

# Seahouses Middle School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122315
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	359222
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Farrow HMI

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

---

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Brookes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Julie Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	James Street Seahouses Northumberland NE68 7YF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01665 720473
<b>Fax number</b>	01665 721756
<b>Email address</b>	seahousesmiddleschooladministrator@northumberland.gov.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	9–13
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	359222

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector who focused for half a day on the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Her Majesty's Inspector observed six teachers teaching nine part-lessons. Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority's school improvement service. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's development plan, safeguarding, equalities and child protection policies and assessment information regarding pupils' current standards and progress from Year 5 to Year 8. Inspection questionnaires from 61 parents and carers, 20 staff and 92 pupils were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of leaders' actions to raise attainment and hasten pupils' progress at Key Stage 2.
- The impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching and use of assessment information.

## Information about the school

Seahouses is small when compared to the average-sized secondary school. It serves isolated communities in close proximity to the north-eastern coastal town of the same name. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion of pupils from minority-ethnic groups is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and increasing. An average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and an above average number of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including the Healthy School Standard and Sportsmark. Since the last inspection the school has achieved specialist school status for music and information and communication technology (ICT).

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Seahouses provides good education and care for its pupils. They thrive in the happy, caring and inclusive atmosphere. Senior leaders have consolidated or built on aspects of work identified as satisfactory or good at the time of the last inspection. For example, the care, guidance and support provided to pupils have improved and are good. The curriculum has been enriched by the school's specialisms of music and ICT; pupils attain highly in these subjects. The impact of the school's work to promote healthy lifestyles is outstanding, especially pupils' participation in the impressive range of sport and health-related activities.

Pupils enter Year 5 with levels of ability broadly as expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6 and usually attain average standards in English and mathematics. However, attainment dipped in 2010, significantly so in mathematics. This was not least due to actions taken to reorganise class groups mid-year, in order to set Year 5 and Year 6 pupils of similar ability into three classes; this disrupted learning for some. Leaders took decisive action to improve matters. They secured support from the local authority, appointed a new coordinator for mathematics and ensured a better focus of teaching based on pupils' individual starting points. Evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and school data show that the school has recovered and is on track to attain its 2011 Year 6 targets. Progress accelerates well in Key Stage 3. By the end of Year 8 pupils make good progress from their average starting points and their attainment is usually above average. The care and guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are outstanding. Careful identification of their needs, high quality support and proactive responses to pupils' individual interests helps to ensure they are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. Consequently, they make similar progress to their peers and excel in the additional activities that the school provides for them.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for because of the care afforded to them by adults, the good relationships they engender between each other and good safeguarding procedures that include teaching them well about potential dangers to their personal safety. Virtually all say they enjoy school and this is evidenced in their high attendance rates and good, and at times, exemplary behaviour. They relish the many opportunities they have to contribute to the work of the school, for example, as peer-mentors, gardeners, school councillors, or first-aiders.

Most teaching is good and all teachers plan lessons carefully. In good lessons teachers ensure activities are well matched to pupils' varying starting points. In the few satisfactory lessons, teachers do not use the detailed information they have about pupils' current abilities well enough and all pupils tackle the same work. Additionally, in weaker lessons, teachers talk for too long, restricting pupils' opportunities to work independently or

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

challenge their own thinking. In such lessons, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good, particularly for higher-ability pupils.

The headteacher's quiet, determined vision for the school's continued improvement is embraced well by staff and governors alike. Regular, inclusive, self-evaluation ensures they have a good knowledge of the strengths of the school and areas that need to be better. Identified areas for improvement form the succinct, appropriate priorities in the school's development plan and these are reviewed regularly for impact. Given the school's accurate self-evaluation, rapid recovery from underperformance in Key Stage 2, good and occasionally outstanding outcomes and continuing improvements in the quality of provision, it has a good capacity for further improvement.

