

# Seghill First School

Seghill, Cramlington, Northumberland NE23 7SB

## Inspection dates

12–13 January 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Since the last inspection, leaders have not worked rapidly enough to improve teaching and address underachievement.
- Over time, outcomes for pupils have not been consistently good and most-able pupils do not achieve the standards they are capable of.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened. Their attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 remains below other pupils nationally.
- Barriers to learning that result from the poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils are not effectively tackled by staff.
- Teaching requires further improvement because it is not consistently good across all subjects.
- In mathematics, leaders have rightly identified that teaching requires improvement. Progress is not as strong as it has been in English.
- Some staff do not use programmes of study effectively in mathematics and lack the confidence to adjust planning to match pupils' requirements. Pupils' skills and ability to solve problems in mathematics are limited.
- While attainment at the end of Reception has improved overall, it has remained below the national average for the past three years. Improvements are very recent.

### The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics and reading are consistently good across the school.
- Standards in English have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well at the end of Year 4 and are ready for their move to middle school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Recent changes to staffing are increasing progress at a faster pace.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management across the school so that pupils make progress more swiftly, especially the most able and those who qualify for pupil premium, by:
  - helping teachers to use assessment and record-keeping more effectively to spot and then close the gaps in learning that occur when pupils have been absent
  - using funding more effectively to support pupils' progress, particularly disadvantaged pupils
  - ensuring that teachers have specific and challenging targets for their work that lead to improved outcomes for those pupils who are underachieving
  - ensuring that governors receive sufficient information about the termly progress of all pupils so that they can effectively evaluate precisely the impact of leaders' actions across the school.
- Improve the quality of mathematics teaching for pupils across the school, so that all groups of pupils achieve higher standards by:
  - increasing teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in mathematics
  - ensuring that teachers use effective strategies to probe pupils' responses and intervene quickly when they spot pupils' misconceptions
  - embedding the recent improvements to problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics across all year groups
  - offering more frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their calculation skills both mentally and within written methods so that they can choose and use a range of operations effectively when needed.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of early years provision so that more pupils start Year 1 at levels typical for their age by:
  - rapidly increasing children's skills in speech and language so that these skills can then be used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum
  - using early years pupil premium funding strategically to help disadvantaged pupils catch up to their peers in all areas of the curriculum
  - extending the range of learning opportunities in the outdoor areas and improving children's ability to access these more effectively
  - developing in children a love of learning so that they can set their own challenges and take more of a lead in their own learning.

A review of governance and the use of pupil premium funding is recommended to assist the governors in taking the improvements started forward.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Improvements have not been fast enough. For a number of years, this school has not been providing a good quality of education for its pupils. It is only recently that the school has turned a corner.
- The newly constituted governing body is ambitious for the school. Although governors have started to drive improvement with the help of a local outstanding school, the changes made have been recent. Improvements have not yet addressed the historical underachievement across some year groups and particularly in mathematics.
- Recent changes to the structure of staffing and new teaching appointments in September 2015 have helped leaders ensure current pupils in the school are now making better progress, especially with their reading and writing.
- Leaders and governors check on the work of teachers regularly, but they do not set challenging enough targets for staff that are specific enough to address underachievement rapidly, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Strategies used to close the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers have not yet been successful. Pupil premium funding is currently used better to improve standards for disadvantaged groups in English, but this is not the case in mathematics. The attendance for this group of pupils remains low and slows their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning is more effectively managed by leaders and governors. They visit lessons together, hold discussions with pupils regularly and check the work in books to suggest how learning might be perfected. These strengthening procedures have helped to raise standards in English for more pupils. However, this is not yet the case in mathematics.
- The changes leaders have made have not had enough time to ensure rapid and sustained progress for all groups of pupils.
- Subject leadership is embryonic. Some middle leaders, such as the leaders for mathematics and English, have a good understanding of the subjects they lead. They make more regular checks on the quality of work across the school and plan the next steps for school development. Nevertheless, this is not the case with most other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability is stronger. Although this has secured good progress for this group of pupils by the end of Key Stage 1, progress is not as good in other year groups.
- Pupils enjoy the many challenges offered by the wider curriculum. They particularly enjoy their writing tasks and are proud of their art work. For example, pupils were keen to talk about the techniques they had applied in their recent paintings in Years 3 and 4. Science and non-core subjects are not promoted as well as English within the school's timetable.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are quickly becoming responsible citizens and have an active influence upon decision making through their role in the school council. Older pupils take on additional activities, such as office monitors and playground helpers, to support others in school which helps to increase their maturity. They learn about a range of customs and religions around the world both within the curriculum and in a very well-organised programme of assemblies. During the inspection, pupils sensibly and sensitively debated some of the injustices faced by Rosa Parks in 1950s America. This discussion was skilfully managed by the headteacher who asked probing questions to challenge and extend pupils' thinking.
- Staff teach pupils how to stay safe in a range of situations, including online, within school and further afield in the wider community. Safety education is embedded across the curriculum together with extra-curricular activities and visits off-site so that they all contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The school makes good use of the primary school physical education and sport premium in order to promote pupils' physical development and extend sporting opportunities. Staff are provided with training through the local schools' sports partnership and specialist coaches offer good-quality teaching. A wide variety of sporting opportunities are offered, including family football and hula-hooping.
- Parents are highly positive about the work of the school and specifically highlight the dedication and support offered by the headteacher. Parents appreciate the regular newsletters informing them of school events and welcome the regular coffee mornings that keep them informed about children's progress. They recognise the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection, praising staff for their commitment and support.

