

Seaton Academy

Address: High Seaton, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 1NP

Unique reference number (URN): 136285

Inspection report: 23 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children flourish in the high-quality early years provision. They have secure bonds with the staff, who are nurturing and supportive. Staff foster high levels of confidence, resilience and curiosity in children. They ensure that children's personal and emotional needs are consistently met. Children become fiercely independent and build respectful friendships with their peers.

Since the last inspection, leaders have significantly developed the indoor and outdoor learning environments, as well as the curriculum. Staff carefully design the resources, activities and layout of the provision to maximise every learning opportunity. They immerse children in a language-rich environment where children enjoy snuggling up with a book and engaging in high-quality conversations. Staff are skilled at delivering the school's aspirational early years curriculum. They consistently focus their interactions on teaching the key knowledge children need to learn next. Staff provide extensive opportunities for children to come across newly taught concepts in different contexts. They are vigilant at ensuring that all children access the full range of curriculum activities. Staff work with children to focus on aspects of their learning that they are finding difficult. This helps to ensure that children are able to keep up with the curriculum and to catch up when needed. Children make rapid gains in their learning. They secure a detailed knowledge across all aspects of their development. This includes children who face challenges in their learning. Children are highly prepared for key stage 1 at the end of the Reception year.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leadership at all levels is highly effective. School leaders and trustees share a precise and aspirational vision for the school which is rooted in the best interests of pupils. This vision is central to the decisions leaders make and the actions they take. Leaders have been on a significant improvement journey since the last inspection. They have taken consistently clear, timely, decisive actions to make rapid progress across all aspects of the school's work. Leaders have a precise and accurate understanding of their priorities for development. They tackle these proactively to ensure that the school achieves consistently strong standards.

Leaders and staff are proactive at engaging with external professionals. They embrace the opportunity to learn from others, as well as to share their own practice. The school's professional development programme for staff is extensive, but targeted. The range of training, coaching, collaborative working and research that staff engage with helps them develop their confidence and to progress in their roles.

Trustees are highly knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They have developed robust processes which, in turn, enable them to carry out their roles consistently and effectively. Trustees are rigorous in their monitoring to assure themselves of the quality and effectiveness of all aspects of the school's work.

Leaders and trustees place a significant emphasis on staff wellbeing. While the school has made extensive changes, particularly to the curriculum and teaching, leaders have

considered the impact on staff workload. Staff morale is high. Leaders, staff and trustees engage positively with the parental community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious personal development programme that prepares pupils remarkably well for life beyond school. It is consistently adapted to meet pupils' evolving needs. Leaders enrich this programme with experiences, visits, visitors, clubs and more. At social times, pupils engage in an extensive range of quality activities that foster their independence, resilience, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Pupils have a detailed understanding of British values and of the characteristics that make them, and others, unique. Pupils benefit from broad experiences of diversity. For example, they recall watching Hindu dancers and speaking to a visitor about Buddhism. Pupils are clear that everyone is welcomed and treated with kindness at their school. Pupils recognise the importance of having their views heard. They regularly vote in school and have spoken about their views to their local member of parliament.

Pupils have a detailed knowledge, for their age, of how to look after their mental and physical health. For example, they explain the importance of talking about their feelings, eating healthy foods and being active. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe, including road safety, water safety, and online safety. They also maturely consider the impact of their actions on the safety of others. Pupils have a deep understanding of what makes a positive friend.

Pupils meet a wide range of professionals. This includes vets, midwives, and those who work in science, technology and engineering. These experiences raise pupils' aspirations and broaden their understanding of the world. Pupils develop their sense of responsibility. They are proud to make a positive difference to the local community, through picking up litter. They also have an in-depth understanding of the impact they have on others through fundraising activities. Leaders robustly consider the needs of pupils. They make adjustments to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, represent the school and access the range of enrichment opportunities. Staff skilfully deliver targeted pastoral help to pupils, which significantly reduces barriers to their wellbeing.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Children in the early years make significant progress and achieve highly. Pupils across the school develop fluency in their reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Pupils who struggle with aspects of this, such as handwriting, are catching up quickly. Pupils progress well in their learning of phonics. This is reflected in the outcomes of the national phonics check in Year 1, which are above the national average. Pupils who find reading difficult quickly gain confidence and secure the knowledge they need.