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

- Hasten pupils' progress further, particularly in Key Stage 2 and for the most able, by:
  - eradicating the remaining inconsistencies in teachers' use of pupil progress data to plan lessons that always takes account of pupils' individual starting points
  - ensuring all teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and critical thinking skills.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Lesson observations and school tracking information show that pupils are making at least satisfactory and often good progress in their learning. This is because of teachers' better focus on meeting pupils' individual needs in their lesson planning and delivery. Pupils in Year 7 have made good progress in the past two terms and have caught up to at least where they should be from their underperformance last year. In lessons observed, all groups of pupils enjoyed learning and tackled their work enthusiastically. For example, in a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 mathematics lesson, interesting problem-solving activities about area, well matched to pupils' different levels of understanding, helped them to have fun and achieve well.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe in school and in the community, for example, through their work with the fire and rescue service or the Royal National Lifeboat Institution; important risk factors in this isolated community. They know very well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are proactive in being-healthy, particularly through the many sporting opportunities provided. Pupils say they especially value the great efforts made by the headteacher in securing sporting opportunities out of school and experts who visit school to work with them. All Year 8 pupils are great sporting ambassadors, leading activities in school and in the wider community of first schools. Pupils' contribution to the local community is good and the annual community week each May extends all pupils' contributions from working with the National Trust improving the beach, or throwing a party for the local Busy Bees Nursery, to providing afternoon tea with musical entertainment for older members of the community. Pupils' well-developed personal qualities, high attendance rates, improving basic skills, good and developing ICT skills and the support for transitions into high school prepare them well for the next steps in their education.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between pupils and teachers characterise all lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good: they are attentive and well-behaved even in the few more satisfactory lessons where the pace slows. The majority of teaching is good due to leaders' better focus on improving it, especially in mathematics, following the dip in standards. Regular, well-focused monitoring of teaching by senior leaders and middle managers show that the proportion of satisfactory lessons is low and reducing. Books are generally marked well with informative feedback that helps pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Occasionally, teachers do not check to see whether pupils have acted on identified improvement points and leaders are taking action to iron out this inconsistency. Teachers' use of assessment information to plan lessons which are matched more closely to pupils' individual needs has improved since the last inspection, and refocused even further following the results in 2010. There are still occasions when teachers do not use this information well enough.

The curriculum is good and improving. The school's specialist subjects enhance the curriculum successfully and their challenging subject targets are met or exceeded. They contribute well to the local community of schools and opportunities within the community itself. For example, after seeking parents' and carers' views, staff provided well-attended training sessions on digital photography. Children excel in music; it helps to build their confidence and self-esteem as well as their knowledge, skills, creativity and performing

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

proWess. It was delightful to see the joy on Year 6 pupils' faces during a Samba drumming session, as well as hearing their great compositions. Pupils enjoy and experience a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits out of, and visitors to, school. Many parents and carers commented on how much they value these opportunities in their inspection questionnaire responses. The school carefully monitors the uptake of activities and constantly develops choice to ensure there is always something for everyone.

Good care, guidance and support, and teachers' detailed knowledge and understanding of pupils' individual needs and interests enable pupils to make the most of their time in school. Pupils say they feel well cared for and that incidents such as bullying are very rare. If they have a concern of any kind, they say any adult will quickly deal with it, or indeed, a friendly peer-mentor. Good partnerships with a range of external agencies support vulnerable children and their families in times of need exceptionally well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body have been invigorated by the challenges they faced following the dip in standards in 2010 and are working successfully together to improve matters. Governance is satisfactory and improving because recent improvements to the committee structure, with clearly identified roles and responsibilities is delivering a sharper, more successful focus on the governing body's role in challenging, as well as supporting senior leaders. Leadership of teaching and learning is extending effectively to subject coordinators. They say they feel increasingly empowered and fully involved in whole-school improvement priorities, rather than just the leadership of their own subject. This is enabling a much more consistent approach to planning and teaching. Regular subject meetings between coordinators and staff are helping to hold staff more fully to account for the progress of pupils in their class; as yet, coordinators do not check whether teachers are always using the regular assessment information they have about pupils' current achievements well enough in all lessons.

Virtually all parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire were very positive about their partnership with the school. The school has developed many strategies to communicate with, listen to, and respond to their views. For example, following requests, staff provided sessions to help parents and carers support their children's homework and 'mental maths'. Home-school reading journals also help to keep parents and carers well informed and involved in their children's learning.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and this lies at the heart of the school's work. Staff make great efforts to include everyone in the life of the school and to take

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

account of their views. One parent eloquently summed up the views of a number when she wrote, 'The school goes the extra mile to personalise the provision to each child, building up on their interests and successes.' Improved monitoring and assessment procedures make sure anyone at risk of underachieving is given appropriate support and this is helping to narrow the gap between pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. A good and thorough single equalities plan, with underpinning actions, that are regularly monitored, ensures a successful focus on anyone at risk of any type of discrimination. The plan links very well to appropriate legislation and key school strategies, including the strategy for community cohesion, which is also well-promoted. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. There are very well-developed systems for risk assessment and issues about safety are integrated into the curriculum well in order to increase pupils' understanding about how to keep safe. For example, all pupils are given bicycle training and the e-safety work delivered in ICT lessons with parental involvement is first-class. Good partnership working with a wide range of other agencies has a demonstrable impact upon vulnerable pupils, or those who may be at risk.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A higher-than average proportion of parents and carers, 58%, responded to the inspection questionnaire. Virtually all are very positive about the care and education their children receive. For example, all agree their children are safe and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. They also believe that any misbehaviour is well managed and that the school is led and managed effectively. Inspection evidence endorses these views. A third of respondees provided positive additional comments and two, more negative ones. Parents and carers comment very positively on the individual care and support that the headteacher and staff provide, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or particular talents. They also value the wide range of interesting sporting and



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

out-of-school activities their children take part in. The two more negative comments regarded lack of opportunity to consolidate learning through homework, and the challenge for the more-able children. The school's home-school journals and range of website activities are aimed at supporting consolidation of subjects taught. In the few satisfactory lessons with whole-class teaching, opportunities for pupils to move quickly from their individual starting points are more limited and this leads to satisfactory rather than good progress, particularly for the more able. This is an area identified for improvement in the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seahouses Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 106 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	44	32	52	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	40	66	21	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	64	22	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	56	23	38	2	3	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	64	21	34	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	59	23	38	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	61	23	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	59	23	38	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	57	25	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	74	15	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	66	20	33	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Seahouses Middle School, Seahouses, NE68 7YF**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently and for those of you who spoke to me in meetings, in lessons and around the school. I was impressed with your good and sometimes outstanding behaviour and it was good to see how caring and supportive you are of one another. Seahouses is a good, happy school and you make good progress in your learning by the time you leave for high school, although you usually make faster progress in Years 7 and 8.

There was a sudden dip in standards in Year 6 last year, in part due to Year 5 and Year 6 moving into mixed-age classes; this disrupted some of your learning. The headteacher has improved things and those of you who are now in Year 7 have caught up to at least where you should be. You told me that you feel very safe and enjoy school and I agree, indeed your high attendance rates show me that you must like coming! You particularly appreciate the many sporting activities Miss Harris teaches and arranges for you and these contribute to the way you adopt healthy lifestyles, outstandingly. Your contribution to the school and to the local community are good and you enjoy the range of opportunities you have to help others in Seahouses, like cleaning the beach, throwing a party for the Busy Bees Nursery or making tea and performing your very good musical skills to the older members of the community. Year 8 pupils are great sporting ambassadors for your school.

Teaching is good overall, but sometimes you are all taught the same thing, even when you have different levels of ability. When this happens you make satisfactory rather than good progress. Teachers sometimes talk for too long in lessons, limiting opportunities for you to develop your ideas and thinking skills. I have asked Miss Harris to tackle these issues.

Once again, thanks for making me welcome, I am glad to see, like you, your parents value all this inclusive school has to offer and I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**