- Leaders have fully embraced the support offered by the local authority. Middle leaders have been helped to develop their role as the result of working closely with other schools, especially a local outstanding teaching school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Following a review of governance, new members have been appointed to strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body. New governors have the relevant skills and knowledge to support the strategic leadership of the school. They are beginning to challenge and support leaders to bring about faster rates of improvement across many areas of school life, particularly within English. At times, they do not receive the relevant information they need to make informed decisions and to challenge the school further, particularly when monitoring the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
  - Governors have managed staffing turbulence well by making difficult decisions for the benefit of pupils. They used their expertise effectively to recruit highly competent new staff who are now quickening the pace of improvements.
  - Financial matters are scrutinised carefully by governors and they understand how teachers' pay is linked to the school's priorities for increasing pupil progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Coherent systems are in place to secure pupil safety and staff apply them diligently. The headteacher works closely with families and outside agencies to support pupils who may be at risk or who need a little extra support.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they have not yet resulted in consistently good progress for all groups of pupils. There is also a lack of consistency in the levels of achievement across year groups and different subjects.
- Following support from an outstanding school, the headteacher and middle leaders for English and mathematics have started to tackle the quality of teaching by modelling best practice and leading targeted training for staff. Since September, half of the teaching staff are new to the school. They have helped to boost the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, but improvements are not fully embedded in all year groups.
- In mathematics, teaching, learning and assessment are not of high enough quality. Recent training for staff has helped them to introduce more problem-solving challenges which pupils enjoy, but these are not used effectively by all staff to challenge and deepen pupils' thinking and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong in mathematics as it is in English. In some classes, teachers do not intervene quickly enough when they spot pupils' misconceptions and they sometimes lack the confidence to probe pupils' responses deeply.
- The new calculations policy is helping teachers to improve their teaching, but the work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils have not had regular opportunities to practise, use and apply their calculation skills. In some year groups, pupils' abilities to choose and use a range of mathematical operations are not yet well developed.
- Some teachers have helped to secure better progress for more-able pupils by offering more challenging tasks, but this is not consistent enough across the school to ensure good progress for these pupils.
- Teaching has not successfully helped disadvantaged pupils to improve. While frequent absences hinder the progress of disadvantaged pupils, not enough support is offered for these pupils to catch up, and gaps in their learning are compounded. Teachers do not always make effective use of records of pupil progress to ensure this group of pupils make good enough progress in their learning.
- Some teachers deploy teaching assistants skilfully and ensure that pupils with special educational needs or disability have work that is well matched to their needs. This was observed in a Key Stage 1 class where a competent assistant helped pupils with special educational needs to focus very carefully on improving their work. Nonetheless, the quality and effectiveness of support is not as strong in all classes.
- The teaching of English has developed well since the previous inspection. In this subject, teachers plan learning effectively so that pupils' skills are gradually built up over a series of lessons. A strong emphasis on high expectations for handwriting, spelling and presentation has produced a better quality of work in some year groups, but not all. Pupils write for a range of purposes across the curriculum and are proud of their accomplishments. For example, they enthusiastically showed inspectors the poems they had written which were displayed imaginatively on a 'poetry tree'.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of teaching in reading and phonics (the relationship between letters and

the sounds they make) is consistent in all classes. Pupils enjoy reading and employ their skills in phonics well to pronounce words that are new to them. They can answer comprehension questions well to show their understanding of characters' feelings and motives.

