

Sea View Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134230
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	316247
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Wells
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Cunningham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norham Avenue North South Shields South Tyneside NE34 7TD
Telephone number	0191 4274343
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school was formed in 2006, an amalgamation of two infant schools and one junior school. It serves a mixed urban area, including pockets of social disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British families. A below average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A children's centre, run by the school and a special school, share the same building and facilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sea View provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The leadership has faced a tough challenge in bringing together three different schools under one roof. Despite its many fine qualities, the building itself has had persistent teething problems. Staffing instability and numerous parental concerns about the amalgamation meant that it has taken some time to agree and establish new systems, responsibilities and routines. However, the determination and resilience of the headteacher, supported by governors, have enabled the new school to establish its own identity. Parents are supportive and staff share a common sense of purpose.

The focus now is very much on raising standards. The results of the 2007 tests were below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, though broadly average in reading by the end of Year 2 and in science by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing and mathematics were the weakest aspects of the pupils' achievements. These results were in part due to the difficulties of last year but also because teachers do not set challenging enough work for the more able pupils. With the difficulties of the amalgamation behind the school, the pupils are currently making satisfactory progress and standards throughout the school are higher than the previous year's national test results suggest. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It is good in Year 6, where most pupils are on track to reach the challenging targets set for them, because teaching is good for this year group.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Classrooms are calm, convivial places and, as a result, pupils enjoy work although their interest varies according to the quality of teaching. Teachers clarify learning objectives and present work well so that pupils readily understand. Interactive whiteboards are used well to reinforce learning, but teachers do not make enough use of computers to motivate pupils and help them develop their basic technology skills. Staff are mostly good in lessons at supporting pupils, but the marking of pupils' work is heavy on praise and light on guidance, particularly through individual targets.

Pupils are proud of their new school and are increasingly involved. They respond well to the extra sports on offer, well aware of the benefits of exercise. Constantly in evidence are the orange jackets that denote mediators and buddies among the older pupils. Bad behaviour, including bullying, was a serious issue last year and a small minority of parents expressed concern about these issues. The school has done well to work alongside pupils to solve the underlying problems. Isolated incidents still occur, but most pupils behave well and have faith in their teachers to resolve any conflicts. The formal systems of care are secure.

Although only a quarter of parents expressed views about the school, these were essentially positive. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and how the school is moving forward.

The school has had much to do but the good management skills of the headteacher have given the school structure and cohesion. The knowledgeable governing body has provided stability and good advice. The school has a largely accurate view of itself. For example, it is aware that the curriculum, although adequate, is not diverse or stimulating enough for pupils. It has good plans for overall school development but does not expedite them with enough rigour or sense of urgency. Nevertheless, because of what it has achieved thus far and because senior staff are warming to their roles, the school is in a satisfactory position to develop further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. Children begin Nursery with skills typical for their age, although some children, often more able ones, leave to join another school after one year. Teachers make learning fun and encourage children to learn through exploration, and focus strongly on personal and social skills. Children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and reach the goals expected of five year olds. The school has had some difficulty in verifying standards because effective assessment procedures have only recently been introduced. Teaching and the curriculum are sound, sometimes good in the Reception year, but do not exploit the outside area fully or provide enough challenge for all children. The enthusiastic new Foundation Stage leader is already developing good strategies to boost standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging and stimulating in order to meet the needs of all pupils, especially more able pupils.
- Ensure greater rigour in carrying out the school's plans for development.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter and leave the Foundation Stage with levels of development that are typical for their age but in the 2007 national assessments for Year 2 pupils, standards were average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. It was a similar picture by the end of Year 6 where the results were below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Writing was the weakest aspect of the pupils' achievements at this key stage. Current standards are higher and the pupils are making satisfactory progress.

Now that the school is settled, teaching and learning are improving. Indications are that standards are beginning to rise and the school's information from tracking pupils' progress shows that most of the Year 6 pupils are currently on course to reach the challenging targets set by the school. The school is aware that, although their achievement is satisfactory, not enough more able pupils attain the higher levels expected of them. Teachers do not routinely expect enough from these pupils. Other groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school has worked hard to improve this aspect of its work which had some serious weaknesses last year, especially in behaviour and relationships. It has succeeded and mutual respect flows among staff and pupils. Despite occasional instances of poor behaviour, the vast majority of pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They have confidence that staff will sort out any issues and many are fully involved as mediators and buddies. They all contribute well

to the school community, especially through the school council, and also show responsibility in developing a healthy lifestyle through diet and activity.

