

# Scott Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109512
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	377933
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Shepherd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Laybourn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anita Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Hawk Drive Bedford MK41 7JA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 352630
<b>Fax number</b>	01234 211366
<b>Email address</b>	scottlower@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Shepherd

Additional inspector

Gillian Walley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons led by five teachers for a total of eight hours. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They held meetings with the senior staff, five groups of pupils and seven members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation and the school's analysis of its data. They analysed the responses to questionnaires from 64 parents and carers, 14 staff and 57 pupils.

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, speaking 28 different languages. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs, but a lower than average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Nursery class and one Reception class. The proportion of pupils who join the school during the year is below average. The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club. The school has gained an Activemark award and an International School award.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The ethos of the school is welcoming and industrious. Pupils understand the importance of behaving well and reflect thoughtfully about their responsibilities in school. As a result pupils make satisfactory progress.
- The school has a number of strengths. The relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and learn to respect each other’s views, customs and differences.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils’ progress slows to satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. Over the past three years, attainment in reading has been higher than in writing because pupils are taught effectively to sound out individual letters and groups of letters to work out unfamiliar words. Attainment in writing is lower because not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length across the curriculum. Attainment in mathematics is at expected levels.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good and fully engages and motivates pupils in their learning. However, this is not always the case because there is inconsistency between classes, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils’ behaviour and safety are good. Parents, carers, pupils and staff are positive about behaviour and very few concerns have been raised. Pupils’ behaviour contributes to a safe and orderly environment. Pupils feel safe because they are looked after well.
- Monitoring and evaluation are carried out accurately by the headteacher, senior

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staff and middle leaders. This has led to improvements in provision and outcomes, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. However, this has not yet led to higher standards in Year 4 because subject leaders' plans have not set out clear targets for improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- By July 2012, raise attainment and progress in writing by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to write across the curriculum
  - ensuring that pupils' work is presented neatly.
  
- By July 2012, improve the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, so that at least 80% of lessons are at least good by ensuring that teachers consistently:
  - correct mistakes being made by pupils working independently during lessons
  - provide pupils with opportunities to respond to guidance included in marking.
  
- Ensure that subject action planning leads to improved outcomes for pupils by:
  - including quantifiable targets for improving progress and attainment
  - regularly monitoring and evaluating progress against these targets.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. This is because of the priority given to these areas by the senior and middle leaders. Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those typical for their age, although their skills in reading and writing are not as well developed as in the other areas of learning. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average. Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, and standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4 are at expected levels. School data show that this has been the pattern over the past three years, and it is consistent with standards seen by inspectors in lessons and books. The majority of parents and carers are positive about how well the school develops their children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors found that the school develops pupils' skills in these subjects well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, but found that

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progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and could be accelerated.

Attainment in reading is the strongest aspect of pupils' learning, and is above average at the end of Year 2 and above expected levels at the end of Year 4. Pupils of different ages were keen to read to inspectors and talk about the books and authors they like to read. In discussions with pupils, they felt that the school helps them develop their reading skills well. Some written work is presented neatly and is easy to read, but this is not consistent in all classes.

Both boys and girls achieve at similar levels to their peers in other schools nationally as do pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. However, there are good examples of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable making good progress. The school addresses quickly any area of identified underachievement through half-termly pupil progress meetings.

### **Quality of teaching**

Technology is used well by staff as a valuable aid to make teaching clear to pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour, and this teaches pupils effectively how to act responsibly and work together in pairs or larger groups. The learning environment of the school is bright, colourful, calm and purposeful.

Pupils enjoy their work and settle down to it quickly. For example, pupils in Year 4 applied themselves eagerly as they undertook their early morning challenge on arrival in class. Some practised their spellings, some read to an adult, whilst others worked on a mathematics challenge that had been set by their teacher. Pupils in Year 3 were captivated by the video clip of the Iron Man falling over the cliff, and this inspired their use of interesting vocabulary and similes to describe what was happening in the story. They suggested words such as 'traumatised' and 'cautiously', and similes such as 'eyes like headlights' and 'fingers scuttling like a crab on its back' that contributed to making their writing interesting. This helped to raise the standard of writing. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed describing the dog called Dogger with descriptions such as 'its soft brown fur' and 'brown friendly look'.

Evidence from pupils' questionnaires and discussions with pupils indicate that they feel teaching is good at the school. Parents and carers are equally as positive about the quality of teaching. Inspectors found evidence of good teaching, but that it was not consistently good in all classes, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning indicates the main focus of lessons and includes what pupils at different levels of ability are expected to learn. As a result, work is tailored to meet individual needs and helps pupil to make progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and provide good guidance to pupils in their groups. However, on

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occasions, not enough support is given to pupils working independently, and their mistakes are sometimes not corrected quickly enough to enable them to make faster progress. Marking is encouraging and consistently provides guidance about how to improve but not enough opportunities are given for pupils to respond to suggestions made.

The teaching of different cultures, beliefs and ways of life is good. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about different religious festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid. They learn about African music and songs, and the achievement of different people and customs through Black History Week and Chinese New Year. The impact of the International School award can be seen by the school's emphasis on pupils' cultural development.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Good relationships promote pupils' positive attitudes to school and their willingness to make valuable contributions around the school such as being 'playground pals'. Pupils respond promptly to their teachers in lessons and little time is wasted between and during lessons. Discussions with pupils indicate that they, including those with identified behavioural difficulties, are aware of the school's strategies for managing and improving behaviour, and think they are appropriate and carried out fairly by staff. They try hard to conform to them.

In replies to their questionnaires, a few pupils indicated that behaviour is not always good. However, no parent or carer mentioned that instances of inappropriate or racist behaviour in lessons have occurred. Inspectors discussed behaviour and safety with senior leaders and found the school procedures for dealing with behaviour, bullying and racism to be rigorous. Very few such incidents are recorded by the school, supporting the school's assertion that very few occur. In conversations, pupils say that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively.

Pupils feel safe. They have a good understanding of the risks they face and how to keep safe. For example, pupils of different ages told inspectors how they keep safe on roads, rail, water and with fire. They also have a good understanding of internet safety. They understand to keep away from bad behaviour on the streets and in the town centre. Attendance is above average.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, ably supported by senior staff and middle leaders, has successfully instilled a sense of ambition and drive to improve the work of the school. The senior team and middle leaders incorporate areas for improvement into detailed plans of action. Monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle leaders of pupils' achievement are leading to improvements in teaching and achievement, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Some improvements have been

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made in teaching in Key Stage 2, but these have not yet had a significant impact on standards at the end of Year 4. This is because detailed subject action plans lack clear criteria to measure success through improvements in pupils' progress and attainment. An extensive programme of professional development of staff has contributed effectively to the improvements that are evident. These factors, together with the support of the governing body, contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The school has developed and implemented a curriculum that includes all subjects, sometimes under a common theme. The planning of this curriculum includes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. Out-of-school clubs also enrich the curriculum considerably. This is appreciated by parents and carers, and expressed by the parent who wrote, 'The staff have given my child the best foundation possible.' Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory.

Members of the governing body are keen, enthusiastic and show high levels of commitment to the school. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of challenge to the school. Safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements. Both pupils and their parents and carers indicate that the school provides a secure environment for learning. The school promotes equality for different groups satisfactorily and tackles discrimination well. This enables all groups of pupils to achieve satisfactorily.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Scott Lower School, Bedford, MK41 7JA**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you. Thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire for us. We found your responses very helpful. You go to a satisfactory school where adults work hard to prepare you for the future. Here are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy school and get on well with each other. You are very welcoming, well mannered and courteous to each other and adults.
- You feel extremely safe and work in a calm, colourful and stimulating environment.
- You like your teachers and teaching assistants and try your best to please them.
- You are enthusiastic about all the different activities provided for you, including visits out of school and extra clubs out of school hours.
- You enjoy reading and talking about books and stories you have read.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and the governing body to do three things to make your school even better:

- provide you with more opportunities to practise writing in different subjects.
- check on your work during lessons and give you time to carry out the improvements suggested in marking.
- make sure that the plans that the school has to help you learn in different subjects are working well.

All of you can help by continuing to work very hard.

Yours sincerely

David Shepherd  
Lead inspector

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