- The school's marking policy for responding to pupils' work in writing is applied consistently, helping pupils to improve and correct their tasks. Pupils use 'fix it' time effectively, for example to complete corrections or edit their writing. Pupils are motivated by the 'smiley system' which rewards their good work and behaviour. However, in mathematics lessons, some staff miss opportunities to correct misconceptions promptly enough.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A positive, calm and friendly atmosphere pervades the school. The headteacher sets a highly effective role model for other staff. Together, the whole staff create a nurturing and inclusive ethos within the school, where everyone is welcomed and valued.
- Pupils are happy, enjoy coming to school, form close friendships and say that they feel safe. Their safety and well-being are managed effectively by staff who teach pupils skilfully about how to keep safe in different situations. Pupils can explain how to keep themselves safe online and know what they should do if they are worried or in need of help and advice. They have a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves and others safe if faced with an unexpected fire at home or at school.
- Pupils actively engage in their learning and say that they 'love to have a challenge' especially when learning mathematics. Pupils cooperate well with others during lessons and this supports their progress.
- Older pupils are keen to take on responsibilities to help others around school, such as setting up the hall for assembly or organising playtime equipment for their peers. They carry out these roles sensibly and maturely. Older and younger pupils play together happily during breaktimes, with the Year 4 pupils setting an excellent example for others to follow.
- Teachers use opportunities within the curriculum to discuss emotional well-being and to help pupils develop empathy for others. This was demonstrated in a Year 2 class when pupils were able to sympathise with one of the characters in their class storybook. They explained in some depth why the character was feeling unhappy and lonely, suggesting ways to make him feel better.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils know about several world religions and are able to challenge stereotypical views that are sometimes portrayed in the media. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to talk about a variety of religions, comparing similarities and differences between them.
- Parents are confident that their children are well looked after and feel safe in school.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show care and concern for each other. They share resources and show consideration for others, such as when playing together on the playground.
- Pupils are proud of their school and follow rules carefully so that their conduct is orderly. For example, they know why they need to walk on the left side of the corridors and this helps prevent disruption when moving around the building. Low-level incidents of misbehaviour are rare and pupils say these are always dealt with promptly by staff.
- Pupils understand how to respond to bullying and what to do if it happens but are confident that it is not a common occurrence. They are clear that teachers will deal with any incidents that may arise, but also explain that pupils are often able to deal with disagreements sensibly by themselves.
- Handwriting and spelling have continued to improve since the previous inspection and more pupils now take greater pride in the presentation of their work.
- Rates of attendance are moving closer to the national average. Pupils enjoy school and know that good attendance helps them to learn. Leaders have used a variety of different strategies to improve attendance, including prize draws for pupils who complete a full week at school and penalty notices which are served to parents if absence is persistent. Despite the efforts of school leaders to reduce absences, there are still a number of pupils who do not attend regularly, in particular disadvantaged pupils.

- Parents stress that positive behaviours are consistently developed and the vast majority state that bullying, if it ever occurs, is dealt with effectively.

### Outcomes for pupils

### require improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because, although increasing, not enough pupils attain as well as their peers nationally, especially by the end of Reception and at the end of Year 2.
- In mathematics, outcomes have not been as strong and, at the end of both Reception and Year 2, pupils' attainment remains below their peers nationally. Progress in mathematics has been less rapid, so pupils do not catch up to where they should be quickly enough.
- Outcomes for groups of pupils have varied since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs or disability have consistently outperformed their peers in other schools at the end of Key Stage 1, but their progress is variable throughout school. It is often linked to the quality of teaching and provision in individual classes.
- Standards have begun to improve for the most-able pupils in English but, again, this is variable and dependent on the quality of teaching in each class. Fewer of the most-able pupils reached the very highest standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 and their progress is variable across the school.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school have widened since the previous inspection. Standards reached by disadvantaged pupils in school were lower than those achieved by their peers nationally and this gap has also widened in the past three years.
- Outcomes for other groups of pupils in English have improved over time. For example, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who achieve the expected standards in phonics has continued to increase over the past three years and was well above the national average in 2015.
- By the end of Year 4, pupils have made good progress in reading and writing so that they leave for middle school well prepared in these subjects.

