

Seaton C of E Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112277
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325567
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Sutcliffe

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Ian Grainger
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Ingrams
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
School address	Seaton Park Seaton Workington Cumbria CA14 1HA
Telephone number	01900 325232
Fax number	01900 325238

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Seaton Junior is an average sized school. It serves an area characterised by a mixture of privately owned and local authority housing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

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. It gives its pupils a good standard of education and helps them achieve well and reach standards that are well above the national average. The school provides good value for money. One parent's comments echoed the views of many: 'This is an excellent school that supports and cares for the children. I feel my children are making excellent progress here.' Pupils' personal development and their care, support and guidance are excellent. All staff promote pupils' safety and well-being very well and pupils reflect this by showing care and consideration for each other. They have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour and relationships are exemplary. Pupils gain an exceptionally good understanding of how to make positive choices and understand how to keep safe. Pupils are interested in their work and want to do well because the well planned curriculum is enriched by additional activities that extend pupils' experiences and skills. Opportunities for the pupils to develop their learning through the local and wider community are excellent. Pupils' targets and next steps for learning are displayed effectively on classroom walls. The provision for pupils to acquire skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is outstanding. They have excellent opportunities to use these skills across the wider curriculum.

Pupils' attainment when they start the school varies but many start with skills that are above those typical for their age. As they move through the school, good and often outstanding teaching ensures they make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make good progress in line with their peers. For the last three years, standards in English, mathematics and science have steadily risen and are now well above average. The progress of the more able pupils, an issue at the time of the last inspection, has significantly improved. This is because the headteacher has implemented effective systems to monitor pupils' progress and set them challenging targets. The school's priority to improve standards and achievement in writing is having a good impact on the progress of girls. However, the progress of boys is more limited.

The headteacher, fully supported by her colleagues, leads and manages the school very well. There is shared vision amongst the staff for the school's development and a strong drive for improvement. Many parents commented on how much progress the school has made over the last three years. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is accurate and matched by inspection findings. The school has improved well since its last inspection and has good capacity to do so in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in boys' writing across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Additional support, guidance and improved assessment of how pupils are performing have helped to consistently raise standards over the last three years. The proportion of higher attaining pupils has now risen to well above average in English and science and to above average in mathematics. The pupils' work in the present Year 6 and the targets they have been set for the end of key stage tests indicate standards to be well above average. As many of these pupils were above average when they

started the school, this represents good overall achievement. In most subject areas, there are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls. However, in writing, girls make better progress than boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils clearly enjoy all aspects of school and their relationships are excellent. The Golden Rules reward system results in exemplary behaviour by pupils in and around the school and contributes to progress and achievement. Pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, the part that particular food plays in their growth and development and the importance of exercise is excellent. This is endorsed by the Healthy Schools accreditation. The majority of pupils participate in an extensive extra-curricular programme. Dance provides alternate physical activity for those less inclined to sports. Visits and visitors are regular features of school life and contribute to exposure to cultural diversity. There are many opportunities to take on responsibilities and play an active part in community activities. Buddy systems support the transition from the infant to the junior school and the school council instigates local, national and international charity work. Older pupils demonstrate very good basic skills and are highly competent in using ICT. Combined with maturity, very good self-discipline and a strong work ethic, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. Attendance is much higher than the national average and this has a positive impact on learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and often outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make the learning objective of the lessons clear to pupils. These strengths are put to good use to plan lessons that often interest, motivate and support pupils to make good progress. In the outstanding teaching, pupils make exceptionally good progress because the expectations are very high for pupils of all abilities, and probing questions make pupils think hard. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson on division, the pupils responded well to the teacher's enthusiastic delivery. They enjoyed the challenge of the work and made rapid progress. The school's focus on improving writing has made a strong impact particularly on the progress of girls. Boys' progress in writing is not as consistent. This is because, in some year groups, the marking of writing is inconsistent and there is not enough attention paid to how they present their work. Teachers create positive relationships within the classroom. They set a good example for pupils by respecting and valuing everyone equally. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and they are particularly skilled in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets national requirements in its provision for all subjects. There is a balance between creative, physical and academic work which the pupils enjoy and find challenging. The recent introduction of the school's own scheme of work for supporting lower