Pupils generally achieve well across a wide range of subjects. They can broadly recall what they have learned and are typically well prepared for starting junior school when they leave. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. However, pupils do not secure a consistently detailed understanding of what they have been taught. This means that, at times, some pupils lack the confidence to apply their knowledge independently, or to show a deeper level of knowledge in their work.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' attendance, including for children in the early years. They are vigilant at spotting when absences rise and take swift action with parents and carers. Leaders gain a clear understanding of the challenges families may be facing in getting their children to attend. They use this information to make thoughtful decisions about specific, tailored help for families to help reduce these barriers. Leaders check the impact of the actions they take. They are quick to spot when pupils' attendance improves and celebrate this with both pupils and their families. Whole school attendance, and attendance of vulnerable groups of pupils, is above the national average. Rates of persistent absence are well below the national average.

Leaders have established clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff model these expectations and provide support to pupils who need help to manage their emotions. Leaders do not tolerate bullying or discrimination of any kind. Pupils enjoy their learning. They generally behave well and concentrate in lessons. At social times, pupils collaborate and interact very positively with each other. Leaders make adjustments to routines and to classroom environments to ensure that pupils' sensory needs are met. In early years, children sustain their focus for long periods and demonstrate a real love of learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

In recent years, leaders have made significant improvements to the design and delivery of the curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum clearly identifies the key knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. This includes defining the specific vocabulary pupils will be taught. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is progressive and leads towards clear end points. The curriculum includes a focus on teaching pupils the fundamental knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. The consistent structure of lessons across the school ensures that pupils have multiple opportunities to develop fluency in spelling, handwriting and calculation.

Staff deliver the curriculum well. They use their knowledge of what pupils already know to build on this in a logical sequence. Staff identify gaps in pupils' learning and use their teaching to address these effectively. They consider the needs of pupils when designing lessons. This includes those who face particular barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Staff provide pupils with resources, visual cues and additional help so they can access lessons successfully. In the main, staff design activities that enable pupils to learn the curriculum. However, at times, tasks do not focus sharply on the key learning staff intend. Furthermore, staff do not ensure that lesson activities consistently enable pupils to apply what they know independently and in depth.

Leaders have established a clear approach to identifying when pupils face barriers to their learning or wellbeing. This ensures that pupils' needs are quickly understood when they join in the early years and continue to be met as they progress through the school. Leaders take appropriate actions to assist pupils and carefully monitor the impact of these actions. If pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, continue to have difficulties, leaders adjust the support provided.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers. They make decisions in the best interests of pupils at each stage. Leaders also engage with specialists to ensure that the most effective strategies are in place. In lessons, pupils are supported well by staff to succeed in tasks. Pupils who struggle with particular aspects of their learning, such as phonics or reading, catch up quickly. They access targeted intervention programmes and additional reading time with staff. Pupils, including those who face economic or emotional challenges, benefit from a range of personal and academic support. Leaders use additional funding effectively to support staff in offering this support. This makes a tangible contribution to pupils' success in their learning and in their personal development.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils understand the school's values of 'pride, patience, honesty and kindness'. They strive to live up to these. Pupils interact positively and respectfully with each other. Leaders ensure that any incidents of bullying or discrimination are dealt with effectively. Pupils appreciate the supportive, trusting relationships they have with staff. This helps them to feel secure and safe. Pupils behave well and enjoy attending school.

The school is determined to meet its vision to be a place where 'every star can shine'. Pupils have rich opportunities to develop their talents to a high standard. For example, pupils who attend the dance club and school choir have performed in front of large audiences in Workington. Pupils who have attended gymnastics club have gone on to achieve in this at a county level. Pupils access a wide range of clubs, such as sports, theatre, cookery and darts. The school's enrichment activities are also offered during the school day, to enable more pupils to attend.

The school offers varied enrichment experiences, including an overnight trip and a visit to London. Pupils take pride in their leadership roles, such as play leaders, 'the green team' and school councillors. They demonstrate a mature understanding of the impact that these roles have on the school, and beyond. Leaders ensure that all pupils take part in these experiences and opportunities.

Pupils enjoy learning and benefit from a broad curriculum which is delivered well by staff. Children get off to a flying start to their education in the early years. In key stage 1, pupils secure the knowledge and skills they need for future learning in junior school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who face other challenges in

their lives, are supported well by staff. They successfully engage with the curriculum and make successful progress over time.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that tasks pupils complete are consistently and sharply focused on the knowledge they should learn, so that pupils secure a deeper understanding across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that lessons consistently enable pupils to apply their knowledge independently and in depth, so that pupils are even better prepared for the next stage in their learning.
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About this inspection

This school is a stand-alone academy. This school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Smith. This means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, staff, trustees, and a representative of the local authority during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with parents and carers and pupils.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Robert Barton

Lead inspector:

Liz Dayton, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sue Bowman, Ofsted Inspector

Craig Dewar-Willox, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

216

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

240

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

12.58%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.93%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.19%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	3.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	6.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	16.5%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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