



Seahouses First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122214
Local Authority Northumberland
Inspection number 292339
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	First	School address	Main Street
School category	Community		North Sunderland, Seahouses
Age range of pupils	4–9		Northumberland, NE68 7UE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01665 720444
Number on roll (school)	88	Fax number	01665 720444
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Mrs Pat Scott
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Ayden
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006	Inspection number 292339
-------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© 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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Seahouses First School is a small school and the majority of pupils come from the village and nearby semi-rural and coastal villages, within Northumberland. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few are from minority ethnic families. The number of pupils taking a free school meal is below average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is below average. The school building has recently been extended and transformed through the 'Space for Sport and Art' funding, to create additional learning areas for these two aspects of the curriculum.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where continued improvement and success is due to the determination of the headteacher, staff and governors to provide the best education for pupils. Therefore, the leadership and management of the school are good. They evaluate accurately its effectiveness and know clearly what needs to be improved. This gives the school a good capacity to improve.

Curriculum provision is good. Staff make sure that there is an extensive range of interesting, exciting and meaningful learning opportunities. As a result, pupils are very happy in school and they get to know everyone very well in lessons and at clubs outside school hours. There are outstanding links with parents, local experts and outside agencies, which mean pupils have regular opportunities to make their contribution towards the community. Parents are rightly pleased with the progress their children make and the good care and attention they receive in school. One parent remarked that the school is 'fantastic and a real family/village school.' The new sport and art facility, which is also used by the local community, is increasing the school's profile within the village.

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Good progress continues in Years 3 and 4 and the majority exceed the expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 4. However, in writing a small minority of boys do not achieve as well as the others; as a result, boys' attainment tends to lag behind that of the girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because the curriculum offered matches their specific needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well. Foundation Stage provision is good because teaching is good and children achieve well to reach levels close to those expected for this age group. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall, offering a broad range of learning opportunities indoors. However, provision for outdoor learning is sometimes limited.

Pupils are confident and mature, easily engaging adults in conversation. They enjoy coming to school because they say they make lots of friends and 'playground pals are always on hand to make sure you are enjoying yourself.' They say teachers make learning fun and, boys and girls alike, particularly enjoy solving problems in mathematics. Pupils have good opportunities to become responsible because each one has a turn to be on the school council during their time in school.

Pupils succeed well because teaching and learning are good. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, play a full part in lessons because they are well supported. There is an increasing emphasis for pupils to work together in pairs and this, alongside good basic skills and the stronger emphasis on information and communication technology, is preparing them well for their future economic well-being. The use of the new school hall is having a strong, positive impact on the way physical education is taught and pupils' understanding about how to stay healthy is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing for boys.
- Extend the outdoor experiences for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well, throughout the school. On entry to the Foundation Stage Unit, the majority of children are below the expected level for their age group. They achieve well and reach standards close to national expectations. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2 and results in the national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average. This good standard has been well maintained over the past 3 years. Attainment at the end of Year 4 has been improving over the last 3 years. Assessments show that pupils make good progress, resulting in attainment that is above average, particularly so in reading. Pupils of above average ability achieve very well and reach high standards. However in writing, a few boys do not make as much progress as the majority. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and reach the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Throughout their time at the school, pupils make good progress in developing their personal skills. Their spiritual development is outstanding; their moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem. They show great pride in their work and show complete confidence when communicating their ideas to each other and to adults. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and a 'walk to school' plan and, as a consequence, pupils' understanding about how to be healthy is exemplary. They accurately explain the workings of the human body and the essentials of good food and regular exercise. Pupils make healthy choices at lunch time. They feel very safe in school because behaviour is good and they know that all staff care for them. They love coming to school and attend regularly. The school council meetings and questionnaires are used to elicit the view of pupils, although they do not always receive a formal response from staff or discussion about how their views are to be acted upon. Pupils are involved in a range of celebrations and events, such as singing for the elderly and raising funds for charity, so they can learn how to make their own contributions to the community. Pupils have good levels of literacy and mathematics and show high levels of cooperation. These factors equip them well for the next stage of education and support their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers are well focused on what they want pupils to learn. They explain new ideas clearly and pay good attention to the ways pupils learn best; they provide good practical activities to enhance learning. Pupils say they particularly enjoy problem-solving in mathematics. The way investigations in science are taught truly excites and motivates them. In writing lessons, a small minority of boys are less enthusiastic, because the approach and subsequent activities are less practical. In all lessons seen, teachers make good use of computer technology to inspire pupils and make learning meaningful. Teachers make sure the activities they set have a clear purpose. Therefore, pupils talk easily and confidently about what they are doing and show pride in their work. Relationships are good and teachers make good use of support assistants and students to help pupils every step of the way. Teachers provide good guidance by discussing pupils' work with them, highlighting their strengths and encouraging them towards improvement. Consequently, pupils concentrate well and try even harder.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, using national guidance, together with a rich range of activities linked to special events that occur throughout the year. Success in achieving the Artsmark Gold Award and the excellent use of local expertise including artists, the vicar, local poets and a newspaper editor has resulted in some topic work of a high standard. This is one of the reasons why pupils love coming to school and are well prepared for their next stage of education. The recent centenary celebrations involved the entire local community and gave pupils a very clear insight into their cultural heritage. The school has a strong commitment to the 'Space for Sports and Arts' project and, with good support from the local authority, has dramatically improved the quality of the physical education curriculum. This, linked with a strong science curriculum is why pupils' understanding of healthy issues is outstanding. Links with Education Business Partners have inspired pupils to collaborate in the workplace as they construct huge tetrahedrons and solve difficult practical mathematics problems. Whilst the Foundation Stage curriculum indoors is good and motivates children well, extension opportunities outdoors are not provided regularly enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All aspects of health, safety and risk assessment are secure and there are good procedures in place for child protection. Staff have been checked for their suitability for working with children and records are kept up to date. Pupils with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language receive good additional support and their progress is well tracked. Parents are pleased with the school and realise that staff are working extremely hard to ensure that their children are happy, safe and secure learners. This emphasis on being secure is seen in the way the youngest children settle happily into their class. Support and guidance for pupils' academic work ensures that most make good progress and the pupils themselves are beginning to evaluate how well they are doing in lessons. Assessment procedures are in place, but action is not always taken swiftly enough when an individual's progress first appears to be slowing down.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's good leadership and management are pivotal to the school's success. She has a clear vision for the school's future development and is well supported by the senior management team, staff and governors. The school makes outstanding use of all its resources, including the involvement of the local community and the support of parents and outside agencies, to support its work. The school has the Investors in People award in recognition of the good teamwork, which is focused on improving pupils' personal development and academic standards. Together, staff have successfully addressed all issues from the previous report. The school examines its provision and knows itself well. Teachers play a good role in leading initiatives identified for improvement; therefore, the school has good capacity to improve even 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

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Seahouses First School

Main Street

North Sunderland

Seahouses

Northumberland

NE68 7UE

7 November 2006

Dear Pupils

I had a very enjoyable time in your school. You are very welcoming and friendly. It is good to see you growing up into very confident young people. I particularly liked the conversations at lunch time with you and the meetings I had with older pupils. I could see the youngest children love their class and have lots of interesting activities that help them to learn well. I have asked the teachers to make sure they get more chances to learn outside as well.

I know you work very hard and it is good to see how well you are learning. You do particularly well in reading and I know all of you enjoy books very much. It's good to see you taking books home at night to share with your parents. You are also doing well in mathematics and most of you have good standards in writing too. I have asked teachers to keep a particularly close check on boys' writing to make sure it is as good as the girls. I remember what one pupil in your school told me, 'School gives you a chance to get good jobs.' Therefore, keep up the hard work, so your parents and teachers can be really proud of you.

I was thrilled to see how well you behaved in lessons and around the school and I can tell you feel safe and secure. You know all adults are there to help you. You were listening very well in assembly and it was good to see so many of you having fun at the school clubs. I loved the writing and photographs on the topics you have been involved in. The school newspaper is wonderful and the advert for tourists to visit Seahouses is very well made. I don't think you will ever forget the centenary celebrations.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector