



Seaburn Dene Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108786
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288188
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Iain Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Torver Crescent
School category	Community		Seaburn Dene, Sunderland
Age range of pupils	4–11		Tyne and Wear, SR6 8LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 553 5590
Number on roll (school)	286	Fax number	0191 553 5592
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Les Cutting
		Headteacher	Mrs Maxine Stroland
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	28–29 September 2006	288188

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Seaburn Dene is a larger than average primary school serving a relatively advantaged area of Sunderland. Children enter with above nationally expected levels of attainment. Nearly all are of White British heritage. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Like many schools in the area, there has been a fall in the roll. The school has won many awards including an Active Mark and Arts Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The pupils' personal development is good; they are well cared for and safeguarded. They behave very well, enjoy school and learn how to keep safe. They are shown how to make a contribution to the local and the world community and they are equipped with the skills to enable them to acquire economic well-being in the future. The school strongly emphasises the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the pupils are encouraged to take part in physical exercise.

The pupils join the school with above average standards and by the time they leave they are still above average. The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is therefore satisfactory. However, it could be better than this. Not enough pupils who reach the higher levels in national tests at Year 2 go on to do so at Year 6, and there is unevenness in the progress made between year groups and between subjects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but in too many lessons the work provided does not challenge the pupils sufficiently. This is particularly the case for the higher attaining pupils. Not enough use is made of assessment information to match what is taught to the pupils' differing learning needs. Planning is too variable in quality. The provision for the Foundation Stage of learning is inadequate. It is poorly organised and not sufficiently focused on learning.

The leadership of the school is well aware of these shortcomings and has taken appropriate steps to address them. These measures have not yet had sufficient impact and there has to be more insistence that necessary improvements are actually carried out. The headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher, has successfully steered the school through a period of staffing turbulence and has created a positive ethos within which the pupils develop well as individuals. The school provides much in the way of enrichment and the sports and arts programmes are particularly successful. The school has the capacity to improve and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the achievement of pupils, especially the higher attainers, by monitoring and evaluating the teaching more rigorously, providing support where it is needed and ensuring that overall improvements are made.
- Make more effective use of assessment information to provide work that is closely matched to pupils' learning needs and challenges them sufficiently.
- Develop the provision in the Foundation Stage so that it is more focused on learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with standards that are above the level that is typical for their age. The inspection confirms that when pupils leave the school standards are above average. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. This achievement is

not consistent through the school and pupils progress at different rates due to the differences in the quality of the teaching and learning. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are inadequate and children's achievement is unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations of individual children are too low and the curriculum does not develop basic skills systematically enough. The national tests show that standards in Year 2 are above average, but results are inconsistent over time, both from year-to-year and between different subjects. The school has identified the weakness in the rate of progress over time in the junior classes. In the past three years, this has improved and achievement is now satisfactory overall. The new tracking system is effectively identifying when progress slows and the school is now in a better position to ensure a consistent rate of progress in the infant and junior classes. Standards in music and sports are high due to the school's strong emphasis on these areas.

Achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Teaching assistants support their individual needs effectively. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. More able pupils achieve inconsistently. Not enough pupils who reach high standards in Year 2 then go on to reach higher levels in Year 6. In some classes, teachers challenge these pupils well, resulting in good rates of progress. In other classes there is not enough attention paid to providing more difficult work or higher level questions to match their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. They behave very well, are friendly and confident. They listen to each other and their teachers with respect. They willingly do all that is asked of them. They know and conform to school and class rules. They show their enjoyment of school by attending regularly.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies contain a strong religious and moral flavour and the pupils are shown how they can make a contribution to the various communities they belong to. They are aware of the multicultural nature of Britain and are taught about a variety of lifestyles. The school council plays an important role in the life of the school and its members can cite many examples of how they have brought about improvements.

There is a good emphasis on teaching the pupils the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They know about healthy eating and are strongly encouraged to engage in sports and other physical activity. They feel safe in school and know how to avoid unnecessary risks. They enjoy school and can think of few things that would improve it. They acquire good basic skills and learn how to cooperate with each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are some examples of good teaching but also some that are inadequate. The quality is not good enough overall to ensure that the pupils achieve as well as they could.

