

Seghill First School

Seghill, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 7SB

Inspection dates

15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points, only a few make good progress.
- There is not enough good or outstanding teaching. The pace of learning is sometimes too slow and occasionally work is not matched closely enough to some pupils' individual needs. Higher levels of challenge for more-able pupils are seen in some classes, but not all.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and children's early literacy skills, although adequate, require further improvement. The curriculum does not always enable children to learn independently or follow up their individual needs and interests.
- Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length and their handwriting and spelling are not always as good as they should be.
- Leaders have improved teaching over the last year but not enough to ensure it is consistently good or better to enable all pupils to make good progress.
- Governors do not always ensure they have enough first-hand evidence of the work of the school in order to challenge leaders and hold all staff to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- There have been some improvements in attainment in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment in Year 4 and rates of progress across the school are beginning to improve because of effective action taken by the headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is good throughout the school. Pupils are cooperative, polite and are very willing to take on responsibilities. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Marking and feedback are used effectively to help pupils improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of eight lessons taught by six teachers and two teaching assistants, including two jointly with the headteacher. She also looked at pupils' work and explored how pupils learn the basic skills of reading.
- The views of 10 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration. The responses from 12 questionnaires from staff were also examined.
- The inspector held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, other leaders and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also met a group of pupils from Years 1 to 4 and spoke informally to other pupils.
- The inspector checked a wide range of documentation including that relating to behaviour and pupils' safety and information on pupils' progress and attainment.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Christine Inkster, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is slightly above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- There is no alternative or off-site provision.
- The school is not subject to the government's floor standards as pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are not managed by the school and so do not form part of this inspection.
- There have been significant staffing changes with three newly qualified teachers being appointed, one in February 2013 and two in September 2013. A new mathematics leader has been appointed who took up her role in September 2013. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has had an extended period of absence, returning to her role in November 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring all staff use assessment more effectively to meet pupils' individual needs, including providing appropriate levels of challenge, particularly for those pupils who are more able
 - increasing the pace of learning and ensuring that time is used more effectively to enable pupils to make more rapid progress
 - improving pupils' skills in handwriting and spelling
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring the curriculum is stimulating and more closely matched to children's individual needs and interests by giving them more opportunities to learn independently
 - developing children's early literacy skills more effectively to ensure they reach national expectations by the time they enter Year 1.
- Increase the impact of leadership on how well pupils learn by:
 - ensuring that systems to check and evaluate the quality of teaching are more rigorous and hold all staff more fully to account for pupils' progress
 - ensuring that all governors have the knowledge and understanding necessary of the work of the school to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, although pupils make at least expected progress, they do not all make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Children start Nursery with skills and abilities which are typical for children of their age but with weaker skills in communication, language and literacy. They make expected progress and start Year 1 reaching nationally expected levels, although children's levels of early literacy are below national expectations.
- In Key Stage 1, attainment in reading and writing, including boys' writing, is in line with national expectations and improving. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average. The headteacher is addressing this by providing in-service training for staff, with a particular focus on problem solving.
- The school's data show that attainment at the end of Year 4 in writing and mathematics is broadly in line with that typically expected for their age and above that expected in reading.
- Higher-ability pupils make at least expected progress but in a few lessons observed, work was not always challenging enough. However, in other lessons, such as in mathematics in Years 2 and 3, the level of challenge was raised for more-able pupils and they responded with enthusiasm and were fully engaged in their learning.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and the most-able pupils are fluent and expressive readers who talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and the different styles of writing. Some less-able readers struggle to read unfamiliar words, but do try to use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) to help them. The Year 1 phonics reading check indicates pupils' phonic knowledge is close to the national average.
- Although rates of progress and attainment are increasing in writing, particularly for boys, pupils' handwriting and spelling are not always as good as they should be and there are sometimes limited opportunities for pupils to write at length. However, there were some good examples of writing seen in pupils' books, for example in Year 3.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. This is because of the targeted support given by teaching assistants in the classroom and, as observed, in small group sessions where work was planned carefully to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils who receive support funded by the pupil premium now make similar progress to their classmates and their attainment is also broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has managed the use of the funding appropriately by providing specific programmes of work, equipment and additional adult support to help them improve. The gap between these pupils' attainment and that of their peers is narrowing throughout the school and is now less than one term behind other pupils in Year 4. The funding is also used to support individual pupils in their personal, social and emotional development.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because not all pupils are making good progress. This is partly because the pace of teaching and learning is sometimes too slow. Teachers do not always make the best use of the time available to ensure all pupils make rapid progress.
- Although there were some good examples observed during lessons where teachers were using assessment effectively to plan 'next steps' in learning for pupils, such as in a Year 1 mathematics lesson and a Year 4 literacy lesson, this is not always the case. Some teachers do not always check on pupils' progress often enough during the lesson and adapt their teaching accordingly to meet pupils' individual needs.
- The quality of teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although adequate, requires improvement because the curriculum is not as stimulating as it could be and work is not always closely matched to children's individual needs and interests. There are not always enough

opportunities for children to learn independently.

