

Sundon Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109555
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	356574
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Jenkins
Headteacher	Karen Hooker
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited one assembly and 15 lessons, observing 14 teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school improvement plan. Inspectors analysed 130 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing.
- Pupils' understanding of their targets and how to achieve them.
- The contribution of leaders and managers, particularly middle managers and members of the governing body, in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

Sundon Park Junior is slightly larger than most of its type. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. However, the proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic or mixed heritage background is higher than that found in most schools. A few speak English as an additional language. The main minority ethnic groups represented in the school are Black Caribbean and Black African. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is considerably higher than average. However, the proportion of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs is broadly similar to that found nationally. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual starting and leaving times is less than that found in the large majority of schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to the national average.

The school holds the Healthy School and the Bronze Cycling awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is improving steadily. This is because the headteacher has high expectations, commitment and drive. Many aspects of her vision for the development and improvement of the school are coming to fruition. For example, in the development of the learning environment, the curriculum and promoting pupils' attitude towards school. As a result, pupils' attainment is rising and pupils' progress accelerating. All pupils are made to feel welcome and are well cared for. The pastoral care is a real strength within the school. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is consistently above average. They have a positive attitude to learning, behave well and make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school.

Staff work together as a team and are very positive about the school and the leadership of the headteacher. They have reviewed the curriculum and developed a good structure to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and that pupils understand the relevance of their learning in different subjects. They ensure that the curriculum supports pupils' personal development effectively. Consequently, pupils' understanding of healthy living, staying safe, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

However, there are some inconsistencies between classes in the delivery of the curriculum. Although teachers in the year groups share joint lesson planning, it has not been sufficiently adapted in the parallel classes to set clear activities and objectives for pupils of different abilities. This is because some teachers have implemented the school's recently introduced, and well constructed, assessment procedures effectively but others have not done so to the same extent. In addition, some middle leaders have not yet fully developed their roles in monitoring the implementation of lesson planning and the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in order to guide improvements. Consequently, there are variations in the quality of teaching. Some teaching is outstanding but in too many lessons teaching is satisfactory. The satisfactory lessons tend to be dominated by the teacher and do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to make decisions or take responsibility for their own learning. Nevertheless, the school does have examples of outstanding teaching on which it can build. The headteacher monitors the progress of all pupils well, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and when they do not make the expected rate of progress she ensures that additional support is provided. Consequently, all groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress and reach the expected levels by the end of Year 6. Hence, standards are broadly in line with national averages and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attainment and progress are consistently better in mathematics and science than in English where the weakness tends to be in pupils' writing. The school has successfully

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focused on raising attainment in writing but this remains an area for consolidation and development. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members of the governing body appreciate the efforts made by the headteacher and staff to bring about improvements. They are kept well informed but do not always have sufficiently detailed knowledge to provide more robust challenge to the school. This is because they do not evaluate the work of the school rigorously enough against external criteria. They, therefore, have a slightly inflated view of the school's performance. The governing body has yet to ensure that the school's action plans, and those of year group leaders, contain precise and measurable outcomes to help judge the progress being made towards achieving the identified objectives. Nevertheless, given the systems and structures in place, the school's track record of ongoing improvement, governor and staff commitment and the enthusiasm of the headteacher, the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote good practice in teaching throughout the school, by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information more consistently to raise expectations and to challenge all groups of pupils
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to contribute to, and take responsibility for, their own learning
 - ensuring pupils consolidate their writing skills in other subjects.
- Refine, consolidate and extend the role of middle leaders in improving outcomes for pupils by ensuring they all:
 - vigorously monitor and evaluate the quality and the impact of lesson planning on pupils' progress.
- Ensure governors raise expectations further by;
 - monitoring action plans produced by the school and year group leaders to ensure they contain precise and measurable outcomes
 - evaluating the effectiveness of the school more rigorously and precisely.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' feel safe and enjoy school. They have a good understanding of personal and road safety. This has helped the school to gain the Bronze Cycle award. Pupils' good understanding of healthy living is evident in their healthy eating choices and eagerness to participate in physical exercise. This has contributed to the school being awarded Healthy School status. However, not all pupils have adopted the commitment to the same extent. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, undertake tasks around the school and to become prefects and members of the school council. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in local events. Pupils generally get on well. There are

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the occasional disputes but these are quickly resolved. Pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their knowledge of other faiths, cultures, religions and beliefs is good. They are keen to celebrate different cultural festivals.

