

Seaton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113108
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325754
Inspection date	19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield HMI

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	344
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	Nessa Rutherford
Headteacher	Alan Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Valley View Seaton EX12 2HF
Telephone number	01297 20922
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress pupils are currently making, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 6.
- the impact of developments in the curriculum on pupils' thinking skills and their capacity for creativity.
- the impact of middle leaders on provision and standards.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and staff and analysing the views of parents and the school's documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large school that serves the seaside town of Seaton and the surrounding area. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. Pupils with moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties form the largest groups with additional needs. The school has a below average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. There are two Reception classes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has secured external recognition of several aspects of its work, notably the Ashden Award for sustainable energy. The governors manage Kidz@play, a before- and after-school club, and a private provider runs pre-school provision on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Seaton Primary is a good school. There have been some significant improvements since the previous inspection and it now has more outstanding features. Pupils respond superbly to the huge range of opportunities provided within the exceptionally warm and caring community created by the headteacher and his staff. Most parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school. One commented that her children are 'made to feel valued here' while another noted the 'good culture of making school enjoyable, friendly, caring, healthy'. A third reported that her daughter 'is so happy and is very keen to learn'. The inspection evidence fully supports these views.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, standards have been consistently above average overall for several years, with particular strengths in writing and mathematics. Standards dipped below average in 2008 when there was a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and a few whose first language was not English. The school provided additional support at an early stage but was unable to achieve the full impact it sought. It is rightly continuing to give extra support now that these pupils are in Year 3. Those with English as an additional language have made good progress and the progress of others is improving. Teachers' assessments indicate that current Year 2 pupils are on track to return to the high standards of previous years. By the end of Year 6, pupils have consistently reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science, with the exception of 2007 when pupils made good progress from lower starting points at the end of Year 2 to reach broadly average standards. The school's data indicate that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above average standards overall, with large numbers set to reach the higher Level 5.

There are good systems for checking pupils' progress as they move through the school. Any at risk of not doing as well as they should are identified at an early stage and are the focus of a discussion between the headteacher and the class teacher so that additional support or challenge can be provided. The school has made strenuous efforts to improve pupils' writing so that it is of a similar high standard to their reading. The school's data indicate some success here by the end of Year 6, particularly for those of average attainment. The gap has been narrowed significantly for the higher attaining pupils and the school is rightly continuing to work to improve writing further. The good teaching makes an important contribution to pupils' good progress in their learning. Typically, teachers provide challenges for pupils, to which they respond with real enthusiasm and very good concentration. Teachers' good subject knowledge is often the basis for a good pace in lessons. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. In some teaching observed, the work provided was not challenging enough and teachers did not press pupils to think more deeply about their work.

The curriculum has improved significantly and is now outstanding. One parent rightly judged that 'the school works really hard to develop the whole child' and the richness of the curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' wider personal development. Pupils benefit greatly from the extensive use of the school grounds, the coast and the river valley and from the wide range of visitors to the school. The school's generation of power through its wind turbine and solar panels makes a key contribution to pupils' understanding of the importance of sustainable energy. Much effort is devoted to providing pupils with opportunities which both inspire interest and engagement and develop a wide range of skills that will be useful to them in the future.

Good examples include involvement in the design of the Seaton Visitor Centre and of the town's banners. The impact of such opportunities on pupils' thinking skills and creativity has been high. Pupils value the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and the level of participation is impressive. Provision for the development of skills in literacy and numeracy is good. With recent improvements in equipment, provision for information and communication technology is excellent. Education for health, safety and well-being is outstanding.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of exercise and eating healthy foods. Pupils say they feel 'completely safe' and are confident that in the highly unlikely event of any bullying, it will be swiftly resolved by the teachers. Behaviour is excellent and pupils really enjoy school. They value the responsibilities they are given to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school, including Year 6 pupils helping the youngest children and the roles of head boy and head girl. Pupils also act as playground buddies and participate in the lunchtime support team. Involvement in 'Seaton in bloom', with the Jurassic Heritage Coast team and the Axe Estuary Wildlife project demonstrate pupils' extensive involvement in the local community. Attendance is average and is adversely affected by parents who work in seasonal occupations taking holidays during the school term. The school has appropriate procedures in place to follow up absences but recognises that it could do more to promote better attendance.

