

Seghill First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122225
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	327665
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	0
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 Lesley Laws
Headteacher	Miss Tracey Chappell
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	Seghill Cramlington Northumberland NE23 7SB
Telephone number	0191 2370419
Fax number	0191 2373518

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most schools and is situated in a former mining village just north of the Tyneside conurbations. The socio-economic factors are broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low and very few are at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The headteacher has only recently taken up the post. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive part-time provision in the Nursery and full-time provision in the Reception class. There is a before- and after-school club and holiday scheme on site which is run by a private provider. This did not form part of this inspection.

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. The enthusiasm and strong determination of the relatively new headteacher, who is well supported by staff, has ensured pupils continue to achieve well. She has maintained the very effective partnerships with other schools and agencies and ensures that the school continues to have its strong place in the community. Teamwork is developing well and all staff are determined to further improve standards in both key stages. Much has been achieved since the previous inspection and the school is well placed to progress further. Recent and effective actions are already having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Parents wholeheartedly support the work of the school and provide a range of positive comments including, 'My children look forward to attending school. It is a very child-centered environment where the needs of the individual are paramount.'

The caring ethos and excellent relationships between staff and pupils create a happy and supportive atmosphere in which pupils thrive. Pupils' good personal development, supported through study programmes, gives them a clear understanding of right and wrong and a strong feeling of self-worth and self-respect. Behaviour is good throughout the school and the high level of personal discipline is very evident during the daily 'Wake-up and Shake-up' sessions. Pupils know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and many enjoy the extra physical and creative activities provided. Attendance has improved and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are ambitious enough to be already thinking about worthwhile careers as well as going to university.

Standards are above average by the age of seven, representing good achievement from the time of entry. Progress through Years 1 to 4 is good overall, but uneven. This is because the quality of teaching and learning varies between classes. Consequently, in some classes, and in particular in reading and writing, boys are too passive and not actively involved in learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well, as do pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils succeed well because teaching and learning are good overall. Relationships are strong so pupils try their best. In most lessons they make good progress. Technology is used effectively to introduce new learning and this helps lessons to run smoothly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and question carefully, but the quality of paired discussions is inconsistent.

Pupils are well cared for and the recent monitoring and tracking of academic progress means that those who do not achieve as well as expected are given additional support. However, the procedures are not consistently applied, therefore in some lessons the work is not matched tightly enough to pupils' needs and progress slows down. The curriculum is developing and the school is moving towards a more theme based cross-curricular approach. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has evaluated provision and has set out a clear vision for the school that is shared by all staff. It is firmly based on developing pupils' personal skills, maintaining a positive ethos and improving standards to ensure all pupils achieve well. The senior leadership team is recently established in their new role and their skills in monitoring and evaluation are not fully developed. However, they are enthusiastic and determined to succeed. Governors are loyal and highly committed to the school. They make a very good contribution to the school's place in the local community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities below those typical for their age, particularly in their personal development, early literacy and mathematical understanding. Children achieve well and by the end of Reception standards in all areas of learning are broadly average. These good outcomes are the result of firmly established activities that match children's needs. Teaching is good and focuses well on key skills. Adults interact sensitively with children and take learning forward during child-led activities, leading to higher levels of independence. The introduction of a structured programme in teaching letters and sounds has had a positive impact on improving early reading skills. The balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities is well planned and is underpinned by regular assessment based on observation. Therefore, planning matches children's needs. Children learn in a happy, safe and attractive learning environment. The spacious area indoors is used to full advantage and offers an enticing range of activities through which children pursue independent learning. The thematic approach to learning successfully captivates children and, for example, the snail-trail activity teaches them to be kind and caring to creatures. Children's welfare is well promoted. Home visits before children start Nursery and the introduction of a named adult for each child means staff get to know children well. Consequently, children settle well, gain in confidence and are well behaved. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is new in its present role and monitoring and evaluation has just begun. Teamwork is strong and staff are eager for further success. They are looking forward to developing an Early Years unit and improving provision outdoors through planned refurbishment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching to match the best.
- Raise boys' achievement in reading and writing.
- Develop the role of senior leaders to enable them to become more effective in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