- Where teaching is stronger, teachers ask pertinent questions to probe pupils' understanding and ensure that pupils give in-depth reasons for their answers. This does much to promote pupils' thinking skills. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas with a 'talk partner' and this helps them to consolidate their understanding of a concept and share ideas.
- In better lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work independently or in groups or pairs to solve problems. This was seen in a Year 3 class where pupils were given the opportunity to identify for themselves units of measurement to measure the classroom. They worked together cooperatively and there was much discussion about which units of measurement would be most suitable. This led one pupil to exclaim, 'I love measuring!'
- The marking policy is adhered to across the school and a scrutiny of books shows that pupils' work is marked regularly and conscientiously. There are comments to help pupils improve their work provided by their peers and the teacher. Pupils say they have opportunities to respond to marking and feedback in the next lesson.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils' handwriting and spelling are not always as good as they should be and the quality of work is variable across different classes. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are limited in some year groups and this restricts their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils behave well when they are working with teaching assistants in other rooms and when being supervised by support staff at lunchtimes. This is because there has been a successful whole-school approach to the management of behaviour and pupils have a very clear understanding of what the expectations of behaviour are.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and cooperate well together, particularly when given the opportunity to work in groups and pairs. They have good attitudes to learning and willingly complete the tasks requested of them. Parents and carers have positive views of the way in which behaviour is managed in the school.
- Pupils say there are a few occasions when bullying or name-calling takes place, but are adamant that adults listen to their concerns and deal with any incidents quickly if they occur. They have a good understanding of cyber-bullying and are aware of the inappropriate use of terms relating to homophobic bullying when used disrespectfully. They say any incidents are challenged by staff.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of 'e' safety and know which visitors are able to move around the school independently because they have had the necessary checks (because they wear a red badge) and those visitors who should be with another adult (because they wear a blue badge).
- Attendance was broadly average in 2011 and 2012, but dipped over the last year, partly because of outbreaks of illness for a significant number of pupils in the autumn term but also because of holidays taken during term time. The school has made very clear to parents and carers that absence will be unauthorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to hold responsibilities within the school and they take these very seriously. Older pupils look after younger pupils and visitors at lunchtimes and the youngest children take on responsibilities as monitors within their classrooms. Younger pupils say they enjoy working with their older 'reading buddies'. The school council is democratically elected by its peers and has opportunities to promote its ideas within the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils across the school are not all making good progress from their starting points. Also, the quality of teaching is not consistently good because procedures for checking and evaluating teaching by all leaders have not ensured

that all members of staff consistently apply the expected whole-school procedures to ensure a smooth progression in pupils' learning.

- The systems to manage teachers' performance require improvement to ensure that targets are more specific and bespoke for each member of staff. There are links, however, between teachers' pay and targets linked to pupils' progress. There are good opportunities for all staff to participate in professional development according to their individual needs but there are limited opportunities for them to share expertise with teachers and support staff in other schools.
- The senior leadership team has been increased by the appointment of a new leader for mathematics in September 2013. However, the leader has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning at this early stage. Current leaders are involved in monitoring and supporting the three newly qualified teachers within the school.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because the curriculum is not always closely matched to the needs and interests of children and there are not enough opportunities for children to learn independently. Also, children's early literacy skills are not as well developed as they should be.
- The impact of the leaders' actions demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. The headteacher has taken positive steps to improve behaviour and safety and there have been some improvements in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher has an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching as demonstrated through joint lesson observations conducted with the inspector.
- The school promotes equal opportunities effectively and ensures that all pupils have access to the full range of subjects and activities and learn without fear of any type of discrimination.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' personal, social and health education is a strong feature of the school; pupils' well-being is promoted effectively through ensuring they participate in regular sport and exercise and are encouraged to eat and live healthily. The primary schools sport funding (additional funding provided by the government to promote sport and healthy lifestyles) is being used effectively through the partnership of Seaton Valley Schools to provide a range of physical activities for pupils and professional development for staff. Older pupils benefit from a residential experience and pupils benefit from visits to the seaside, museums and a local theatre as well as from participating in a range of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities.
- Parents and carers have positive views of the school and all of the respondents on Parent View indicated that they would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
- The local authority, particularly the School Improvement Adviser, has provided a range of effective support for the school, including support for school leaders during the absence of the headteacher. A recent review of the quality of teaching in the school provided an accurate picture of the strengths and the improvements which needed to be made. This has had some impact in terms of some improvements to the quality of teaching and raising attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. A local authority consultant has provided good advice to the school in respect of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage but this requires close monitoring and follow-up by leaders to ensure the necessary improvements are made.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. Two governors have made visits to check on health and safety procedures but not all governors have ensured that they have an in-depth knowledge of the work of the school in order to hold leaders to account in respect of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors have received some training on the understanding of data on pupils' performance from the local authority but they do not always challenge leaders well enough to ensure that pupils' progress is consistently good or better. The governors meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding, have a good awareness of finance, and are checking the impact of the pupil premium and also sport funding on the outcomes for pupils. Governors are well informed about performance management and the link between teachers' pay and performance. They are aware of what has been done to tackle any underperformance and where better teaching has been rewarded.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122225
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	425844

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Laws
Headteacher	Tracey Chappell
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
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