

# Seaton Sluice Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122334
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	292373
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Wallis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lynne Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Tom Moran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Alston Grove Seaton Sluice Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE26 4JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2370629
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2373970

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school takes its pupils from the village of Seaton Sluice and the neighbouring villages of Seghill and New Hartley. A below average number of pupils is entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups or who have English as an additional language. In all year groups, there are more boys than girls. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. The school has a Healthy School award and Investors in People status. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Seaton Sluice Middle is a satisfactory school with some good features. The school is a calm and welcoming place where staff are determined to help all pupils fulfil their potential. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and most have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The personal care and support pupils receive are good whilst their academic guidance is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and pupils' personal development is enhanced by the excellent range of enrichment opportunities the school provides. Pupils spoke enthusiastically of the residential visits they had been on to places as far apart as Paris, the Lake District and Whitby. Pupils develop workplace and other life skills satisfactorily.

Most parents are positive in their support for the school. Their comments included: 'Staff have been really good in making the transition from first to middle school easy for my son', 'My daughter loves the school and is doing very well' and 'The school lets me know about my son's good behaviour'. A few parents had concerns about pupils' behaviour and said that their child did not enjoy school. Inspectors found little evidence to support these views.

Pupils' standards are above average and they make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils reached above average standards in the 2005 and 2006 Key Stage 2 tests. However, the school recognises that pupils in all year groups did not achieve as well in English as in other core subjects. This was largely due to an extended period of staff absences in that department. This issue has now been successfully resolved and standards in English are rising.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In some lessons, it is good and in a very small proportion of lessons it is inadequate. Strengths of teaching are the careful planning of lessons and the way in which pupils are encouraged to assess their own work. In most lessons, relationships are good and pupils work hard. In a minority of lessons, often where the pace is slower, pupils lose interest and drift off task. Much of pupils' work is marked thoroughly and they are given clear guidance on how to improve but this is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The commitment and hard work of all staff and particularly the headteacher are instrumental in maintaining morale during the present difficult period of proposed school reorganisation. The recent restructuring of existing staff, coupled with new staff appointments, is now leading to rising standards and achievement and adding to the school's capacity to improve further.

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.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English.
- Eliminate the small proportion of inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Ensure pupils' work is marked consistently so they have clear guidance on how to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school varies but pupils who took Key Stage 2 tests in 2005 and 2006 entered the school with standards which were above average. They made satisfactory progress in Years 5 and 6 and achieved above average standards in tests at the end of Year 6. Given their starting points their achievement was satisfactory. The school met its targets in 2006. Pupils' achievement was best in mathematics and science but markedly weaker in English. The school recognises the need to improve standards and achievement in English following a period of staffing turbulence over the last three years, which has resulted in pupils' underachievement in this subject. Following the recent successful appointment of a specialist English teacher standards are now rising and progress is beginning to accelerate. In Years 7 and 8, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 8 have fluctuated over the last three years but have been broadly average and have reflected pupils' capabilities and starting points. Results of current assessments and work seen in lessons indicate that standards are rising, particularly in English, and are above average in Year 8. Achievement is satisfactory. Boys and girls achieve equally well and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of learners are good. Attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assembly pupils listened carefully to the contributions of three visiting specialists involved in the Creative Partnership programme focusing on the design of a new local high school. Pupils reflected on the visual impact of buildings and thought carefully about premises renewal and environmental impact. Behaviour is good. Pupils show respect for staff in lessons. They are well-mannered when meeting visitors to the school. Pupils discuss confidently the reasons why it is important to eat well and take part in regular exercise. They recognise that eating a balanced school lunch involves placing certain restrictions on food choices. Pupils like school activities, most can cite new knowledge gained through enjoyable lessons. The fact that some extra-curricular sports activities are often oversubscribed reflects pupils' enthusiasm for them.

Pupils are keen to contribute to good causes. Year 8 pupils take full responsibility for the organisation and management of a charity event. School council members successfully represented pupils' views when changes were made to school lunch options.

