

# Seaton Sluice First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122234
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	314243
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Buller

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gillian Ewen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Love
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Granville Avenue Seaton Sluice Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 4BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2371839
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2980413

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller in size than most other first schools. It is in an area that is average in terms of social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is lower than the national average as is the proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is higher than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school is part of reorganisation proposals planned by the local authority. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in April 2007.

## 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 with some outstanding features. An excellent curriculum, which is modified very effectively to respond to pupils' needs and local and national priorities, helps pupils to achieve well academically and reach extremely high standards of personal development. Parents are delighted with the school, and full of praise for the caring staff, the way that pupils are treated as individuals and the progress that they make.

Pupils acquire a very wide range of social skills and are maturing into sensible, caring individuals with a very strong sense of community responsibility. Pupils grow to appreciate and respect differences because teaching about cultural diversity is emphasised very well in the outstanding curriculum. The school's strong and sustained emphasis on ecological awareness has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and enables them to make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council plays a very active role in decision making, for example, in the appointment of the current headteacher. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as is shown by their good attendance and behaviour. They have an outstanding awareness of how to stay safe and make very positive choices to live healthily. The very good social and organisational skills which pupils develop, added to the above average standards that they attain prepare them extremely well for their long-term future.

As a result of good teaching and learning children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, where sensitive and clear instruction enables them to learn quickly. Throughout the school teachers engage pupils well in lessons and motivate them to do their best. Consequently good progress continues throughout the school, In 2007 standards at Year 2 were very high and by the end of Year 4, they were above what is typical for pupils' of their age.

The school provides good quality care and effectively utilises partnerships with other agencies to provide pupils with exceptional support and guidance for their personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need are given excellent support, so they make the same good progress as others. Not all pupils are always sufficiently guided in assessing their own work and, because they do not all have personal targets, they are not fully aware of what they need to do to improve.

Good leadership and management together with positive teamwork results in pupils receiving a good standard of education. Senior managers have developed good procedures for evaluating the school's performance and these are used effectively to develop the school. This is demonstrated by its good improvement since the last inspection. There is a strong emphasis on promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination, which results in good levels of achievement across different groups of pupils. The monitoring of pupils' progress to identify any risk of underachievement is relatively new and less well developed. This is one of the main reasons why the pupils' progress is not yet outstanding. Nevertheless the success of actions taken, such as improving pupils' progress in mathematics and learning letter sounds demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Good teaching means that children enjoy their learning and show increasing levels of confidence and independence. Staff look after the children very well which helps them to settle very quickly into Nursery routines and later to

the demands of full time education in the Reception class. The staff plan the curriculum extremely well and link it effectively to all the areas of learning. At times, however, there is overlap between what children learn in Nursery and then subsequently in the Reception class. This overlap reduces some aspects of their learning but overall children make good progress in their time in Reception. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children are working within or beyond the goals set for children of this age and they are well prepared for their work in Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of the staff's use of the new arrangements for checking pupils' progress.
- Increase pupils' understanding of how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills which are broadly typical of three-year-olds. From this starting point, good teaching and an outstanding curriculum ensure they make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. When pupils enter Year 1 many are already working above the levels expected for their age. In 2007 results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally high. The school has very successfully concentrated on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, significantly more pupils than found in schools nationally attained the higher grade of Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Good progress in Years 3 and 4 means that, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, a large proportion of pupils are already attaining the level expected of Year 6 pupils. Pupils who have difficulty with their learning and those who have a statement of their special educational needs also make good, and at times very good, progress due to excellent support and a curriculum which fully meets their needs. Consequently these pupils reach standards which are above those attained by their peers nationally.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners who enjoy and readily participate in all that the school has to offer. They feel very safe in school and attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils show very good levels of concern for each other's welfare, rights and general well-being. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and the impact that regular exercise has on their bodies. From involvement in the school forum and the Eco committee, pupils gain an excellent understanding of the democratic process and how each one of them has a responsibility towards the wider world. They have a strong sense of fairness and justice and how important it is to all get along and take care of each other. All of these qualities together with the development of very secure basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare pupils extremely well for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In all classes, teachers and pupils have very good working relationships. Consequently, pupils behave well and enjoy learning. When teaching is most effective, challenging questions and a good range of learning approaches motivate pupils and they are eager to succeed. Pupils learn well because they are required to work hard and they have good attitudes to their work. Resources are stimulating and modern technology is used well to make learning fun and interesting. Marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive. Teachers know their pupils well and this is reflected in the careful planning of lessons. Opportunities are missed, however, to inform individuals about how to improve their work further.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

An outstanding, interesting and varied curriculum provides extremely well for all pupils. This is a major reason why they enjoy school so much and consistently reach above average standards. It also results in all pupils having equal access to all parts of the curriculum. There is a clear emphasis on developing good basic skills as well as a strong focus on developing pupils' self-esteem and well-being. This takes place through an extensive programme of activities designed to nurture, encourage and raise pupils' future aspirations. This includes many opportunities for pupils to develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Excellent enrichment includes visits, visitors and clubs that offer additional social opportunities as well as learning experiences. Themed weeks, such as 'pirate week', link subjects and bring learning to life. In this way, basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are woven into topics so pupils have real contexts in which to develop their skills.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pastoral care is highly effective, with a strong and effective emphasis on promoting the social and emotional development of pupils. Pupils know that the staff are sympathetic and approachable and that they themselves are valued. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and secure. Requirements for safeguarding pupils are in place. The support and guidance provided for pupils' personal development is outstanding but pupils do not always receive the guidance needed to help them to know how to improve their work. This is because systems for tracking pupils' academic progress are at an early stage of development. The school has good links with its partners and agencies in providing support for vulnerable pupils. Skilled teaching assistants give excellent support and guidance to less able pupils or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially in literacy, helping to ensure that they make good progress. The school has good systems in place to support pupils with behavioural difficulties.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's monitoring procedures provide detailed and accurate information regarding how well the curriculum is meeting pupils' needs. As a result, swift action is taken to adjust provision to meet changing needs. For example, changes in the way mathematics is taught have brought about a rise in standards in Key Stages 1 and 2. The management of the systems to track pupils' progress and to involve teachers in the process of setting even more challenging targets are at an early stage of development. This is one of the key reasons why pupils' progress is good and not yet outstanding. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching followed by constructive feedback to teachers helps them to improve their practice. Senior staff are good models of effective practice and all staff work together well as a team, making good use of each other's strengths. Governors carry out their statutory duties well and strike an appropriate balance between providing support and challenging the school to do even better.

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## 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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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**

14 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton Sluice First School, Northumberland, NE26 4BX

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school and especially to those of you who talked to me about school life. I enjoyed my visit.

I agree that the school provides you with a good standard of education. You are all making good progress in your work and developing exceptionally well as young people. I could see that you all enjoy coming to school and it was good to hear that you especially enjoy all the special themed weeks, the visits and extra activities. It is good to know that you all feel safe at school. You make excellent choices about choosing what you eat and take part in lots of exercise to keep healthy. You behave sensibly and this helps you to reach good standards in your work. Teachers and all of the staff take good care of you and do a really excellent job at providing you with work and activities that are interesting and fun. The way you work together to look after your school and the understanding you have about how to look after the environment is really impressive.

I have agreed with the school that there are two things that would improve the school even more. These are to keep a careful check on how well you are doing each year and to help you to understand what it is that you need to do to reach even higher standards. You can help by always listening carefully and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector