

New Seaham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113996
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311442
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	247
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edward Bell
Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Dolan
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Byron Terrace Seaham County Durham SR7 0HX
Telephone number	0191 5813046
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves the western part of Seaham on the east Durham coast. Although most pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school, an increasing number travel from further afield due to the school's popularity. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities, including those who speak English as an additional language, is small. Free school meal entitlement is rising but remains below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also increasing but is still below that seen nationally. Children enter the school's Reception class from a variety of early years' placements, including two which are state funded Nursery schools. The school has earned several national awards including, the Basic Skills Quality Mark; the Information and Communication Technology Award (ICT) and has achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

New Seaham Primary provides its pupils with an outstanding education; significant improvements are evident in all areas of the school's work since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents who made their views known to the inspection team were highly complimentary about the school's work and their children's achievements.

Underpinning these improvements has been the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have, with the collective support of staff and governors, sustained a relentless and successful drive to promote high standards and high achievement.

The monitoring of pupils' performance against highly ambitious targets has established a culture of continual assessment and intervention. Additional support for pupils who are 'off target' is both swift and effective and is pivotal to the high percentage who achieve in line with expectations and the significant number who exceed them.

Well focused training has led to good and outstanding teaching and learning. The majority of teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and excellent classroom management skills. Their interaction with pupils is challenging and frequently motivational. This successfully encourages pupils to engage in lessons and strive to do well. Furthermore, teachers are very effective in using the school's detailed assessment information when preparing lessons ensuring an accurate match between tasks and pupils' needs.

The school's outstanding curriculum has become increasingly innovative in supporting improvements to pupils' basic skills. While the focus on literacy and numeracy is secure, imaginatively constructed schemes of work ensure that pupils experience a broad range of interesting work. Integral to the curriculum is the widespread use made of the school's excellent ICT facilities and an extensive commitment to the creative arts.

These changes have combined powerfully to support improvements in pupils' outcomes and stimulate their enjoyment of learning. Consequently, standards are high, particularly at Key Stage 2, and the achievement of the overwhelming number of pupils, of all abilities, is excellent.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary. The large majority of pupils willingly accept responsibility for their own learning, work very well with their peers and enjoy excellent relationships with staff. There is a genuine atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration for others. Staff demonstrate an exemplary degree of concern for pupils' welfare. Safeguarding procedures are robust and rigorously enforced providing the security and confidence from which pupils can thrive.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the Reception classes with below expected levels of attainment. Their communication, language and literacy skills are least developed. Good quality provision ensures that the majority make good progress by the end of the year with most achieving in line with expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 although a small proportion exceed these levels. Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. They behave very well in classrooms, shared learning spaces and around the school. They are keen and enthusiastic about their learning having settled quickly into routines. Children relate well to their peers and to adults, enjoying each others' company and taking every opportunity to talk and share. They are

supported well in their learning and achieve best when activities have a clear purpose, whether these are chosen by children or directed by staff. When this occurs, children work and play with sustained interest and motivation. Children's welfare is promoted extremely well. Staff display an extremely high level of care and concern for children's wellbeing. Consequently, children are confident and secure in school and this provides a secure foundation from which they can learn and make progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide opportunities so that all staff can benefit from the expertise of the school's outstanding practitioners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards at Key Stage 1 have been consistently above or well above average. This trend has continued in 2008 as pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved on the previous year's results. The large majority of pupils made good progress in line with their capabilities. At Key Stage 2, standards have been consistently very high with a significant majority of pupils achieving their very challenging targets. Detailed analysis by inspectors of the school's assessment records, pupils' workbooks and from lesson observations shows that current standards have strengthened further with exceptional progress evident in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The excellent monitoring of pupils' performance has enabled decisive interventions to occur where underachievement has been identified ensuring that pupils of all abilities receive the high quality help they need to improve. In addition, the school has been successful with strategies to improve pupils' writing resulting in a sharp rise in attainment with almost all pupils making exceptional progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils exhibit outstanding personal development and well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is fully reflected in their work, interaction with others and commitment to school life.

The large majority of pupils are confident and assured because the school takes every opportunity to celebrate success and to praise their achievements. Pupils demonstrate maturity and responsibility combined with outstanding attitudes and commitment to their work. Of particular note is their willingness to organise and deliver assemblies, independent of staff, about important world issues. Relationships are excellent. Pupils enjoy each other's company and thrive when working in pairs and groups. Many demonstrate effective leadership and self organisational skills. For example, pupils use their excellent ICT knowledge and skills to good effect in the production of DVDs related to their class work and educational visits.

Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils have an excellent commitment to all matters relating to living a healthy life shown in their enthusiasm for physical education and sport and their keenness for eating healthily. Pupils demonstrate a very clear awareness of the dangers associated with smoking and drug abuse. They offer an exemplary commitment to the school community, acting as school council members, monitors and house captains. All take their roles seriously and are proud of the contribution they make. School council members can point to some excellent improvements developed from their own ideas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Most teaching and learning is good while a significant proportion is outstanding. Teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities are very high reflecting their exacting targets. Lessons are planned thoroughly using the school's detailed assessment systems to provide tasks which are both challenging and motivational. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and supported by an extensive and effective intervention programme provided by additional teachers and support staff. This process works exceptionally well ensuring that pupils' progress towards their targets is maintained. Within lessons, teachers' very good subject knowledge and class management skills are used effectively to engage students and provide a secure basis from which learning can progress. A particularly strong feature of lessons is the opportunities pupils have to work together. This is very successful in sustaining their interest and enthusiasm. This combination of factors ensures that pupils are well motivated to learn and underpins the exemplary attitudes they exhibit towards their work. Of particular note is teachers' wide-ranging use of the school's excellent ICT facilities to extend learning opportunities in all curriculum areas. This leads to pupils demonstrating exemplary skills and confidence in their use of this equipment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An excellent curriculum provides a strong motivational basis from which pupils thrive in their work. The range of provision more than meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is securely focused on developing pupils' basic skills but is designed to interest and stimulate learning in all subject areas. Consequently, pupils have excellent opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The school makes an outstanding commitment to ICT with provision fully integrated into all subject areas. In addition, a far-reaching commitment to music and the creative arts further adds to pupils' enjoyment.

Extensive opportunities are also offered beyond the teaching day for pupils to take part in clubs including, sports, ICT, drama, cookery, photography, music and Italian. Activities are greatly enriched by visiting experts in areas such as art and music and pupils make regular visits to places of interest to extend their school based studies. A well resourced DVD library of pupils' recordings of these visits forms part of an excellent learning resource.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides exemplary support and guidance for pupils. Thorough, detailed assessment information is used very effectively to track pupils' work and to target intervention where required. Pupils are set challenging targets for the next steps in learning, building successfully on their prior attainment. Pupils are knowledgeable about their targets and are able to explain in detail what they mean. Work is regularly marked with very good feedback given which focuses clearly on how pupils can improve. This contributes significantly to the very high standards and excellent rates of progress which pupils make. The school actively promotes learners' understanding of other faiths and cultures routinely through the curriculum and specially organised events. Its contribution to community cohesion is good and improving.

The quality of pastoral care and guidance is excellent. Staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to pupils' care and welfare. Safeguarding procedures are in place and robust. Risk assessments are robust and routinely carried out. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and there has been extensive instruction in first aid procedures. Attendance levels are good but are adversely affected by some families taking holidays in term time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school benefits from the exemplary leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. High expectations and a resolute drive to tackle areas requiring improvement have resulted in consistently good and often outstanding rates of pupils' progress. Key developments to enhance teaching and learning; the curriculum and the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work have successfully built capacity in the school to sustain these improvements further.

Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous, areas requiring improvement are well known and understood providing a secure basis for school improvement plan priorities. School and pupil level targets are directly aligned to staff's performance management with improvement priorities appropriately set. Middle leaders are very effective. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are held duly responsible for the performance of their subjects. Accountability is both rigorous and routine.

Governance is good. Governors offer appropriate support and challenge to the school. While they are very appreciative of the work of senior leaders and the staff, they are resolute in holding them accountable for the school's performance. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of where improvement is required.

Funding allocations are driven by the school improvement plan targets. Exceptional ICT provision and a commitment to a broad and innovative curriculum have ensured that subject areas are effectively resourced. The learning environment and school premises generally are maintained to an exceptionally good standard providing a high quality environment for learners.

There is excellent capacity to improve further and the school provides outstanding value for money.

Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Seaham Primary School, Durham, SR7 0HX

Thank you on behalf of Mrs Keddle and myself for your welcome during our recent visit to New Seaham Primary School to carry out the inspection. Your views were hugely helpful to us. The report is now completed and I would like to tell you what it contains.

Your school provides you with an excellent education. We have judged almost all areas of your school as outstanding. We were very impressed by your teachers and support staff and consider they provide you with an excellent quality of education. We were very impressed by the quality of your school buildings and the facilities which you have. Your ICT facilities in particular, and the way you use them, are exceptional. Mrs Dolan, your headteacher, all the staff and governors deserve credit for their hard work and commitment. In addition, we consider your contribution to be of an equally high standard. You were excellent ambassadors for your school whether in lessons, around the school or in the yard. Your behaviour was always exemplary and your attitudes to learning were first class. We were greatly impressed by the way you take responsibility for your learning and the way in which older pupils accept responsibility for many things in school. School council representatives, monitors, house captains and others provide valuable and much appreciated help to other pupils and the staff.

We have asked Mrs Dolan and the governors to concentrate on making things even better by ensuring that your teachers share their best practice so that over time all teachers and support staff can improve their skills even more.

Please accept our very best wishes for the future and continue to work hard so that you can all achieve your targets.

Yours sincerely

Tom Grieveson

Her Majesty's Inspector