Pupils develop workplace and other life skills satisfactorily. They take part in a structured decision-taking programme that helps them to simulate financial management skills. The school's improving information and communication technology (ICT) provision provides them with suitable opportunities to use a good range of business and administration software.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some teaching is good and a very small proportion is inadequate. In mathematics and English, pupils are grouped according to ability and this strategy

helps teachers to plan work that better meets their pupils' needs. Good levels of support from teachers and their assistants frequently enable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress within individual lessons. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers make clear to pupils what they have to do and the time that is available. Teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work and make good use of the final section of lessons to help pupils to understand what they have achieved; this structured approach gives pupils a clear understanding of their learning within the lesson. In the great majority of lessons, relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils respond well and behaviour is good. In the few lessons where there were instances of loss of attention and restlessness, they were generally in response to slow pace and teaching that did not engage all of the pupils. Marking of written work is inconsistent. Too frequently, it is restricted to ticks and celebratory comments and does not include guidance on what individual pupils should do next.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and is well matched to the needs of all learners. Statutory requirements are met. The basic skills of numeracy and ICT are developed well. Provision for literacy, following a review of the curriculum, is now satisfactory and is improving rapidly. Pupils say they really enjoy the excellent range of residential trips the school offers. Groups of pupils visit Paris, the Lake District and the Yorkshire coast and have the opportunity to go skiing in Europe. Large numbers of pupils participate in sporting and dramatic activities and attend school clubs and booster classes. The personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay safe and healthy and helps them develop successfully the skills needed for the world of work. Pupils develop self-confidence and teamwork skills through taking responsibility as members of the school council and through fundraising activities. They are well prepared for their transfer to High School.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care, guidance and support of learners are satisfactory. Child protection procedures satisfactorily meet the requirements of the Area Child Protection Committee. Staff receive regular training, those newly employed at the school being provided with clear guidance on procedures to be followed. Safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are satisfactorily applied.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access a satisfactory range of support. Focused work with teaching assistants helps them to make similar progress to other pupils. Vulnerable learners benefit from the good links school staff have established with specialists from a wide range of support agencies. Case studies confirm the school's success in helping pupils with poor attendance to become re-engaged with school.

Staff knowledge of pupils and attention to their personal needs and welfare is good. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for knowing they can easily access help when they wish to discuss personal matters. Academic guidance is not as good because systems for tracking pupils' progress are not consistently applied. Similarly, the marking of pupils' work is variable. Consequently some, but not all, pupils receive structured guidance on what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders are determined to help all pupils fulfil their potential and give them a wide range of learning opportunities, which lead to their good personal development. Although the school's self-evaluation of some aspects of its work, including pupils' achievement, was a little overgenerous; the headteacher analyses assessment data thoroughly and identifies appropriate areas for development, which are firmly focused on raising standards. For example, a 'coaching' initiative is currently being implemented where teachers work in teams in order to share best practice and improve their teaching. The school is well aware that an extended period of staff absence has contributed to pupils' previous underachievement in English and has now resolved this issue successfully. The school's monitoring of its own work is satisfactory and recent staff training in lesson observation is helping senior leaders to form an accurate view of the quality of teaching. However, there are still inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work and in the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress.

Governors know the school well and are supportive of it. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the good links that have been forged with other schools, parents and outside agencies. Resources are effectively deployed and accommodation has been improved to offer a safe and welcoming learning environment. The recent investment in ICT equipment is leading to rising standards in this area. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and, with a strengthened team of senior and middle managers, the school now has the capacity to improve further.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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**

27 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton Sluice Middle School, Tyne and Wear, NE26 4JS

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed seeing your work and hearing all the things you liked about school.

These are some of the things we found out about your school during our visit.

- You behave well and most of you enjoy school and want to learn.
- Your personal development is good and your teachers help you to become confident and caring young people.
- You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach standards which are above average.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and in some lessons it is good.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Raise standards and your achievement in English.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching.
- Ensure that the marking of your work gives you clear guidance on how to improve.

To help Seaton Sluice Middle School improve further make sure you attend school regularly and work with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Best wishes

Mrs A Wallis

Lead Inspector