

Seaburn Dene Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108786
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337151
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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 of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Chalk
Headteacher	Miss Maxine Purdy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by eight teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also scrutinised 119 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and whether it is enabling pupils to make consistently good progress across school
- the attainment and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- pupils' understanding of the multicultural make-up of modern British society.

Information about the school

This is an average size school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has achieved Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Healthy Schools Award, Anti Bullying Silver Award and Eco Schools Bronze Award. There has been a period of disruption in staffing, including illness and absence issues which have had an adverse effect on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good education for its pupils. The pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They achieve highly in writing, art and design, and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They behave well and make good progress because the good teaching strives to make learning fun. Despite a period of uncertainty in the staffing of the school, the headteacher has maintained a drive for improvement. Accordingly, standards show a rising trend and were high in 2009. Pupils make most progress in Years 5 and 6 because there are many opportunities for pupils to learn collaboratively through investigative activities. Although teaching is good throughout school, teachers in Years 1 to 4 sometimes do too much for pupils and occasionally opportunities are missed for pupils to learn together. Information about pupils' skills and abilities is well used to ensure that those pupils who are at risk of falling behind or who are able to achieve highly, are well targeted. Data are less consistently used across school to plan individual lessons where work is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Staff give effective care and support which ensure that pupils' well-being and personal development are promoted well. As a result, pupils are happy, confident and feel safe. Outstanding partnerships with outside agencies have contributed to pupils' improving attainment. Parents are supportive of the school and how it promotes pupils' social, moral and academic development.

Senior leaders are very clear about what needs to be done to improve the school. They implement appropriate strategies and rigorously monitor outcomes to ensure that they are improving pupils' progress and raising attainment. Initiatives have impacted well on standards and show the school's capacity to improve is good. However, unavoidable absences by staff have meant that improvements made in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection have slowed. The school has acted rapidly to appoint a new leader so that developing satisfactory practice in assessing children's progress, matching activities to their learning needs and developing their writing can become fully embedded.

Pupils benefit from knowing the level of their work and how to achieve the next level. Marking is done regularly and supports pupils, but it is inconsistent across school in the way in which teachers tell pupils how to improve their work. Pupils have a strong influence on what happens in school, a strong sense of how to help and support one another, a love of their local area and a good understanding of different religions, life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of modern British society.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- By 2011, raise children's attainment and improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the range and quality of the activities available to children, in particular those tasks designed to develop children's writing
 - implementing assessment procedures so that information about children's skills and abilities are routinely used to provide sufficient challenge in activities
 - ensuring the new leader establishes a cohesive team.
- By 2011, improve pupils' learning by being more consistent in ensuring that:
 - marking tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - information from assessment is well matched to pupils' individual needs
 - a wider range of learning strategies is used across the school, including practical work, investigations and collaborative techniques.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning is good. Pupils behave well, are courteous, have good attitudes and relationships in lessons and are keen to do well in their work. They enjoy their learning especially when they are involved in lively activities, such as investigating together the causes of landslips or experimenting about forces.

From starting points in Year 1 which are broadly average in English and mathematics, pupils usually attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. Indeed, in the 2009 tests for 11-year-olds, attainment was high. For the present Year 6, standards are above average. Although standards in the 2009 assessments for seven-year-olds were broadly average, standards are typically above average at the end of Key Stage 1. While good overall, progress is stronger in Years 5 and 6 as teachers are able to build on the strong foundations of basic skills laid down earlier by allowing pupils more opportunities to learn in an investigative, collaborative manner. Occasionally, too much time is spent consolidating learning in the earlier years. In addition to English, mathematics and science, pupils' achievement is also good in art, design and sport. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils are highly aware of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking plenty of exercise. This is reflected in their keen involvement and success in sporting activities, the high take-up of healthy school meals and their enjoyment in using play equipment to further their physical skills. Pupils have respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe. They are confident that they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, taking on a range of roles, such as councillors, organising clubs and taking part in reviews about behaviour, as well as teaching and learning. There are good links within the local area through the Methodist church, local businesses, participation in performances and work with the

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allotment association. Pupils have a good understanding of their local heritage and of different religions, of life in other countries and the multicultural make-up of modern British society. They have a good understanding about the world of work and have great skill and confidence in using ICT. Allied to above average attendance, good skills in working collaboratively and above average basic skills in English and mathematics; this ensures they are well equipped for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants are skilful at supporting the needs and developing the learning of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They use interactive whiteboards, discussion and investigations to engage pupils and to stimulate their thinking. They use questions very well to ascertain what pupils already know and to encourage them to develop their thinking. Lessons are well planned to include opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities including investigations. However, while teachers give clear direction to pupils,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the learning opportunities afforded to younger pupils. Occasionally, there is too much direction by the teacher and insufficient opportunity for pupils to get on with their work independently or with classmates. Marking is effective in telling pupils how well they achieve in relation to the work set, but is inconsistent in explaining the next step in learning. There is much information about pupils' progress which helps teachers to target those who may possibly fall behind. It is used well, although not as consistently as it could be in all lessons, to match work to pupils' individual abilities.

The curriculum offers pupils a wide range of challenging and creative activities, including enterprise. It helps pupils to see the links between subjects and offers them many opportunities to use computers and to write at length in subjects other than English which contributes to high standards in writing. All pupils learn French; they particularly enjoy physical education and the performing arts. A strong focus on communities develops pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures, for example, through visits to Durham Cathedral, working to support the local lifeboat, and through participation in Indian dance and visits to the Sikh temple. They participate enthusiastically and successfully in a range of extra-curricular activities.

All staff know pupils very well and pupils benefit from the sensitive care and support they receive. Provision for pupils with a wide range of complex special educational needs and for those who are vulnerable is well managed. Pastoral support for all pupils is beneficial for their learning. Strong links with a wide range of outside agencies and a developing range of strategies some of which involve families add much to pupils' welfare. Transition is well organised so that pupils are very well prepared for the next phase of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has skilfully pursued and implemented strategies that have brought about an improvement in the school's effectiveness and improving outcomes for pupils. After a period of some turbulence in staffing, the headteacher is establishing an able senior leadership team with a shared vision for school improvement. Tasks are prioritised well and addressed with rigour. For example, swift action was taken to address leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the progress of individual pupils and uses this to plan with teachers to

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ensure no child falls behind. The school knows itself well and plans for improvement are clearly delineated in the school development plan which is monitored regularly and to which all staff, governors and other stakeholders contribute. A well organised programme of training uses the skills of staff to share expertise, as well as working closely with the local authority to advance school improvement. Governors likewise have worked closely with the local authority to bring the school successfully through a difficult time. They offer strong support and challenge which has been instrumental in school improvement. The school is proud of its inclusive nature and has close links with outside agencies to support the individual needs of pupils with a range of needs, showing the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling stereotypes and ensuring that discrimination against any group is avoided. There is an outstanding range of successful partnerships with many outside agencies, such as local businesses, which impact significantly on pupils' progress, enjoyment and attainment. The school's good relationship with parents and carers benefits pupils' well-being and learning. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements and are rigorously applied. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It ensures pupils are proud of their place in the local community and understand their responsibilities as global citizens and members of a culturally diverse society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry to and exit from the Early Years Foundation Stage is mostly at a level typical for children's ages. Children's achievement and progress are satisfactory. An

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effective focus on activities which supports children's social and emotional development means that they gradually become more confident when working with others and behave well. A strong focus on teaching letter sounds develops children's reading. However, it is not used as well to increase progress in writing which is less well developed because there are too few opportunities for children to practise and develop their skills. There is a satisfactory range of those activities which are directed by the teacher and those which pupils choose for themselves. Children know about staying healthy and boys and girls enjoy physical activities, such as playing on the large climbing equipment. Welfare requirements are met and children with a wide range of needs are cared for well. Staff get to know the children before they start in the Nursery. They involve parents and carers in their children's education and show how they can build on learning at school in the home. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been adversely affected by staff absence and by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader having to teach in Year 6. While provision and outcomes for the children remain satisfactory, this has slowed development and prevented the consistent application of assessment and planning procedures which were beginning to raise attainment. The school has recently appointed a new leader to address this issue.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The respondents support the school very strongly. Most like the way the school helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy their learning. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching and the way the school meets their children's needs. The inspection agrees that these are positive features of the school. However, a few parents and carers indicated that they believed the school could give more information about how they can support their children's learning. Inspectors do not consider that this is a significant area for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seaburn Dene Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	56	50	42	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	73	61	44	37	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	50	51	43	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	36	65	55	7	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	34	72	61	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	29	70	59	12	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	37	72	61	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	37	59	50	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	39	67	56	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	29	72	61	7	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	31	65	55	9	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	28	74	62	9	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	46	57	48	5	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaburn Dene Primary School, Sunderland, SR6 8LG

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school.

You go to a good school which knows what to do to make itself better. The staff care for you very well. Teachers help you learn well because they try to make your lessons fun. You take pride in your tasks and you work hard in lessons. You attain highly in writing, art and design, and information and communication technology. You behave well, show respect for one another and look after one another admirably. You are polite and helpful and look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers and appreciate the activities the school provides for you, such as visits and sports activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much.

To help your school improve even more I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that the youngest children in school have plenty of exciting activities to develop their skills, especially writing
- make sure that work is always well matched to your abilities
- make sure that marking is better at telling you how to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to do your best and attending regularly. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Gordon Potter

Lead inspector

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