

Seaton Delaval First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122223
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327664
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Armstrong

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	178
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	Mrs Wendy Batley
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Seaton Delaval Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 0EP
Telephone number	0191 2371239
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized first school serving an area of social and economic disadvantage in the Blyth Valley district of Northumberland. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The very large majority of pupils are from White British families. A very small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; none speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is high. A very small number are looked after by the local authority. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception class. Children have the opportunity to attend a 'Pre-Reception' class the term after their fourth birthday. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards. There is a Sure Start Centre adjacent to the school. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs.

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 and improving school. It has outstanding features. Its strong family values and high expectations enable pupils to flourish in their personal development and academic achievement. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work closely together to set a clear direction to the school's work. All are welcome to this inclusive school and the promotion of community cohesion is good. This can be seen in the way the school forges very effective partnerships with parents and external agencies to support pupil's development and well-being. Parents are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the 'friendly atmosphere' where pupils are 'well supported and encouraged to succeed.'

Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills which are below what is typical for their age. The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage means children quickly become confident learners and achieve well. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school and, by the time they leave Year 4, standards are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, behaviour is exemplary and pupils show very mature attitudes to learning. The school motto of 'Believing and Achieving Together' is a key feature which helps pupils feel part of the school community. All pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. They contribute well to the school community through their involvement in fundraising for a wide range of charities and through their high level of participation in the 'Seaton Delaval Hall Project'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are proud of their achievements. Their good learning, along with the school's strong emphasis on personal development, ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good and some teaching is outstanding. This promotes good achievement for all pupils. Lessons are lively and interesting therefore pupils work hard and enjoy learning. However, teachers do not always make effective use of assessment to plan sufficient challenge especially for the most able pupils and particularly in mathematics. Marking is used well to support and encourage pupils but it does not always give them clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils respond well to the imaginative curriculum which excites and motivates them. The partnerships the school has with outside agencies, including the Seaton Valley Learning Partnership, are outstanding. As a result, the curriculum is enriched by a good range of high quality activities that are available both inside and outside of lesson time.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads and manages her staff well. As a result, teachers and support staff work well together as a team and this has resulted in an outstanding level of care and support for vulnerable pupils. Governors are forward thinking and they support the school well through new initiatives. Consequently, the school has made good progress in improving provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children settle quickly into routines because of the high quality care and support they receive. Good provision in the 'Pre-Reception' class and effective links with parents help children make a smooth transition into school. Children's love of learning begins at this early stage when they are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment. Staff work and plan together effectively as a team to provide high quality learning experiences, both inside and outside of the classrooms, which make learning fun. Adults make regular observations and assessments to plan the next steps of learning for each child. As a result, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those from which children can choose. Consequently, children make good progress in relation to their starting points which are generally below what is typical for their age. By the end of Reception children mostly achieve average standards, although this can vary in some years. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the effective adult support. Leadership and management are good and there are comprehensive plans in place to improve outdoor provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make better use of assessment information to ensure all lessons are consistently challenging especially for the higher attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the use of marking across the school so pupils know what they need to do to move on in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Standards vary year-on-year because of the differing ability profiles of the intakes. In 2008, standards were average for Year 2 pupils. This represents good progress from this group's point of entry to Year 1. In Years 3 and 4, pupils maintain their rate of progress so that they leave school at the end of Year 4 with above average standards, particularly in reading. A key factor in the school's success has been the use of a well-planned programme of intervention work which has resulted in pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils making good progress. Throughout both Key Stages, higher attaining pupils perform well in reading, although they do not always do as well in writing and mathematics. Over the past year, the school has made raising standards in writing a priority area for development. As a result, standards are rising and more pupils achieve higher levels because they are more skilled in writing for a variety of purposes. Although there is some variation in the attainment of boys and girls, there is no recognisable pattern.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By the time they leave in Year 4 they are well rounded, assured individuals who are proud of their achievements. Behaviour is exemplary because relationships are excellent and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils demonstrate maturity and responsibility combined with good attitudes and commitment to their work. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in good levels of attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of the

importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They say they feel safe and are confident issues such as bullying would not be tolerated. Pupils take a pride in their contributions to the community. They act responsibly as members of the 'Playground Squad' and serve on the active school council. The good grounding pupils receive in their social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. There is some outstanding teaching. A positive feature of all lessons is the very good relationship staff have with pupils. As a result, pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to learning. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are exciting and creative, capturing the imagination of the pupils. Pupils work very productively and are keen to give their views and explain their thinking. Generally, lessons are well planned and resources, including computer technology, are used well to enrich learning. However, planning does not consistently identify the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics. Where this is the case, teaching does not extend learning sufficiently. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide high quality, targeted support. This means pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the increasing number with additional needs are able to play a full part in lessons and achieve well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum is creative and engaging and promotes good achievement in pupils' personal and academic development. This is seen in the strong emphasis the school places on developing healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as the 'Roots and Shoots' programme. The curriculum is enriched through very strong partnerships with the wider community. These include visits from sports specialists, visits out of school to Alnwick Gardens and Bede's World and opportunities to participate in 'Activity Afternoons'. Opportunities for learning beyond the classroom are good and pupils are keen to attend the wide range of sporting and creative activities which are available. There is a systematic approach to the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology resulting in good achievement. This exemplifies the good progress the school has made since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are fully in place. Expectations for the behaviour and development of pupils are set very high within a caring climate in which all feel valued and supported. The school has a very strong partnership with parents and the innovative use of the parent support adviser for instance, supports learning well and has resulted in improved attendance and a swift reduction in exclusion levels. The very good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and or disabilities, are met. Strong links with the neighbouring middle school ensure a smooth transfer as pupils move to the next stage of their education. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Marking is supportive and encouraging.

In the best examples it clearly indicates how pupils can improve their work but this practice is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not always know how to move on to the next step in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in close partnership and this has helped them establish a good team spirit in the school. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. Self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and provide an accurate picture of what is working and what needs attention. Senior leaders analyse data carefully and set challenging targets for improvement. As a result, standards in English are rising especially for the more able pupils. However, leaders have not yet secured consistency in teachers' use assessment to ensure lessons are always sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils especially in mathematics. Governance is good. Governors are supportive but at the same time play an important role in holding the school to account for its performance. A strong feature of the governors' work is their careful analysis of how the school can promote community cohesion. This plan is being implemented well. The school's involvement in the local community and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life exemplify good community cohesion.

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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

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	2

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?	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

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

17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton Delaval First School, Northumberland, NE25 0EP

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and listening to your views about your school and why you enjoy learning. Your school gives you a good education and it helps you become very thoughtful and sensible young people. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and how well you take responsibility for looking after each other. You develop a strong awareness of right and wrong and you know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. We were delighted to see how much you like to take part in school activities, how much you value the friendships you make and the help you get. We were also pleased to see how much you contribute to school life, for example as school councillors and members of the 'Playground Squad'. The headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

We really liked the family atmosphere in your school. The staff take excellent care of you and many of you told us how kind the adults are and how safe you feel in school. Even though your school is good, your headteacher, staff and governors want to make it even better. You are given work that interests you and helps you make good progress but some of you could be challenged further. We have suggested that your teachers plan harder work for those of you who find learning easier, particularly in mathematics. We have also asked the school to improve the way your work is marked so you will know precisely what you need to do to improve.

You have very many opportunities at Seaton Delaval First School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. Some of you will soon be leaving to join a middle school. We hope that you all do really well.

Once again, thank you very much for your help and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Armstrong

Lead inspector