Attendance is average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and learning, although their attitudes in lessons depend heavily on the quality of teaching. They are not yet self-reliant enough to work at a good pace on their own. Their good social skills ensure fruitful, co-operative work in lessons and quiet self-esteem. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but the school wishes to develop pupils' awareness of the wider world. In view of their basic skills, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All staff have a good rapport with pupils, generally manage behaviour well and so provide a positive atmosphere for learning in lessons. Teachers' planning and preparation are generally satisfactory; initial explanations of work are clear so pupils know exactly what they should learn. However, some of the activities often lack the excitement and challenge on which the more able pupils particularly thrive. Teaching assistants provide good pastoral support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but, as with other pupils, work is not always skilfully linked to pupils' abilities.

There is some good, enterprising teaching in the school. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils were required to script a radio broadcast. This demanding but stimulating topic guaranteed full concentration and swift learning. Some teachers also make effective use of resources and plan imaginative activities to motivate the pupils and increase the pace of their learning. The marking in pupils' books is always encouraging but provides too little guidance to help pupils know how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Its sound structure follows national guidelines. It does not exploit natural links between subjects to bring learning to life and strengthen basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). In some subjects, such as art, activities are often too directed by adults, limiting the scope of pupils' creativity and independence, especially the more able pupils.

Good links with groups such as Creative Partnerships diversify the curriculum; the school is keen to improve such curricular enrichment through visitors, visits and a variety of lunchtime clubs. Good community facilities enable unusual activities like the Family Drumming Club to take place, so that children and parents can learn together.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for securing pupils' safety and well-being are satisfactory. Formal safeguarding procedures meet requirements and documentation is satisfactory. Induction procedures for new pupils are good and all staff routinely look after pupils' interests, especially those of the more vulnerable. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued.

Academic guidance is at an early stage of development. Statutory targets for pupils in Year 6 are challenging but, throughout the school, there are no individual targets in literacy and numeracy to highlight what pupils need to do to improve. The new system to monitor pupils' progress is good and enables the school to focus extra support on those pupils who show signs of not making their expected progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The early difficulties of staffing, parental disquiet and building problems have restricted the school's initial progress. The headteacher, through good management and the support of a knowledgeable governing body, has succeeded in harmonising the school. She has established good new systems to address teaching, management and behavioural issues, and has deployed staff skilfully. Consequently, staff, including the senior management team, now shares a sense of purpose.

The school has satisfactory systems for self-evaluation and has suitable plans to improve further. Its sights are clearly trained on the raising of standards and its targets are challenging but achievable. The governing body keeps a sharp eye on the progress towards these targets. However, there is a need now for greater rigour at all levels of management in carrying out the school's plans and for acceleration in the pace of change.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

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?	3

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 December 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Sea View Primary School, South Tyneside, NE34 7TD

I am writing to thank you all for the part you played in the inspection of your school.

Mrs Richardson, Mrs Macfarlane and I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers, and getting to know your exciting new school. Your opinions were important to us.

It has been hard for three schools to come together and you know there have been some difficulties. It did not help that the building and site were not fully ready in time. Teachers took a little while to get used to each others' ways and the behaviour of some of you was a serious problem. We are pleased, therefore, things are better now, and you have played a valuable part. For example, your work as mediators and buddies contributes to a happy atmosphere in school, and your behaviour is generally good now. Teachers make sure you are safe at all times.

We know that your standards are not as good as they could be, especially in writing and mathematics. Your teachers want this to improve too and are going to make sure all of you are working as hard as you can. To help you concentrate more and achieve better, we agree with the school's plan to make your work more varied and interesting. We also think teachers could help you more by showing you how to improve through marking and setting individual targets. We hope you will do your best to follow their advice.

The school is giving you a satisfactory education. Your personal development is good because you are responsible, lead a healthy lifestyle and learn how to get on with one another. We feel that the school is beginning to improve but could develop at a faster rate to become a really good school. We hope that you will all work with Mrs Cunningham and the staff to make it happen.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector