

Sundon Park Junior School

Kinross Crescent, Luton, LU3 3JU

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and governors have not been able to bring about improvements to the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are too low and the progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics during their time at the school is well below average.
- Pupils' progress and attainment are inconsistent between classes and year groups because of the variation in the quality of teaching.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school is widening. Spending of the grant for these pupils in 2013/14 did not benefit them.
- Recently appointed subject and other middle leaders are not doing enough to raise pupils' achievement.
- The work given to the least-able pupils is often too difficult for them, particularly their writing tasks. Because of this, they are dependent on adult support and achieve very little when left to work alone.
- The work given to the most-able pupils is often not challenging enough, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' feedback does not consistently help pupils across the school to make progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because a few find it difficult to maintain interest, and they become restless or inattentive. Pupils do not always take pride in their work. It is often messy, with poor handwriting and spelling.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and recently appointed assistant headteacher have an accurate picture of what the school needs to do to improve. They have recently put much in place to enable the school to move forward. They both have the confidence of the staff.
- Pupils feel safe. Staff take good care of them.
- The new National Curriculum has been implemented well and there are clear plans in place to monitor its effectiveness.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons or parts of lessons, including three joint observations with the headteacher and one joint observation with the assistant headteacher. Inspectors observed teachers in all year groups.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in books and on classroom displays. They listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to them during lessons, in the playground, in the dining hall and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school’s own questionnaire for parents. Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start and end of the day and received phone calls from several parents.
- Questionnaires completed by the 17 members of staff were taken into consideration.
- Many school documents were reviewed. These included: development plans, policies, records of monitoring, safeguarding and planning records, information for families and governing body documents.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brian Simber	Additional Inspector
Marion Cannie	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Sundon Park is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with around 49% coming from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- At about a third, the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- Around a fifth of the pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is slightly above average.
- The school is currently trying to recruit a new deputy headteacher and has recently appointed an assistant headteacher.
- Periodically, since the last inspection, the school has received subject leader support from Tennyson Road Primary School. It has also had some support from the headteacher of this school, who is a National Leader of Education. The school has recently made significant changes to the teaching staff and to the leadership team.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and their knowledge and understanding of pupils' progress in mathematics, reading and writing
 - making sure that all pupils are given clear and accurate guidance to help them improve and to correct errors and misconceptions
 - making sure that teachers establish clear unequivocal expectations for spelling, handwriting and presentation across all areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring that any gaps in knowledge of phonics (letters and sounds) and spelling which exist when pupils start at the school are quickly filled in order to improve their reading and writing skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are given work which helps them achieve what they are capable of
 - ensuring that the work given to the least-able pupils is set at the right level to enable them to experience success with their own learning, feel confident to work without the support of an adult and make rapid progress
 - reviewing the provision for disadvantaged pupils and making sure their particular learning needs are met so that the gap between their attainment and the attainment of others closes.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of senior and middle leaders so that they monitor effectively the impact of their actions on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress
 - developing the knowledge and skills of the governors so that they understand the school's achievement data fully and are able to hold the school to account effectively for the impact of the pupil premium funding
 - ensuring that governors are able to help the school to develop effective communication with parents

– ensuring that teaching assistants are always deployed effectively to have the most impact on pupils' progress.

- Improve pupils' behaviour by making sure that they consistently take care with their work, do their best and maintain their concentration when working.

An external review of governance and the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders, including governors, have not taken effective steps to bring about improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, significant changes to the leadership team and the teaching staff have meant that her plans to secure improvement have not had enough impact on teaching and pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has maintained links with the National Leader of Education who is the headteacher of a local school. This has resulted in a great deal of training and professional development for staff. There have been some improvements in teaching because of this work but they are not consistent and have not led to consistently good progress for all pupils.
- Middle leaders and senior leaders who are relatively new to their posts are developing an understanding of what needs to be done to move the school forward and have already taken some actions to improve teaching and learning. It is too soon to see the impact of their work on pupils' progress.
- Since the last inspection, senior leaders and governors have not checked that pupil premium funding has been effective in helping disadvantaged pupils to close the attainment gap with other pupils. Consequently, the attainment gap has increased, highlighting weaknesses in the school's work to promote equality of opportunity. The headteacher and recently appointed senior leaders now have good systems in place to check on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Most of the parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were unhappy about communication between themselves and the school. A large majority of the small number of parents who completed the online Parent View survey stated that they would not recommend the school to another parent. The school's own parent questionnaire completed during parents' evening had many more responses and the majority of parents stated that they were happy with the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements.
- The headteacher ensures that the performance management of teachers tackles underperformance and this has led to a high staff turnover since her appointment.
- The newly appointed assistant headteacher has ensured that the new curriculum has been implemented well and new assessment arrangements are in place. She has put carefully thought-out plans in place to review the effectiveness of the new curriculum next term.
- The school makes prudent use of the additional funding to develop physical education and promote healthy lifestyles for pupils. It is used to provide a broader range of sporting activities and to provide specialist sports coaching for pupils, which they benefit from and enjoy.
- There are generally good relationships between adults and pupils in the school. Teachers are consistently firm but fair with pupils, and staff all express a desire to 'do their best' for pupils. Staff are generally proud to work at the school and feel that the school will improve well under the leadership of the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has not been effective in driving improvements or in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement. Governors have not ensured that the school provides value for money, including in its use of the pupil premium funding.
 - Governance has improved during the past year because of the principled leadership of the new Chair of the Governing Body and the appointment of highly skilled governors. They have had external advice on what they need to do to improve further and are in the process of undertaking a skills audit.
 - Governors are highly committed and supportive of the school and the headteacher. However, they still