In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is inadequate. The organisation of learning and the use of resources are ineffective. Expectations are too low and too little time is spent talking with the children. Questioning is poor and there is not enough use of assessment information to provide activities that are accurately matched to the children's learning needs.

The better teaching succeeds in motivating the pupils to learn and in these lessons the teachers' subject knowledge is used well to interest and extend the pupils. Assessment information is used well to match the teaching plans to the differing needs of the pupils. However, this quality is not found in sufficient lessons. The result is that too much of the teaching is focused on what pupils already know or can do and they are not challenged enough, especially those of higher attainment. Learning objectives are not always shared with the pupils and although they have targets for learning, they are unsure of these or of what to do to improve. The marking of pupils' work, although completed conscientiously, is generally less successful in helping them to understand their successes and areas for development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn satisfactorily and sometimes well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory; it is broad with a strong emphasis on the arts and sports. The balance across the National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory. The school has identified some imbalances in the literacy and numeracy programmes and are working to improve this aspect of their work. The lack of continuity within these subjects is having a negative impact on the progress of some pupils, especially the higher attainers. The school provides a good quality curriculum for pupils' personal development. There is a clear emphasis on extending pupils' understanding of safe and healthy living. The school organises interesting whole-school projects and a range of diverse visitors. This enriches the curriculum and extends pupils' learning well. A major weakness is the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Planning does not ensure that all the different areas of learning are covered systematically.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, overall. They are well cared for and protected from harm. Appropriate measures are in place to safeguard pupils and

all appropriate checks are made on those who come in contact with them. Relationships are good and effective guidance is provided to promote good behaviour. Guidance and support for learning are satisfactory for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting of specific targets for classes and individual pupils are appropriate strategies in the school's pursuit of increased achievement but, at present, the links between assessment, teaching plans and the marking of pupils' work are not made consistently enough. Consequently, achievement is only satisfactory

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has been successful in creating and sustaining a positive ethos and in steering the school through a period of staffing turbulence. The pupils' personal development is good and they are well cared for. Most of the issues identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Despite the high standards they attain, the pupils do not achieve as well as they could, and the quality of teaching and learning is too variable to sustain consistent progress throughout the school. The headteacher has accurately identified these shortcomings, is determined to remedy them and has put in place all the appropriate measures to tackle them. However, these measures have not yet had sufficient impact. For example, a well structured programme for the monitoring of teaching has been put in place, accurate judgements made, and support offered where needed. This has not yet resulted in there being consistently good teaching throughout the school, although individuals have improved.

Efforts have been made to develop the effectiveness of middle managers. Subject coordinators are given responsibility for monitoring and improving standards in their subjects. They do not all have a sufficiently detailed overview of standards in their subjects and they are not exerting sufficient influence on increasing achievement.

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is inadequate. There is no clear vision for the development of this stage of learning and the planning of the provision lacks cohesion and consistency. The good quality resources are not used to full effect and new members of staff are not inducted and supported effectively.

The governing body is led by a perceptive chair who supports the school well and is keen to help in the monitoring of its provision. Training is being sought to help achieve this. The school is held to account and there is awareness that achievement could be better. The views of pupils and their parents and carers are regularly sought and they express general support for what the school is trying to achieve. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory, although there has to be more insistence that necessary improvements are actually carried out. An exceptionally large budget underspend has been reduced and plans are well in hand to cope with falling rolls and the resulting need for staff restructuring. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Pupils

Seaburn Dene Primary School

Torver Crescent

Seaburn Dene

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR6 8LG

30 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Mrs Shepherd, Mrs Lock and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. You made us very welcome and thank you for that. We found our discussions with you very helpful and we particularly liked the music we heard around the school.

Your school has many good things about it. It helps you to develop well as people and it shows you how to keep safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. You enjoy coming to school and you make a good contribution to the community. You reach high standards and most of you make steady progress during your time in school.

We have asked Mrs Stroland to look at a few things to make your school even better: to check that the work your teachers give you is always at the right level for you; and to make sure that the children in the youngest classes get off to a flying start in their learning.

Thank you once again for your hospitality.

Yours sincerely

Iain Rodger

Lead Inspector