

Sundon Park Junior School

Kinross Crescent, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 3JU

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not successfully analyse all of their information about pupils' learning to identify and implement rapidly those actions which will have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders at all levels do not systematically check the impact of their actions on supporting pupils' progress.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Some teaching underestimates pupils' capabilities. Too few teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to plan work that will enable pupils to learn well, especially the most able.
- Learning support assistants are not deployed well enough during whole-class teaching to enhance pupils' learning as much as possible.
- Not all teachers follow the school's policy for giving feedback. As a result, pupils do not always know how to improve their work and this slows their progress.
- Outcomes in the 2017 national tests achieved by Year 6 were low. Outcomes for current pupils are still too low. Not enough Year 6 pupils are working at standards expected for their age in reading and writing.
- Pupils are not given the opportunity to work at greater depth, especially in writing.
- School leaders have not developed a consistent approach to promoting positive behaviour for pupils' learning across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors show a passion for the school to improve. The recently enhanced senior leadership team now has the capacity to facilitate required improvements rapidly.
- Attendance is good. The pastoral team works hard to support families, which has led to more pupils attending school regularly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive good individual support. They make strong progress in their learning.
- Leaders have created a book-rich environment. Pupils enjoy and value reading and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the proportion of younger pupils working at the expected level for their age.
- The broad curriculum offers opportunities for pupils to enjoy learning. There is an abundance of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended by many pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders use the information they gather to identify which priorities will have an impact most rapidly on pupils' learning
 - monitoring routinely the impact of identified actions on pupils' outcomes
 - taking effective steps to improve pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make better progress by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve from their different starting points
 - ensuring that teachers plan learning in all subjects that offers challenge for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers plan better use of learning support assistants to have a positive impact on pupils' learning at all times.
 - ensuring that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- School leaders have not been analytical enough in reviewing their effectiveness. They have tried to address too many weaknesses at once since the previous inspection. This has led to improvements being too slow for those currently at the school to make good progress.
- Senior staff and governors do not use all the information they hold about the school to identify which areas for improvement will have the most positive, rapid impact on pupils' learning.
- There has been considerable staff turnover since the previous inspection. Leaders have focused their monitoring on whether staff, new and more experienced, apply school policy or not. They have not paid enough attention to whether these tasks will enable pupils to progress in their learning even when they are applied.
- Leaders have provided appropriate training for learning support assistants to build their skills in supporting learning at all times in lessons. This training has not led to improvement in provision. Leaders recognise that learning support assistants' skills are not being used consistently to improve pupils' learning during whole-class teaching but have not yet addressed this issue.
- Leaders do not ensure that all staff follow the school's behaviour policy and this leads to an inconsistent approach to managing behaviour across the school. Consequently, some pupils do not demonstrate positive attitudes, disrupting the learning of others.
- Since the previous inspection, when the school was judged to require improvement, leaders and governors have sought external support to enhance the provision offered to their pupils. They have also worked closely with the local authority, which has offered accurate guidance. The school still requires improvement, but leaders and governors are taking suitable action to tackle remaining weaknesses in order for the school to become good.
- The headteacher is determined to enhance school improvements with her newly restructured senior team. Leaders and governors have a clear vision of the goals they wish to achieve. They are developing strategies to achieve these goals with less support from other providers.
- Leaders have developed a book-rich environment. There are reading prompts and references to authors around the school and in every classroom. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading and embrace the concept that 'every book is a new adventure'.
- Leaders have developed a broad curriculum that maximises the school's good facilities and stimulates pupils' interests. Reading, writing and mathematics are complemented well by being integrated into other areas of learning. For example, inspectors saw a history lesson that required pupils to use computing, speaking and writing skills.
- Leaders employ specialist staff to teach music and physical education, who offer high-quality education in these subjects. Other subject leaders are developing leadership skills to have an impact on the teaching and learning of their subject. They have identified that the next step is to monitor the impact of the actions they have implemented.