This is a very caring and inclusive school which focuses on 'caring now, for the future'. Those pupils in need of additional support are identified early and appropriate action is taken, in conjunction with parents and outside agencies where appropriate. This ensures that they make good progress. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Good before- and after-school care is provided by Kidz@play. Pupils know their targets well and are confident that teachers' marking helps them to improve their work. The partnership with parents is very strong. Parents are provided with extensive information. For example, they receive the key learning objectives involved in their child's work at the start of each term and receive a mini-report on how well their child has done when the term's work has been completed.

The headteacher is deeply committed to the development of the school and, with his deputy headteacher and the staff, ensures a huge range of opportunities for pupils to flourish in their wider development. He provides the governing body with good information about the school's progress, enabling it to discharge its responsibilities well. There is a detailed plan for the development of the school in 2008–09, supported by an outline plan for further into the future. This is underpinned by good self-evaluation, where there is extensive consultation with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community, and this results in clear and appropriate priorities for the future. Middle leaders have a positive impact on provision and standards. Team leaders make an important contribution to implementing and checking agreed approaches and to gathering staff views. Curriculum coordinators conduct useful annual reviews of their subjects, resulting in helpful action plans, but the reviews do not always identify clearly enough strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' knowledge and skills. Excellent use is made of partnerships with outside organisations to enhance provision, such as with local secondary schools to provide business and enterprise days and additional opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. The school has a good record in improving standards in writing and the capacity to improve further is good.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It is very successful in engaging its pupils and has excellent links with the local community. The school has had links with schools in other countries for particular projects and is at an advanced stage in planning a more enduring link with a school in southern India. A relationship has been established with a school in a

multicultural urban area in Manchester, involving video conferencing, but this is at an early stage.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and staff work as an effective team with colleagues in Years 1 and 2, which helps to smooth children's progress into Year 1. The engagement of parents is a significant strength and parents value the opportunity of 'parent involvement mornings', such as the one that took place during the inspection.

Teachers engage and interest children through skilful questioning and stimulating classrooms. A chick hatching on the day of the inspection delighted the children and was a memorable experience. Staff provide a good range of activities, some directed by the teacher and others chosen by the children, which meets their differing needs well. As a result of the good teaching, children make good progress from starting points which are at broadly expected levels when they join Reception. Children's progress is carefully and systematically assessed and recorded. Almost all reach average standards by the end of the Reception Year and many exceed these. Children are very well cared for and their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. They get on very well together and enjoy school very much. Behaviour is excellent and children are very keen to learn.

Home visits prior to starting school make a positive contribution to children settling in quickly but contact with pre-school provision only occurs shortly before children join the school. The outdoor area is currently not used frequently enough to maximise its contribution to children's development. A cover for this area is to be installed shortly which is intended to permit use in wet weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the level of challenge in some lessons so that the quality of all teaching is as good as the best in order to raise standards further.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

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.

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
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?	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**

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seaton Primary School, Seaton EX12 2HF

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection of your school, particularly for the friendly, polite and open way in which you talked to us in discussions, in lessons and around the school. We enjoyed visiting your school very much.

You go to a good school which has improved significantly and now has more outstanding features. You are rightly proud of it. The school has some important strengths.

- Your personal development and well-being, including your behaviour and enjoyment of learning, are excellent.
- You benefit from an outstanding curriculum which offers you an exciting range of opportunities to develop many important skills.
- You are very well cared for by the staff of the school.
- You make good progress in your work, supported by good teaching.
- The provision for the children in Reception is good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, the governors and other staff are good.

We have asked the school to improve two aspects.

- Teaching is good but does not always provide work that is at the right level of difficulty and we have asked the school to ensure that all the teaching in the school is as good as the best.
- We have asked the school to make sure that some of you do not miss too many school days and to do all it can to improve attendance. Some parents can help with this.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Grahame Sherfield Her Majesty's Inspector