### Early years provision

### requires improvement

- Early years provision requires improvement because too few children have reached a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class. Leaders have ensured that the proportion of children who reach a good level of development has increased since the previous inspection; however, it is still below average. In some areas of learning, such as communication and language, children's attainment has not been as high as in other areas.
- As in the rest of the school, disadvantaged children in the early years do not make progress at the same rate as other groups and so their achievement falls behind other children at the end of Reception. Leaders do not target or check on the impact of additional funding for the children well enough.
- The school's previous assessments suggested that children joined the Nursery class with basic skills below what is typical for their age. In previous years, teaching in the early years has not been strong enough to provide the progress needed for children to quickly catch up to where they should be. As a result, nearly half of the pupils are not ready to start in Year 1.
- Leaders have significantly improved the structure of staffing in the early years and appointed a dedicated and able middle leader to manage the Nursery and Reception classes. Consequently, current pupils are starting to make better progress, but there is still much to be done.
- Assessments made by staff are now more accurate and methods used to track the progress made by children have recently been developed successfully. These assessments are shared with parents regularly at early years coffee mornings and home-school books help parents to contribute by recording their children's activities at home.
- The newly structured team have improved indoor provision so that pupils are becoming increasingly independent in their learning. Children enjoy making and using puppets in their mini puppet theatre and access painting and collage activities by themselves during free choice time. Outdoors, however, children's learning is not as well focused and they do not access activities as productively as they do inside.
- There are positive relationships between children and adults in the early years classroom. Staff offer good care and support. They teach children how to stay healthy, such as when they participate in lively movement sessions in the school hall. Staff make sure that the environment is safe and there are no breaches in welfare arrangements.

- Children's general behaviour and conduct is good; most children listen respectfully to adults and make requests politely. However, not all of the children demonstrate a thirst for learning. Many children prefer to engage in low-level learning and this leads to them having low expectations of what they can achieve for themselves.
- Parents are positive about the improvements made in early years. They explain that staff have helped to develop children's confidence and that their children enjoy coming to school every day. Home-school links are very strong, and workshops help parents learn how to support their children at home.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122225
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002057

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First school
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Street
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracey Chappell
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 237 0419
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.seghill.northumberland.sch.uk">www.seghill.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk">admin@seghill.northumberland.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Seghill First School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of 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 and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability who are not supported by an education, health and care plan is above average. There are no pupils supported by an education, health and care plan.
- 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.
- Children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis in the mornings only.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection report and most recent monitoring inspection. Three staff out of a total of six have been appointed during the current academic year. Two have been in post since September and one since November 2015. Two of the new appointments are middle leaders. The early years leader is new in post since September 2015 and the current leader of mathematics is temporarily in post as a middle leader while the permanent mathematics leader is on maternity leave.
- The mobility into and out of school increased significantly last year. In particular, there were six new pupils admitted to the Year 2 class from other schools. Altogether, the school made 35 changes to their number on roll during the year.
- The size of cohort in each year group varies widely, as does the profile of different pupil groups per year. This makes it difficult to make secure comparisons between each year group cohort.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of eight lessons taught by five teachers, a higher-level teaching assistant and three teaching assistants, including three observations jointly with the headteacher. She also looked at pupils' work with the deputy headteacher and explored how pupils learn the basic skills of reading.
- The views of 17 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration. The inspector also gathered the views of parents in the school playground when they brought their children to school in the morning.
- The responses to questionnaires from staff were also examined. There were no responses made to pupil questionnaires.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other leaders and two members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector met with a representative from the local authority who has worked with the school since May 2015. The inspector met with members of the school council and spoke informally to other pupils from Nursery to Year 4.
- The inspector checked a wide range of documentation, including that relating to behaviour, safety and information on pupils' progress and attainment.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of the school's policies, the school website, governing body minutes and a range of documents that related to leaders' evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment.

## Inspection team

Sylvia Anne Humble, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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