

Inspection of a good school: Seaton Sluice First School

Granville Avenue, Seaton Sluice, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE26 4BX

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Seaton Sluice First School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils sing at every opportunity. Music is the bedrock on which the school is built. There are specially composed school songs for nearly everything. This includes lining up after break, tidying the class or describing the key school values. One pupil described being at school as simply 'joyful'. Another correctly said that everyone is happy because they are safe and secure. One pupil told the inspector that singing was 'good for you' because it helped when you are feeling sad or upset. Pupils know about the different types of bullying. They are sure that it does not happen at school. Occasional fallings-out are quickly sorted out by staff.

Pupils are given every chance to be a part of school life. Every older pupil is included in the school's 'leadership programme'. This gives them real responsibility in events such as assemblies, promoting healthy eating, singing and outdoor learning. The school is outward-looking. It has a significant community involvement and ties to a school in Tanzania. Pupils love winning an award for school games and competitive sport. Active learning and healthy lifestyles are an important part of school life. 'Fit Fridays' allow learning to take part in a fun way, often outdoors.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In mathematics, reading and music, pupils understand the important concepts. This is because teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn. Lessons build on what pupils already know. Teachers make sure that pupils understand and use the words linked to a subject. For other subjects, whole-school plans match those seen in music. Lessons in all subjects build pupils' knowledge progressively.

The school benefits from the expertise of the music specialist. Pupils have sufficient time to learn all key concepts in music. This includes musical notation in Year 1 and chords in Year 4. Music is delivered through many different subjects. This helps pupils to remember more by using music as a tool to recall information. All pupils have many chances to compose music, learn an instrument and perform. Music is woven through all of school

life and is a key part of pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are not yet able to recall and talk about great composers of the past.

The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) extremely well. All pupils with SEND have access to the good-quality curriculum. Their individual needs are catered for well. This includes the 'Stepping Stones' class in which pupils' individual needs are met by dedicated and skilled staff. 'Pupil passports' make sure that activities and resources are very well matched to pupils' abilities and development.

The leader of mathematics has worked hard to make sure that all staff have a good understanding of the curriculum. Important areas of the mathematics curriculum are now planned well. Lessons are taught in an order that helps pupils understand. In mathematics lessons, pupils can explain clearly what they are doing and why. Pupils can also explain what they have already learned in a previous year and how this has helped them with their current work. However, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. In addition, lessons in mathematics do not routinely go over previous learning to help pupils remember what they have been taught in previous weeks or terms.

Phonics teaching is effective. Leaders have a clear commitment to making pupils' early reading skills even better. Teachers ensure that pupils learn and remember phonics sounds. They learn to blend sounds together. Pupils falling behind are given extra support. Reading books are mostly well matched to pupils' reading skills. This means that they can read them with confidence on their own. However, not all pupils have reading books they can read by themselves. This slows their development. Occasionally, a few of the more fluent readers have books which are too difficult. Some pupils cannot enjoy a book because it is too hard. Adults listen to pupils read often. There is no doubt that reading is a high priority for the school. Consequently, pupils are becoming fluent readers.

The early years leader is new to the school. She has made real and significant changes in the Reception class. A reorganisation and new resources have helped children to access activities that fire their curiosity and desire to explore. Children are always busy. They work hard on their own or with others. Children are making a strong start with their phonics knowledge. They have lots of activities to count and represent number, both indoors and outdoors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. The school holds detailed records of safeguarding training for staff, including when training needs to be reviewed. The regular updates for staff give them information about risks to watch out for. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding know pupils and their families well. Governors fulfil their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding. Where appropriate, staff communicate with outside agencies. Pupils have detailed knowledge about the dangers they may face online and how to avoid these. The school has worked to improve pupils' rates of attendance. These are now above those found nationally.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is focused on ensuring that pupils quickly learn to read. Some pupils' reading books closely match their phonics knowledge as they are learning to read. These pupils read with increasing confidence because they do not get stuck on difficult words. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils who are learning to read are given books that contain only the sounds they know. This process is under way, as new reading material has been recently ordered. Leaders must also ensure that all pupils regularly read books which are appropriate for their reading skills. This applies to a few of the more confident readers in key stage 1 who have books that are too difficult.
- Leaders must make sure that pupils have many more opportunities to use and apply their deepening mathematical knowledge. Currently, pupils have a very limited experience of problem-solving and reasoning activities in daily mathematics lessons.
- In mathematics, teachers already ensure that the curriculum is planned and sequenced so that pupils are taught the skills and knowledge they need for future learning. Leaders must ensure that all teachers revisit this knowledge more frequently so that pupils remember in the long term the content and skills they have been taught.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 11 February 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	122234
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10110784
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sharon Stirling
Headteacher	Amanda Bennett
Website	www.seatonsluicesouth.northumberland.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	11 February 2016

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils and an after-school club.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is just above average.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff, including the office manager.
- I met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met a representative of the local authority.
- I took account of the 70 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View. I scrutinised the 23 parents' and carers' comments on the free-text facility. I also considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes

and lunchtimes. I also observed a 'singing assembly'.

- I gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussion, including with the representatives from the school council and some of the school's pupil ambassadors.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and safeguarding documents. I also looked at information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- I looked in depth at the following subjects: reading, mathematics and music. This included discussions with leaders of the subjects, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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