

Inspection of a good school: Seaham Trinity Primary School

Princess Road, Seaham, County Durham SR7 7SP

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 October 2023

Outcome

Seaham Trinity Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and supportive school where pupils are happy and safe.

Leaders and staff have clear expectations that pupils will thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Pupils successfully learn crucial knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics. In other subject areas, such as history, pupils are gaining some of the important knowledge they need. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils' learning is less developed.

The school has clear behaviour rules, which pupils understand. Staff apply these consistently. As a result, pupils work well in lessons and move around school sensibly. Children in early years quickly learn the school routines. This helps them to develop socially and to learn effectively. Incidents of bullying are rare. Leaders and staff address these promptly. They help and guide pupils to restore relationships and they teach appropriate behaviours.

The school's breakfast club helps pupils make a positive start to the day. A range of clubs is available in school. Pupils have responsible roles, such as school councillors, which enables them to have a voice in the school's development. Leaders, including governors, believe that pupils should develop their citizenship qualities. Pupils are involved with several projects, which contribute to the local community.

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

Leaders have revised the curriculum and organised training for staff to deepen their expertise. This has strengthened the way subjects are taught. For example, in mathematics, from starting in Nursery children are taught important knowledge to help their understanding of number. The focus on important knowledge continues across school. This is ensuring that pupils' knowledge of number facts, such as multiplication tables, is improving. Teachers use effective approaches to help pupils retain mathematical

knowledge and to check pupils' learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils have gained secure mathematical knowledge.

The school successfully identifies and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers make suitable adaptations to their teaching and provide support to help pupils with SEND achieve well. Where pupils have more complex needs, well-considered plans are implemented to provide additional support. The school has recently introduced nurture provision for some younger pupils to assist their development.

In other subjects, such as history, the school has revised how topics and important knowledge are taught. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' knowledge. However, at times, what pupils will learn and how this knowledge builds are not clearly sequenced. Also, the approaches to checking that pupils have retained important knowledge in some subjects are not precise enough.

The school has prioritised reading. All staff have received appropriate training to enhance their expertise. Phonics and early reading are taught through a consistent approach. Staff use suitable checks to ensure that pupils achieve well. They provide support to help pupils catch up where required. The school ensures that books are well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. Reading is taught regularly, using quality texts. Books shared in class enrich pupils' learning in other subjects. As a result, pupils develop their reading competency and have a deepening love of reading.

Children in early years, respond positively to staff guidance. They behave sensibly and become successful learners. Pupils follow the school's, 'straight smart and silent' approach and move around school in an orderly manner. Pupils are attentive in lessons. During playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils are friendly and enjoy the range of activities available. Leaders use several approaches to encourage and support good pupil attendance and punctuality. However, the school's approaches are not systematic enough and too many pupils have low attendance levels or poor punctuality.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities for 'time to talk', if they have any concerns or anxieties. The school offers a range of clubs for all age ranges, including early years children. Links with local universities are established to raise aspirations for older pupils. The school encourages pupils to be active citizens through contributions to the local community. Pupils are proud of their important roles, such as school councillors and peer mentors. Residential visits help pupils to develop independence and confidence.

Leaders have accurate views of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Staff receive suitable training to develop their expertise. They are positive about the way leaders consider their workload and their well-being. Governors fulfil their roles effectively. They ensure that the school's resources are well used for the benefit of pupils. They assure themselves that the school's safeguarding procedures are followed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the school has not sequenced the knowledge that pupils need to learn specifically enough. Opportunities to check how well pupils are building their knowledge are not effectively used. Where this is the case, pupils do not develop their knowledge as well as they could. The school should continue its work to sequence knowledge more clearly across foundation subjects and to check how well pupils have learned this knowledge.
- Attendance levels for some pupils are too low and some are late for the start of the school day. This interrupts pupils' learning and restricts how well they learn. The school should devise a clear strategy for improving pupil attendance to ensure that pupils are punctual and attend school regularly.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134657
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10290146
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Robinson
Headteacher	Elisabeth Lee
Website	www.seahamtrinity.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

During the inspection, the school made the inspector aware of prior incidents at the setting which were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. This information, as well as the school's response, were taken into account when conducting the inspection.

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- The school uses two alternative providers, one is registered and one is unregistered.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. He met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector completed a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first. He completed a telephone call with Durham local authority designated officer.
- The inspector visited an unregistered alternative provider used by the school.
- The inspector met with school leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the school's provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil, staff, and parent surveys.

Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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