On entry to Year 1, standards are broadly average and by the end of Year 2 they are above average. Pupils achieve well. The slight decline in the national test results in 2008 was due to the fact that over a third of pupils in the cohort had learning difficulties. Standards for this cohort in reading and writing were average and in mathematics they were above average. School data for the current Year 2 cohort indicates a similar picture with pupils achieving well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and they too achieve well. Pupils leaving Year 4 in 2008 made less than expected progress when taking into account the above average standard they reached when aged seven. However, school data shows that the current cohort is achieving better. Inspection evidence shows that progress overall is good, but is uneven and varies between classes in both key stages. Throughout the school both boys and girls achieve equally well in mathematics. However, in reading and writing girls achieve better than boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. By the time they leave the school in Year 4 they are confident and mature. The school's 'Golden Rules' have given them a firm grasp of the difference between right and wrong. They show a genuine respect for the environment and appreciation of nature. They behave well because relationships are very good. Pupils demonstrate responsibility, for example, in the way the school council has been proactive in developing the school garden and successfully acquiring greenhouses and watering cans. Pupils have an environmental awareness and, through the council, paper and milk cartons are recycled. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is improving and is now average. Pupils are very proud when their efforts are rewarded through 'Star of the Week' certificates. Pupils clearly understand of the importance of a healthy diet and willingly participate in the daily 'Wake-up and Shake-up' sessions. They say they feel safe in school and always have someone to talk to should the need arise. Pupils show pride in their contributions to local and national charities. They are ambitious and say, 'School helps us learn more and have a better future.' This philosophy stands them in good stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall with equal proportions of good and satisfactory lessons seen. Teachers share learning objectives clearly so pupils know what they are going to learn. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to make new learning interesting and meaningful. The very good relationships in lessons motivate pupils to try their best. Teachers' knowledge of pupils' attainment is improving well and in the best lessons they use their good knowledge of pupils' attainment to enable them to meet individual needs. In some classes, pupils are not fully aware of the smaller steps they need to take to improve their work, nor are they involved in assessing their own learning. Teachers question pupils well to check their understanding, but opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas and use new vocabulary with their classmates is inconsistent. Therefore in some classes, the boys in particular are too passive and not actively involved in learning. Good support from experienced assistants is given to all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Priority is given to literacy and numeracy. Work for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effectively planned to meet their individual needs and ensure equal opportunities. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of what makes each of them unique, results in pupils having good levels of respect for one another. Pupils' learning is enriched and supported by visits to places of interest, including early Christian settlements and Holy Island. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including science, dance, rugby for girls and Spanish are well subscribed. The school has just begun to move towards a more theme based cross-curricular approach. The main weakness in the curriculum is the lack of opportunities it provides for boys to develop their reading and writing skills across different subjects and genre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance for its pupils. The ethos of the school is one of welcome, care and purpose, and stems from the way staff are concerned for the welfare of their pupils. Excellent relationships between staff and with pupils ensure that all feel safe and happy and this provides a good foundation for their learning. The arrangements for pupils' emotional support work well and the school provides lunchtime clubs for pupils who prefer calm and restful activities. Good links with external agencies ensure pupils receive the right provision. Procedures to safeguard children with routines for child protection and health and safety are fully in place. Visits to the local middle school help to prepare pupils for smooth transition to their next stage of education. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always guide them on how to improve their work. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are in place. The school recognises that the next step is for teachers to use assessment information more fully to ensure pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The enthusiasm of the new headteacher is motivating and empowering staff to bring about rapid changes and appropriate improvements. Communication is good; consequently, everyone is well focused on raising achievement through team work and collaboration. Self-evaluation is detailed and accurate and focuses on the right areas for improvement. The school has begun to carefully monitor pupil progress and is beginning to take action to support those who are not achieving as well as they should. The present senior team has only recently become established in their new leadership role of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Their skills are not fully developed, however, they have recently begun to monitor teaching and learning and have highlighted aspects for improvement. The school's provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. It has good links within the locality and the international scene, but few links to improve pupils' understanding of British society. Governors are very knowledgeable, loyal and supportive of the school. They undertake their role very seriously and hold the school to account. Most recently, they have taken part in training on self-evaluation.

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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?	2
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?	3

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	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	3
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	3
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?	3
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**

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seghill First School, Northumberland, NE23 7SB

Mrs Graham and I had a very enjoyable time in your good school. You are very welcoming and friendly. It is good to see you growing up into confident young people. I particularly liked the conversations I had with you in your classes and it is good to see older pupils caring for and looking after younger ones. In your school everyone is welcome and no one is left out.

I know most of you work very hard and it is good to see you achieving very well, especially in mathematics. In reading and writing girls do much better than boys. I have asked the school to look at ways to help boys catch up with girls in these subjects. I have also asked the school to look at the way different teachers work with you to make sure you all make as much progress as possible. Your new headteacher, with all the teachers behind her, is very determined to improve the progress you make. You therefore have a very important part to play. You must work even harder, so that everyone is striding ahead and no one is getting left behind.

I was pleased to see how well you behaved in lessons and around the school. I can tell you feel safe and secure. The new librarians are very enthusiastic about their new and important role and the middle garden is quite beautiful because you care for it well. I have never seen such fantastic cherry trees!

I know your teachers work very hard and I have asked school leaders to continue developing their role so they can keep a good check on the work you are doing and give help to any pupils who might be lagging behind.

Thank you again for being so helpful and do not forget: the harder you work, the more choices you will have about your future life opportunities.

Yours faithfully

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector