authority provides some appropriate support, including the improvement of the early years provision and subsequent outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not done enough to challenge school leaders over the progress that pupils are making.
- A number of governors lack the skills to ask pertinent questions about the assessment information presented to them.
- A recent skills audit indicates that the majority of governors are very new to the role. Although governors do not currently have the skills to question the leadership effectively, they have identified training opportunities to help them improve.
- Following the recent changes, governors are keen to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They welcome the opportunity for an external review of governance.
- Governors are frequent visitors to school and keen to ensure that outcomes for pupils improve rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that members of staff have had appropriate training and know what actions to take if they have a concern.
- Leaders keep detailed records of the actions they take to protect pupils.
- Leaders manage a challenging caseload of pupils at risk. They work closely with external agencies and take timely action to protect these children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not all teaching has been good enough over time to enable all pupils to reach the standards they are capable of. A very large number of staffing changes has led to variable rates of pupils' progress.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own records show that, with a full complement of staff in post, the quality of teaching is starting to improve. However, its

effect on pupils' outcomes is not yet rapid enough.

- Senior leaders have a clear view of where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie. Their monitoring over time shows that they have taken good steps to improve classroom practice.
- The teaching of mathematics is not consistently strong. A legacy of poor teaching has led to pupils lacking in basic number skills. As a result, pupils do not confidently develop their skills of reasoning and problem solving. Teachers are not using their ongoing assessments effectively enough to address these weaknesses and correct any misconceptions.
- The teaching of reading is improving; however, this could be accelerated if staff consistently encouraged pupils to take books home to read.
- Teachers and support staff work hard to provide attractive learning environments in the classrooms and corridors. They establish positive relationships with the pupils. Most pupils try hard with their work and are keen to learn.
- Although teaching is variable in quality, there is some good-quality teaching in every key stage. Teachers increasingly plan activities that interest and engage pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good, although levels of attendance remain low.
- Pupils are increasingly taking pride in their work and their uniform. They are positive about school and enjoy learning.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe, which is a strength of the school given the many challenges that the school faces. They can explain, for example, how to stay safe when using the internet and electronic devices.
- The school supports the emotional well-being of pupils very well through its enhanced mainstream provision and counselling service. This enables pupils to develop their self-confidence and lifelong coping skills.
- Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what might constitute different forms of bullying. The many pupils who spoke with an inspector said that bullying is rare in school. These pupils agreed that they feel safe in school and that they would have someone to turn to if they had any worries or concerns. During the course of the inspection, an inspector observed an assembly focused on anti-bullying, in which staff effectively communicated clear messages about the effect of bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in and around school. They are friendly, curious and polite to visitors.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely very positive. They work well with others in the class and listen respectfully to their teacher. Most pupils work hard and try their best, and are very proud of their achievements. Nevertheless, a small minority occasionally lose concentration, particularly if they find their work too hard or too easy. However, they do not normally distract other pupils from learning.
- A small number of parents and staff expressed some concern about pupils' behaviour in school and with how effectively the school deals with bullying. Inspectors explored these concerns thoroughly during the inspection and found that they did not share this view.
- The school supports well pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour, in class, through lunchtime clubs and through the development of exciting outdoor learning provision, which includes a mudslide, bikes and go-karts.
- The overall level of attendance is below the national average for primary schools. The school checks the attendance of pupils and endeavours to encourage pupils to attend school more regularly; however, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains higher than that found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached age-related expectations and the proportion exceeding such expectations in the Year 6 national testing and assessment were below that seen nationally. The work in pupils' books shows that many pupils do not make good enough progress relative to their starting points, particularly in mathematics.
- In 2017, the results attained by disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 were much lower than those attained by other pupils nationally. Some disadvantaged pupils in other classes are starting to make faster progress. However, others still have a lot of lost ground to make up and continue to make slower progress than other pupils nationally.
- Over time, historic outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are poor. The changing number of these pupils joining the school, often late in key stage 2, contribute to these poor outcomes. Pupils placed on the SEN register early and who complete key stage 2, have also made relatively weak progress. Outcomes for SEN pupils in key stage 1 have also been weak.
- Expectations are not high enough for the most able pupils in some classes. In 2016, no pupils attained the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics, in key stage 2. In 2017, a very small percentage attained the higher standard in reading and writing, but no pupils attained this standard in mathematics.
- In 2017, the number of pupils in the additionally resourced provision who reached age-related expectations and the proportion exceeding such expectations in the Year 6 national testing and assessment were below those seen nationally. Pupils generally join

this provision towards the end of key stage 2 and consequently have less time to make accelerated progress.