do not understand the school's achievement data in relation to national data. They have not yet undertaken the headteacher's performance management for this academic year.

- Governors are not visible on the school's website and parents say they have no idea who they are. Governors understand that they need to engage with the parent community more effectively and that they need to support the school in working with the minority of parents who are unhappy with communication from and with the school.

- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In lessons where work is not pitched at the right level, pupils lose interest and become distracted, passive or inattentive.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their work, which is often messy. Poor handwriting, spelling and presentation are evident across year groups and subjects. In mathematics books, pupils frequently fail to use a ruler to draw lines or shapes.
- A small minority of parents expressed concerns about bullying in the school. School records show that there have been a few incidences of bullying over the past two years but the school has dealt with these appropriately. There have been several fixed-term exclusions over the past two years as a result of bullying and one exclusion as a result of a racist incident.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground is generally good. Staff are swift to challenge any behaviour which is less than good and pupils know what is expected of them and the consequences of any poor behaviour.
- Attendance is in line with the national average.
- Pupils are developing well socially, morally, spiritually and in their understanding of cultures different to their own. This is because of the broad curriculum and the effective use of visits and assemblies. They benefit from opportunities such as First World War Day to explore the values associated with life in modern Britain.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for at school.
- When moving around the school the vast majority of pupils are polite and courteous. They are friendly, and happily talk to visitors.
- Pupils feel safe and believe that all incidences of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils have a good knowledge about the safe use of the internet and the risks of cyber-bullying.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- There is too much weak teaching. As a result, almost all groups of pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- Teachers often set work that is too easy for the most able and too hard for the less able. Teaching assistants are usually deployed to work with the less able to help them complete tasks which have been set for the whole class and are too difficult for them. This limits progress and leads to a lack of confidence when pupils are left to work alone.

- The most-able pupils are not always challenged to achieve what they are capable of. For example, sometimes, writing tasks do not enable them to move to writing longer pieces quickly enough. In mathematics, work set does not always challenge them enough to help them reach the higher levels.
- Teaching has not helped to fill the gaps pupils have in their phonics and spelling knowledge when they join the school. Additional sessions designed to accelerate progress in this area are having little impact on pupils' writing. Less-able readers in the school fail to use phonics as the main strategy for decoding unfamiliar words, and books selected for them to read are often not pitched at the right level.
- Teachers do not challenge pupils enough to do their best and present their work with pride. As a result, work in mathematics and writing books is often messy and handwriting is poor.
- Marking and feedback are too frequently imprecise or inaccurate. All teachers have implemented the school's marking policy but not all of them are using it effectively to move pupils on in their learning. Feedback does not always provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their writing and, in mathematics books, incorrect work is sometimes marked as correct. There are weaknesses in some teachers' mathematical knowledge.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make less progress than the national average and the school's own current progress data shows that this trend is set to continue for pupils who will leave the school at the end of Year 6 in 2015. Attainment on entry to Year 3 for pupils who left Year 6 in July 2014 was average. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics, when they left the school, were well below average, and this shows that they lost ground.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 6 in 2014 was the equivalent of one year behind that of pupils nationally in mathematics. They were about six months behind in reading and writing. This means that they did not leave the school well equipped for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' progress through the school is uneven in reading, writing and mathematics. They do less well in some classes and some subjects than others. In writing, many pupils have fallen behind since they joined the school and too many pupils across the school have gaps in their phonics and spelling knowledge which have not been addressed effectively.
- The most-able pupils do not do as well as similar pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. Progress of the most-able pupils across the school is inadequate, with too many pupils making little or no progress in some lessons.
- In 2014, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school widened in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress made by the end of Year 6 in 2014 was much less than seen nationally for these pupils. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were around six months behind other pupils in the school. In reading and writing, they were roughly two terms behind their classmates. When compared with pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were over a year behind in reading, writing and mathematics. The support put in place for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school has not led to the rapid progress necessary in these subjects.
- The progress of almost all groups of pupils leaving Year 6 in July 2014, including disabled pupils and those who have special needs, and those learning English as an additional language, was inadequate. Although there are some classes where pupils make good progress, the progress of all groups currently in the school is variable, with too much of it remaining inadequate.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109555
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	441974

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	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Polly Fryer-Saxby
Headteacher	Jennifer Wightman
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2013
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