



Seascale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112163
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278867
Inspection dates 17 January 2006 to 18 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Andrew Scott

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crofthead Road
School category	Community		Seascale
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Cumbria, CA20 1LZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 728403
Number on roll	147	Fax number	01946 721003
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Philip Taylor
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Hartley

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 17 January 2006 - 18 January 2006	Inspection number 278867
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Seascale, with a few pupils coming from further afield. The socio-economic conditions in the locality are broadly average and all pupils are from white British families. When they start school, pupils' attainment is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly lower than average, but there are more pupils with statements of educational need than is usual. The level of pupil mobility is close to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Seascale Primary is a good school. Its good ethos for learning encourages and enables pupils to achieve well. Standards are consistently high in science. They have been usually above average in English and mathematics, but are average this year; throughout the school, pupils' skills in writing are just satisfactory. The good provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) means that children make good progress in these classes. Teaching is good overall, but pupils do not always receive work that is challenging enough, especially more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well taught.

Pupils develop well into thoughtful and responsible individuals. They benefit from an interesting programme of visits and activities, although teachers could do more to make everyday lessons more stimulating. Pupils rightly feel secure because the school takes good care of them, and they have good targets to improve because teachers monitor their progress well.

The firm, decisive leadership of the headteacher ensures that there are good priorities and strong teamwork among staff. There are good action plans for improvement but they are not all equally detailed. The inspector agrees that the school is good at evaluating its own progress and governors are fully involved in its development. There has been good progress since the last inspection, notably in standards, teaching, management and pupils' behaviour, to the approval of pupils and parents. The school now provides good value for money and is in a good position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils, especially more able pupils, so that they are more consistently challenged.
- Make lessons more stimulating and flexible so that pupils improve their writing skills and have more scope for independent learning.
- Ensure that all action plans for subjects are equally good, with sufficient detail and a clear focus on specific improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well by Year 6. Standards have been consistently above average in the national tests. However, the current Year 6 attain standards that are broadly average. This is because they started at a lower starting point on entry to the school compared with previous groups of pupils. The pupils' targets for this year's national tests in Year 6 are challenging but realistic, and they are on course to meeting them. Standards in the current Year 2 are average and have improved over recent years following a period of instability in staffing in Year 1.

Throughout the school, pupils' skills in writing are just satisfactory because of key weaknesses that include spelling and handwriting. However, standards in science are

consistently above average for all pupils. Like other pupils, those with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well. More able pupils do not always do as well as they could in English.

Through the nursery and reception classes, children achieve well. Their attainment upon entry to the school varies from year to year but is usually average. By the end of the reception year, most children exceed their early learning goals, although not always in language and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's enjoyment in coming to school is evident from their consistently good attendance. They especially appreciate the activities on offer, the rapport with their teachers and most of their subjects. They show this appreciation in lessons, when they maintain good concentration, even when lessons lose momentum. Behaviour is essentially good. Pupils say that there is occasional misbehaviour but that teachers deal with it well.

Pupils have a good sense of responsibility. In lessons, they work well without the need for constant supervision and they perform their duties sensibly as, for example, when staffing the tuck shop. They are well aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and why regular attendance is important. Pupils are prepared well for later life, particularly in their social skills.

Pupils develop a good cultural awareness through a variety of art and music activities. They increasingly understand issues about multi-cultural Britain and their own Cumbrian culture from their visits and activities, such as hiking on the fells. Although pupils' spiritual awareness is satisfactory, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall. Teaching and learning are better in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. This is not a reflection on the current teachers, but due to changes in staffing which have not given pupils good continuity in their recent learning. The work seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection was good.

There are several reasons for the good teaching. Teachers create a positive atmosphere in lessons so that pupils are eager to take part. New learning is clearly explained and presented so pupils readily appreciate new concepts. Teachers use new technology skilfully to motivate pupils. In the nursery and reception classes, there is a good blend of directed and independent activity.

For the most part, teachers assess pupils' progress well and set demanding targets. However, teachers do not always expect enough from all pupils. Not all lessons are

planned carefully enough so that all pupils receive work well matched to their ability. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported and learn well, and the contribution of teaching assistants is a key factor. However, more able pupils are not always challenged enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with good features. This conflicts with the school's view that it is good overall. There is satisfactory planning for teaching each subject. Teachers, encouraged by the headteacher, are becoming more skilled in using the planning to help pupils learn more effectively. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well tailored to help individual pupils progress well, and the school provides good opportunities for pupils with particular gifts or talents. The school also provides a good range of extra curricular activities, visits and visitors which broadens pupils' horizons.

However, such enrichment is not so apparent in all lessons. Teachers often rely on mundane worksheet activities and do not regularly spice up lessons to make them exciting. This helps to explain in part why pupils are not keen on writing. The school is aware that it could do more to promote independent learning, especially in mathematics and science, and link subjects more often to make learning relevant.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils, and parents appreciate this. Staff and governors are particularly effective at ensuring pupils' health and safety through good procedures, regular training of staff and being sensitive to pupils' needs. There are close links with outside agencies which provide valuable expertise when necessary. Pupils trust the staff completely and know they can turn to all adults for help in case of need; for example, to resolve disagreements in the playground.

The school has good systems for checking pupils' progress from year to year. Test results are analysed to show clearly where there are weaknesses in subjects, which pupils are doing well and which need extra help. In this way, teachers set helpful targets to benefit pupils, especially those who are finding their learning difficult. Pupils say that teachers are good at explaining to them how their work can improve. However, teachers' marking in books is not always so helpful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The firm and sensible leadership by the headteacher ensures a positive atmosphere in the school, with a strong focus on maintaining and improving standards. She has dealt with staffing and other important issues very effectively and has strengthened links with the community.

Senior teachers are also effective, particularly the acting assistant headteacher and the coordinator for English and learning difficulties or disabilities.

The school knows itself well. The evaluation of teaching is honest and perceptive, so that teachers are well aware of their strengths and how they can improve. Parents' views are sought, valued and acted upon, although a few parents do not believe this is the case. The school has identified most of the key areas for development, such as pupils' writing, and has created good action plans. However, not all subject leaders are specific enough in their plans, which often include too much routine activity.

The management of the school is effective. Financial planning is shrewd. For example, the headteacher has done extremely well to eradicate the school's deficit budget within two years. New procedures to give teachers more preparation time are very well costed and thoughtfully organised. Governors are fully involved with all decision making, have forged strong links with the school to support staff and make sure the school is heading in the right direction. Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and it has good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

To the children of:

Seascale Primary School

Crofthead Road

Seascale

Cumbria

CA20 1LZ

19 January 2006

Dear children

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school, and meeting you and your teachers. Thank you very much for all your comments and help around the school. Like you, I believe that yours is a good school because:

you do well in your work, especially in science

you develop into sensible, well behaved and thoughtful individuals

your teachers make learning enjoyable and expect you to work hard

there are lots of interesting activities both in and out of school

the adults in the school take good care of you and make sure you are healthy and safe

your headteacher and governors have improved the school a lot and have your best interests at heart.

However, your school could be better if:

teachers give you work that is always challenging, especially those of you who sometimes find the work too easy

lessons are exciting more often, especially to help your writing, and give you more chance to learn through discovery

all plans for the school are clear and detailed.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Additional Inspector