ability groups in mathematics is effectively meeting their needs. 'Big writing' is used to extend literacy skills and this is impacting on good progress and achievement, particularly those of girls. A new curriculum is in the early stages of development and links different subjects together to make the learning real. Through the 'Healthy Me' project, pupils are applying and developing literacy, numeracy, science and healthy lifestyle skills. Themed weeks across the school are an established part of the curriculum. 'Take One Picture Week' demonstrates the positive impact of the school's Artsmark Gold status. The pupils' excellent skills in ICT are used well to support learning across many subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to learn French and Spanish which helps their cultural and international links. The curriculum is enhanced by the wide range of well attended clubs and activities after school. The residential visits to Birdoswald, Hawsend and Edinburgh promote initiative and team building.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Levels of pastoral care and academic guidance are outstanding. Parents appreciate the support and care that the school provides and say their children feel very valued. Arrangements for safeguarding, child protection and risk assessment are in place and the school has a robust approach to medical care and records. Pupils are confident that their teachers will sort out any problems and say that bullying is not an issue in the school. The experienced and skilled support assistants provide high quality support for pupils who find aspects of school difficult. The Nurture Group provides an exceptional facility focusing on the social and emotional aspects of learning for more vulnerable pupils. The inclusive approach of the school results in the engagement of specialist support both within the school and from external agencies, which has a highly beneficial impact on pupils with particular needs. Established and very effective systems for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science demonstrate that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress physically, socially and academically.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and have outstanding features. The headteacher has a very clear vision of a caring community in which every child is important. Her inspirational and outstanding leadership enables those around her to flourish. Together with the senior leadership team, she has successfully created a positive climate for continual improvement. As a result, pupils' personal development and care are excellent and pupils achieve well to reach standards that are well above average. The governing body provides outstanding support to the school. They oversee all aspects of the school's provision and understand the school's strengths and areas for further development very well. Curriculum leaders in English, mathematics and science manage their subjects well. They analyse pupils' work and make good use of assessment data to set challenging targets so that pupils do as well as they can by the end of Year 6. The school has recognised in its development plan that their role in monitoring standards and assessing pupils' progress in other subjects is less well developed.

There is an accurate understanding of school effectiveness and how it can be further improved. The school development plan clearly identifies priorities for improvement and how targets will be measured. There are outstanding examples of how the school is actively engaged in promoting community cohesion at both a local level and in the wider global community. Clear plans for

improvement have helped the school move forward at a good pace since the last inspection and ensure that the school is well placed to improve further.

Parents and pupils are given very good opportunities to share their views and to contribute towards school evaluation. Parents are very positive about the school and make a good contribution towards their child's learning. One parent said, 'Both of my children attend this school and are happy and thriving in this excellent environment.'

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	1

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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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**

12 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton C of E Junior School, Cumbria, CA14 1HA

As you know we visited your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school, the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school. This letter is to tell you what we found. You go to a good school that helps you make good progress and do well.

What we liked about your school:

- you achieve well and the standards of your work are high
- your attendance at the school is very good; you behave very well and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school
- you are very polite, helpful and friendly
- teachers plan interesting lessons and you have a good range of visits, visitors and clubs in which many of you take part
- you have very good opportunities to do well in subjects such as ICT and science
- the staff look after you extremely well and give you excellent support
- the headteacher and other staff lead and manage the school well.

Most of you do well but some of you could do even better. In order to help, we have asked the school to make sure that boys make even more progress in their writing.

We thoroughly enjoyed listening to you and watching you learn. We wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Sutcliffe

Lead inspector