



Seabridge Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134898
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 294210
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Graham Sims

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Roe Lane
School category	Community		Newcastle-under-Lyme
Age range of pupils	3–11		ST5 3PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 297361
Number on roll (school)	462	Fax number	01782 297361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Howson
		Headteacher	Sandra Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007	Inspection number 294210
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Seabridge Primary School opened in September 2005, amalgamating the former infant and junior schools. The school has not been inspected before. It is much larger than most primary schools and has a maintained Nursery, which children attend either in the morning or in the afternoon. Pupils come from a very wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and start school with very different levels of skill and ability. Overall, however, their home circumstances and attainment on entry to the school are broadly average. Just under 10% of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a third of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Seabridge Primary School has developed very quickly into a good school where pupils of all abilities and from a wide range of backgrounds achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. The amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools has been carried out very successfully as a result of the governors' foresight and the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, which has generated such a positive and united team spirit amongst the staff.

Good leadership and management have resulted in a positive, friendly and vibrant ethos and an efficiently run school. The school's leaders have a good understanding of what is working well and what can be improved. Both staff and pupils strive to put the school's motto, 'working together to be the best we can', into practice. Thus, even though standards in mathematics are above average, the school is keen to improve them further by sharpening pupils' mental mathematics skills and the way they apply their mathematical knowledge. Improvements over the last year in the teaching of writing have seen standards in English rise to a level which is well above average and which indicates that there is good capacity for the school to improve in other areas. Good leadership has also led to improvements for the school's youngest children. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children reach above average standards by the time they start Year 1.

Pupils' good achievement arises because of good teaching and a good curriculum. Some of the teaching is very good indeed and challenges the most able pupils to reach standards which are well beyond those normally expected. However, there have been some hiccoughs in recent months, as an unusually large proportion of staff have had to take time off school for unforeseen and entirely valid reasons. Whilst the school has managed the situation well and ensured continuity of teaching for all pupils, these absences have led to some inconsistency in the quality of the teaching. In some classes, teachers' expectations, the pace of learning, the level of interest and the quality of teachers' marking are not as good as they are in most classes. This has led to periods of satisfactory, rather than good, progress for some pupils. However, the overall strength of the school's staff ensures that the curriculum is well planned for all pupils, and that there is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and for those who are more able. Some excellent whole-school projects, such as a recent multicultural week, and a good range of additional activities contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school and their all-round education. Pupils learn information and communication technology (ICT) skills well, but there is not enough opportunity for them to apply these skills to their learning in all subjects.

Good care, guidance and support have helped to ensure good personal development. Pupils are polite and considerate, and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and of the factors which will help them lead healthy lifestyles. With their good inter-personal skills and good academic standards, pupils are well prepared for their future education and the later world of work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teaching in all classes is of a consistently high quality, particularly with regard to the level of challenge, the pace of learning and the quality of teachers' marking.
- Develop expertise in the teaching of mathematics, particularly with regard to the teaching of mental mathematics, the application of mathematical skills and the way mathematics is used across the curriculum.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with broadly average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. This represents good achievement for all pupils, including the more able, those who have learning difficulties and the small proportion who speak English as an additional language.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and standards are above the expected level in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Improvements in teaching and assessment have seen standards rise from the average test results of 2006 to above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. Test results at the end of Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science in 2006, but there have been further improvements this year and standards are now well above average. Some aspects of pupils' work in mathematics, such as their ability to make quick mental calculations or to apply their mathematical knowledge in practical situations, are not quite as strong as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's emphasis on developing character and positive attitudes has been very successful. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy all aspects of school life. The level of attendance is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Events such as the multicultural week have developed pupils' feelings of respect for and their sensitivity to the needs of others. Pupils behave well, and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school and in most lessons. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations and challenging tasks although, in a few classes where the teaching is less good, they can lose interest.

Pupils are committed to the school's drive to promote healthy lifestyles. They enjoy fruit, access to water and healthy options at lunchtime. Pupils know how to stay safe and that they can talk to adults in school about any concerns. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and older pupils assess their own and others' work, which helps them to improve. Members of the school council provide an effective voice for the pupils. However, they are not yet taking full responsibility for leading and managing the council, and there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative

or develop as really independent learners and contributors to the school and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In most year groups and most classes the teaching is good. Some of the teaching is very good indeed, but in some classes the quality of teaching and learning is only satisfactory. Some of this teaching is not sufficiently challenging or interesting, the work is not as well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils and insufficient feedback is given on how pupils can improve. In most classes, however, teachers know their pupils well and plan interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. Pupils develop confidence because relationships are good and their teachers are supportive. Work is well matched to the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those new to learning English. These pupils are supported well by teaching assistants and consequently make good gains in their learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to capture pupils' interest. Assessment procedures are robust and enable teachers to see whether pupils are making expected progress. Additional help is provided for any who are not making the expected progress. All pupils have individual targets and these are generally used well by teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An interesting curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their learning. The personal, social and health education programme has promoted a strong, caring ethos in the school. Curricular planning is detailed and well matched to pupils' abilities. Literacy is used effectively to enrich learning in other subjects. However, the use of ICT and numeracy as a tool for learning in other subjects is less well developed. A good range of additional activities, visitors and visits, such as the Year 5 visit to a Buddhist centre, provides very good curricular enrichment. Clubs are popular and well attended. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about the school's themed weeks, to which the wider community makes such a strong contribution. The recent multicultural and industry weeks made significant contributions to pupils' broader education. Exciting artwork and pottery reflect pupils' growing knowledge and awareness of different cultures and religions. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils, such as the challenge sessions in numeracy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils thrive and learn to support others. Vulnerable pupils and their families are nurtured, and staff work closely with outside agencies to support pupils with particular difficulties. Staff are vigilant of

pupils' safety and procedures to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. The school has swiftly and successfully developed strategies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who are gifted and talented and those for whom English is not their first language. Through early identification, careful choice of intervention programmes and close monitoring of progress, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and this has a positive impact on their achievement.

The school has developed a thorough system to track pupils' progress. Pupils and their parents receive good guidance about the next steps in their learning. Most teachers provide encouraging comments and good feedback when marking pupils' work. In some classes, however, the marking does not explain clearly what pupils should do to improve their work or to achieve their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's inspiring leadership has quickly united staff and pupils from two very different schools, given very clear direction and provided drive and enthusiasm. The school's senior staff and governors have been supportive and effective in their various roles, instigating new initiatives which have led to improvement. For example, under the banner of 'inclusion', new opportunities have been provided for the more able pupils in mathematics to forge ahead, and additional support has been provided for pupils with English as an additional language, enabling them to make good progress. All aspects of the school's work are monitored carefully, resulting in a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. The school's leaders are well aware that they need to devote more time to ensure that agreed practice is implemented consistently across the school, for example in day-to-day teaching. Their efforts to ensure uniformity of practice, however, have been hampered by the unusually high proportion of staff who have been absent for various reasons. Rising standards, improving provision, good teamwork and the overwhelmingly positive views of the great majority of parents indicate that the school is providing good value for money and has a good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	NA

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	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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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	2
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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for your welcome and for taking time to talk to us. Many of you said that yours is a good school. We agree with you. These are our main findings.

- You are all making good progress in your work, and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are well above those found in many schools.
- You are helpful, considerate and well behaved, and this makes it a pleasure to be in your school.
- The quality of the teaching varies from satisfactory to very good, but is good overall.
- The school provides you with interesting work and enjoyable activities, and we were particularly impressed with the work you undertook during your multicultural week.
- The staff take good care of you and know exactly how much progress you are making.
- The governors, headteacher and staff work together very well and have a clear idea of how they can make your school even better.

In the same way that teachers set targets for you, we have set some targets for them. They are to:

- make sure that all of the teaching is as good as the best teaching we saw
- help you to improve your ability to do mental calculations, and to apply and use your mathematical knowledge in different situations
- give you more opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to help your learning in all subjects.

We liked your school motto, 'working together to be the best we can'. We hope you will continue to work with your teachers to help them achieve these targets. We wish you every success for the future.