Inspection of Seaton Sluice First School

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

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in the main school and those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), The Lighthouse, benefit from attending this caring and welcoming school together. The school is rightly proud of its ethos that everyone is included.

Pupils like school because it is 'caring, fun and trustworthy'. They attend regularly and arrive on time. Pupils behave well in and around the school's safe and secure learning environment. They thrive and grow in confidence during breaktimes in the very well-resourced outdoor provision. Their social skills are developed as they explore the well-ordered allotment, new wooden teepee and established trim trail together.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Overall, pupils achieve well. Music is the bedrock of the school's academic and pastoral offer. All pupils learn to communicate with each other using sign language. Their joyful choral and signed performance of 'Defying Gravity' is spine tingling.

The school knows the pupils and their families very well. Parents and carers appreciate the support their children receive. One parent, echoing the views of most, said, 'Teachers go above and beyond to support my child's needs.'

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

Early reading is given very high priority at this school. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver the new phonics scheme, including pre-phonics activities in the Nursery Year, confidently and competently. Pupils read books that are matched precisely to the sounds they have been taught. Those pupils who struggle to read are given bespoke interventions, which help them to catch up quickly. Pupils' early writing skills are developing in line with their early reading skills. Their stamina for writing at length, together with their spelling and handwriting, has improved markedly since the beginning of the academic year.

Overall, pupils achieve well at this first school from their individual starting points. The school has developed and implemented new curriculums in every subject over the last eighteen months. The curriculums are designed to ensure pupils' knowledge, understanding and vocabulary develop sequentially from the Nursery Year to Year 4. Adults check pupils' progress through the curriculums accurately. The school is beginning to address the identified gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge and understanding. The formal curriculum is supported by a range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs, including multi-sports and gardening. Pupils also benefit from educational visits, such as one to Woodhorn Museum, linked to the new curriculum.

The pupils with SEND who attend The Lighthouse experience the same curriculum as their peers in the main school. They make small, but significant, steps of progress daily. They join their main-school peers at assembly time, in some lessons and at breaktimes.

Inclusivity is this school's watchword. The school meets the individual needs of pupils in The Lighthouse well.

Children in the early years understand and abide by the rules and routines they have been taught. The older pupils behave exceptionally well during the less-structured times of the school day. A few behave less well in lessons when the work that has been planned does not capture their interest. Staff are supportive, empathetic and intervene quickly when pupils with more complex SEND do not self-regulate their behaviour well. They use a range of therapeutic strategies successfully to support these pupils to regulate their behaviour and re-engage with school life. The number of behavioural incidents, although not large, is reducing over time.

The school provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to undertake roles of responsibility, such as school councillors and well-being ambassadors. These pupils make a difference to their own lives and the lives of others. In the early years, children contribute happily during tidy-up time. Pupils undertake charitable work willingly. For example, they completed a five-mile-long walk to raise funds for a school in Tanzania, recognising the daily three-mile-long walk of Tanzanian pupils to collect drinking water. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They understand the need for rules in school and the rule of law outside of school. However, their knowledge of different cultures, religions and ethnicities is much less developed.

The school evaluates its strengths and areas that require further development accurately. Staff, including early career teachers, appreciate the way in which the school considers their workload and well-being before new initiatives are implemented. Governors have been proactive in increasing leadership capacity.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's new curriculum is not embedded fully. In some subjects, some pupils have gaps in their foundational knowledge. The school should review its curriculum plans and address the identified gaps in pupils' knowledge incisively.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of cultural, religious and ethnic communities. They are not prepared fully for life in the local and national community beyond first school. The school should revisit its curriculum content to ensure its pupils are knowledgeable about cultural, religious and ethnic communities, both locally and nationally.

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	122234
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10346366
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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Gray
Headteacher	Amanda Bennett
Website	www.seatonsluicesouth.northumberland.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an additionally resourced provision, funded by the local authority, for pupils with autism and Down's syndrome who have an education, health and care plan. This provision has places for 14 pupils aged between four and nine. There are currently 14 pupils on roll. This provision is referred to as 'The Lighthouse' by the school community. All pupils who attend The Lighthouse are on the roll of Seaton Sluice First School.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- The lead inspector held discussions with four governors, including the chair of governors, a school improvement partner and the head of school improvement from Northumberland Local Authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The team also scrutinised pupils' English and history workbooks.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Jeynes	Ofsted Inspector

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