

Inspection of New Seaham Academy

Byron Terrace, Seaham, County Durham SR7 0HX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at New Seaham Academy have a strong vision for the academic and personal development of their pupils. They are committed to giving pupils a wealth of experiences. Due to a lengthened school day, all pupils benefit from an impressive range of lessons as part of their curriculum. All pupils participate in mindfulness, forestry school, singing and an exciting range of sports, among other lessons. Pupils develop leadership skills and a deep understanding of responsibility. Older pupils organise and run extra-curricular clubs for younger children. Older pupils enjoy undertaking positions of responsibility around school.

Pupils agree that bullying does not happen here. Pupils at this school understand what bullying is. They know it is not acceptable. If anyone were to be unkind, pupils believe that teachers would deal with this effectively. Pupils cooperate and play together happily. At social times, pupils enjoy chatting, drawing and reading in the playground.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils are proud of their achievements and want to excel. They enjoy the challenges that school offers them. Strong relationships between pupils and staff are evident across the school. Children in Reception settle quickly and enjoy learning.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils to learn across the curriculum. For example, pupils in key stage 2 learn to play numerous musical instruments. They recall French vocabulary with enthusiasm. Leaders have thought carefully how pupils will learn about sculpture in art. Leaders have prioritised vocabulary in their planning. In some subjects, key knowledge is very carefully mapped out. Leaders have decided precisely what they want pupils to know. This is done more effectively in some subjects than in others.

Leaders make sure that teachers have strong subject knowledge through ongoing training. This means that explanations in lessons are clear. Teachers use questioning skilfully to identify gaps in pupils' understanding. Those gaps are closed quickly. Teachers insist that pupils participate in lessons. They make sure that everyone is included. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported in lessons so they can achieve along with their peers.

Leaders recognise that reading underpins children's education. They have ensured that early reading is prioritised. Staff are well trained to make sure they teach reading effectively. Pupils benefit from strong phonics teaching. They learn the basics of reading quickly. Teachers ensure pupils have lots of chances to practise their reading. Pupils who struggle with reading are supported to catch up quickly.

Leaders are creative about how they inspire pupils to read for pleasure. The reading throne is a popular addition to reading assemblies. Pupils enjoy the chance to lead

these assemblies and read to their peers. Pupils can read to the school dog in the reading corner of their classroom. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the stories their teachers read to them.

Pupils behave very well in school. In classrooms, they are keen to learn. They enjoy participating in lessons. Lessons are not disrupted by behaviour. Even the youngest children understand what adults expect. Children in Reception benefit from these high expectations. They already follow clear routines. Adults encourage children to be independent. Adults plan carefully how to prepare children for moving into key stage 1.

Leaders' commitment to the development of children beyond their academic subjects is exceptional. The range of enrichment and leadership opportunities are designed to ensure pupils have the best possible chance to succeed in life. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about diversity and healthy relationships through their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) lessons. The SMSC curriculum covers a range of topics that ensure that pupils understand how to be respectful and responsible citizens. Pupils talk maturely about respect and tolerance. They celebrate difference. Pupils routinely volunteer to lead assemblies on topics that are important to them.

Leaders at all levels are passionate about providing pupils with the best experiences. Leaders make sure that staff have access to ongoing training and support. Staff feel well supported working here. They feel that leaders are willing to listen. However, some parents do not share this view. Some parents feel that it is difficult to communicate with school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils have trusted adults in school. Pupils are confident to share any concerns or worries with adults. Staff undergo regular training and updates to ensure they are well informed about safeguarding issues. Staff are aware of the risks that pupils might face. Staff are clear about what they should look out for and report. They know the system for logging their concerns. Pupils feel safe in school. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, particularly online.

When concerns are raised, leaders seek external guidance to make sure that the right action is taken to keep pupils safe. Leaders carry out robust checks on the adults who work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parents do not feel communication with school is effective. They do not feel that there are avenues to express any concerns they may have. Leaders should ensure that effective systems are in place for communication with parents.
- In some subjects, key knowledge is not mapped out as clearly as in other subjects. Teachers, therefore, cannot highlight this effectively and some pupils do not retain these important facts or concepts. As a result, it is more difficult for pupils to build on prior learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that the strength seen in some curriculum areas is in place across all subject areas.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	138826
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10229048
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Carling
Headteacher	Bernadette Dolan
Website	www.newseaham.org.uk/

Information about this school

- New Seaham Primary School converted to become an academy in October 2012. It reopened as New Seaham Academy.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Ofsted has not previously inspected New Seaham Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged New Seaham Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as New Seaham Academy as a result of conversion to academy status. The 'outstanding' grade reflected New Seaham Primary School's overall effectiveness in October 2008, under the relevant inspection framework at that time. The judgement of 'good' reflects the overall effectiveness of New Seaham Academy under the current inspection framework.

- Inspectors spoke with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, and representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair and the vice-chair. An inspector also spoke by telephone with an external consultant that the school works with.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans from other subject areas.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They looked at a sample of work from pupils with SEND. They checked on the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors checked the single central record and documentation related to safer recruitment. Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding. They checked logs of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils, formally and informally, during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils at social times.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and relationships education. Inspectors looked at curriculum planning for these areas.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for behaviour. They looked at behaviour and attendance data. Inspectors spoke with pupils who had been subject to sanctions.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, minutes of trustee board meetings and external reviews.
- Inspectors considered responses to the staff survey and to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

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