Most pupils start school with levels of skills and attainment expected of a typical seven year old. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is slightly above the national average. Attainment in science is consistently stronger. In English, pupils' attainment is broadly average but improving following a dip in 2009; the outcomes in 2010 were better with more pupils attaining the higher levels. In lessons pupils are motivated and respond well to challenge. They are attentive and behave well. In lessons which capture their enthusiasm their behaviour is exemplary. They speak positively about their teachers and support staff and enjoy the opportunities to work together in pairs and larger groups. However, in some lessons, pupils of different abilities say the work is sometimes too easy or too difficult, they are uncertain of what is expected of them in that lesson and how best to improve their work. As a result, they lose interest and some do not make enough progress. The quality of pupils' writing is inconsistent. They write for a range of purposes and audiences but do not use a sufficiently broad vocabulary. Pupils do not write often enough in other subjects to help them practise and consolidate their sometimes weak spelling and handwriting and to broaden their use of language. Pupils' skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are developing well. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed researching their topic on life in the Amazon and made good use of the information in subsequent lessons.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and achieve their targets. This is because they receive appropriate support. Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers. Pupils' good social skills and average attainment provide them with a secure basis for the next stage in their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teaching has a number of good features. For example, relationships, the identification of the purpose of the lesson and sharing ideas with a 'talk partner'. In some lessons, teachers make very effective use of questioning strategies and challenge pupils of all abilities. Initial answers are probed and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and pupils are actively engaged. In others, the introduction is overlong and pupils spend too long passively listening to the class teacher. Consequently, they have limited opportunity to contribute to their own learning or to work independently. In some lessons, support staff are used very effectively to support learning. Through the use of questioning, they enable the pupils to explore and devise strategies for themselves. In contrast, others tend to tell the pupils what to do, thus limiting the pupils' ability to think for themselves. There are many examples of good and developmental marking and pupils are increasingly self assessing their own work. All pupils are aware of their literacy and numeracy targets and the National Curriculum level at which they are working. However assessment information is not used consistently. In some classes, teachers do not clearly identify the expectations for the different groups of pupils so tasks are not always best matched to individual needs.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is good providing a well resourced and broad curriculum that builds pupils' skills systematically. Hence, the overall planning is very secure but there are some variations at class level in adapting this to meet the needs of

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different groups. The half termly topics have been carefully constructed to enable the pupils to develop good skills across a range of subjects. The themes selected promote pupils' enjoyment of learning well. However, opportunities are missed to improve pupils' writing through other subjects. Provision to promote pupils' cultural development is good. Effective use is made of visits and visitors to promote learning. Pupils are taught French throughout the school and Year 6 pupils are keen to take part in the annual visit to France. Specialist gym and music teachers visit on a regular basis. A good range of extra-curricular activities contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. The recently created garden provides an excellent opportunity to extend pupils' learning in a relaxed and attractive natural setting.

Pastoral care is strong. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and pupils know they can turn to staff if they have any concerns. Support and guidance for pupils meets their needs and, for the most vulnerable pupils, is firmly embedded in the work of the school. The school has a range of strategies to raise pupils' self esteem and in dealing with difficult circumstances. Partnerships to enhance learning with external agencies, the family worker and parents and carers are good and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Transition processes are well established. Pupils new to the school in Year 3 are offered a Yr 4 'buddy'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body and senior leaders have a satisfactory understanding, in broad terms, of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They want to see the school progress and to build on the improving academic outcomes. Systems and structures for monitoring the quality of teaching and to support and monitor pupils' learning are in place but are not yet implemented consistently across the school. Some middle managers provide an effective lead in their areas. Others have recently assumed the responsibility and have yet to establish a systematic programme of monitoring and review.

The governing body provides a reasonable balance between support and challenge and has worked well with the school to improve the buildings and the outdoor environment. Members of the governing body set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school appropriately but have yet to critically evaluate the school's effectiveness. Nevertheless, they ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements. The headteacher ensures an inclusive curriculum. Rigorous monitoring and investigation of differences in performance between individuals and groups has led to additional, targeted support and improved learning. It has resulted in gaps closing so that,

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over time, all groups of pupils make similar progress. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. The governing body and senior staff know the local community well and have done much to promote the school locally. More parents and carers are involved with the school and express a high degree of satisfaction. Links with a small and contrasting school in Norfolk is in the process of being developed. Internationally, there are links in France and Italy, with further links planned with Greece and India. These have been identified to support and enhance the school's thematic approach to the curriculum.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers was similar to that found in most schools. The very large majority of the responses were entirely supportive of the school's work. A particularly high percentage of parents and carers stated that their children feel safe and enjoy school. Their positive views are confirmed by the inspection evidence. Very few parents and carers disagreed with any statement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sundon Park Junior 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	55	56	53	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	60	48	37	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	36	74	57	3	2	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	36	75	58	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	40	75	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	35	77	59	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	29	87	67	2	2	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)	47	36	74	57	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	35	77	59	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	39	74	57	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	25	82	63	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	41	73	56	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	49	63	48	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sundon Park Junior School, Luton, LU3 3JU

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school and in sharing your views with us. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to see that your attendance is above average, your behaviour is good and you get on well.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Overall you make satisfactory progress during your time in school. Your attainment in Year 6 is broadly in line with the national averages. In mathematics and science is slightly better than that in English. Staff want you to continue to improve and have been working hard to raise your attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. They have done this by making certain that the curriculum is interesting and you can make the links in your learning between different subjects. This is starting to impact but there is still work to be done to make certain your attainment continues to improve, especially in your writing. The staff care about you and this is a real strength in the school. They make certain that you are looked after and have a good understanding of healthy living and how to keep yourselves safe. Well done on getting the Bronze Cycle award.

To help you improve further, the inspectors have asked the staff and members of the governing body to do three things.

Firstly, to make certain that teachers use their assessment information more consistently to give you work that it at the right level for your learning needs, to encourage you to take charge of your own learning and to ensure you get the chance to practice your writing skills in other lessons.

Secondly, for subject leaders to check more closely how lesson plans are adapted to meet your learning needs.

Thirdly, that members of the governing body check the school's action plans and look more closely at how well the school is doing.

Please remember, to make your school better you must play your part by always trying your best, especially in the content and presentation of your writing.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector

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