- The proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check has been rising for the last three years; however, it is still below the national average.
- At key stage 1, pupils' attainment has also been low. In 2016 and 2017, the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly lower than that nationally seen. The work in pupils' books shows that their progress is too variable across the school. They make slower progress in one year group and then catch up with their learning in another. This means that some pupils fail to reach their full potential, particularly in mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter school with skills which are below those expected for their age and stage of development. From a very low position, over the last four years, there has been a year-on-year improvement in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception, which is now moving towards national figures. Children's speech and language and social and emotional development are generally the pupils' weaker areas of learning.
- The provision for two-year olds offers a safe, stimulating and nurturing environment where children can play, explore and learn together. They quickly settle into a routine playing alongside others and join in singing songs and rhymes. This helps them to extend their vocabulary. Such is the quality of the provision that it is beginning to successfully diminish the differences between disadvantaged children and others. The majority of children who attended this provision successfully achieved a good level of development when they left Reception in summer 2017.
- Over the last two years, the school has made significant improvements to both the indoor and outdoor provision, encouraging children to explore and investigate the world around them. Adults actively encourage children to lead their own learning, which is helping them to develop their confidence and independence.
- In Reception, children make secure progress. Adults work effectively to design learning activities that meet the children's needs. Adults place a greater emphasis on child-initiated learning activities. They also provide effective, more formal teaching of reading and number skills. Across the year, the proportion of children working at the expected level of development increases.
- Staff work in conjunction with parents to identify needs in the early years. The school uses a range of external agencies and employs a speech therapist for one-to-one support of pupils who have speech and language development needs.
- Assessment of children's ability is ongoing and frequent. Staff review each child's progress every half term and update their assessments. This is ensuring that staff are clear as to each child's next steps.
- Children develop good social skills. They respect each other's views and choices. They are kind to each other and try to follow instructions carefully. The early years environment is safe and secure and fully meets welfare standards.

- The early years leader is ambitious and determined to get children off to the best possible start. She makes regular checks on the quality of provision and carefully plans what needs to be improved. She has fostered a good team approach between the teachers and other adults. Her good leadership of the early years means that disadvantaged children get extra help to catch up and address any gaps in their learning.
- Senior leaders have taken decisive action to admit two-year olds to the school as an important strategy for supporting disadvantaged children and their families. This is paying dividends in helping children to understand rules and routines, interact more confidently with others and develop a better quality of language.
- Children who have come through the two-year-old provision are now entering Nursery with skills in line with expectations for their age.

School details

Unique reference number	133701
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10037724

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Howarth
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Hudson
Telephone number	01915 864186
Website	www.seascapeprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	seascape@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	5– 6 March 2014

Information about this school

- Seascape Primary School is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Provisional results for 2017 indicate that Seascape Primary School met the floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The local authority has supported Seascape Primary School effectively, improving early years provision, resulting in improved outcomes.
- The school has a local authority-resourced enhanced mainstream provision on site, catering for up to eight pupils who have social and emotional difficulties and who are deemed to be at risk of exclusion. Pupils are placed in the provision from schools across East Durham. The majority transfer into the provision in Year 5 and Year 6 and are entered onto the school roll.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average. A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Inspectors visited some lessons jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils read. In addition, inspectors scrutinised in detail a sample of books containing work from a broad range of subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils at playtime and lunchtime and observed their movement and behaviour around the school. Inspectors also visited the school's breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, the early years leader, middle leaders, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and a group of pupils. Inspectors also met with a group of governors including the chair of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents. They included the school's view of its own performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through informal discussions, analysis of the school's own questionnaire to parents, and the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text responses.
- Inspectors also took account of the 22 staff responses to the inspection questionnaire about the school.

Inspection team

Lucie Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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