- Leaders offer an extensive extra-curricular programme to pupils. Clubs enhance sport and music, which has led to the school being awarded many trophies. Unfortunately, leaders do not yet identify which groups of pupils attend these activities and so cannot analyse the impact for specific learners.
- Sport premium is used to improve staff's ability and confidence to teach physical education while offering pupils high-quality teaching from specialists which develops pupils' physical skills well.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively by leaders. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from strategies to improve attendance and progress. Funding is used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have an equal opportunity to receive support to fill gaps in their understanding such as in phonics, mathematics or where English is an additional language. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their classmates. Leaders make effective use of the funding provided to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Resources and training for staff have ensured that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are helped to make better progress than others in their year groups.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers are used both to help them develop professionally and to support the school in reaching its goals. Historically, leaders have addressed weaker teaching and it is beginning to improve. Teachers, including those newly qualified, told inspectors that they appreciate the support they receive.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. Inspectors saw examples of work about Stonehenge, the Second World War and the democracy used to elect the school council. Leaders also provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning in lessons, in assembly and during art club.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths, ambitions and areas for improvement. They acknowledge where the school has not had enough impact on pupils' learning in the past. They are able to support leaders with identifying and implementing actions that will make a positive difference to the learning experience of the pupils in their care.
- Governors prioritise pupils' outcomes, learning and behaviour in their meetings. They offer appropriate challenge to leaders and demonstrate a commitment to reaching their shared goals for pupils' development.
- Governors meet their statutory duties, including their responsibility for ensuring that the school keeps pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff training for child protection is up to date, as are all safety arrangements. All newly appointed staff receive a thorough induction so that they understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils.

- Pupils feel safe at school. Staff make every effort to ensure that pupils are safe and cared for.
- Pupils are taught about types of bullying. They are confident in reporting any concerns to adults and know that leaders will act swiftly in response.
- Leaders are vigilant in checking the suitability of any adult who is likely to work with pupils. Records are kept well. The school ensures that work with external agencies is effective in ensuring that the safety and well-being needs of all pupils are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching varies across the school. Expectations for what pupils are capable of achieving are often not accurate. Teachers do not plan learning that provides enough pupils with work that is pitched to meet their needs from their different starting points.
- Not all teachers recognise when pupils have misunderstood a learning point evident in their books or in lessons. This results in some pupils not progressing and repeating their misconceptions. Sometimes this is because teachers do not have secure subject knowledge in an area of the curriculum.
- Teachers rarely have high enough expectations of what most-able pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils' books do not demonstrate different expectations than those for their peers.
- Teachers do not focus sufficiently on developing the technical vocabulary required for higher standards to be reached. This is particularly evident in pupils' science work.
- Teachers do not always plan how to make good use of the available additional adults in their classrooms. Learning support assistants offer effective questioning and guidance for pupils when working with them in small groups or individually. At other times, they just listen to the teaching offered without supporting learning and do not guide pupils' development.
- Teachers offer pupils many opportunities to read. Pupils value reading and are well informed about authors and the different approaches to writing. There are high-quality reading materials in every classroom and references to reading around the school. Raising the profile of reading in the school is beginning to support pupils' ability to read texts appropriate to their ages fluently and with understanding.
- Specialist staff teach physical education (PE) and music. They offer practical, well-planned lessons that enable pupils to develop skills well.
- Pupils can explain what they are learning and are given the opportunity to do so in some classes. They are also confident in making mistakes and learning from them. Where these skills are encouraged, they empower pupils as learners. Pupils told inspectors, 'We feel like mathematicians!'
- Staff question pupils' understanding and this is beginning to encourage them to think for themselves.
- Teachers have produced a well-organised and stimulating learning environment which provides pupils with learning prompts and resources designed to support their progress in subjects across the curriculum. These are newly implemented and their full impact cannot yet be assessed.

- In response to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, many parents disagreed that they are given valuable information about pupils’ progress. However, inspectors found evidence that teachers give accurate information about how well pupils are progressing regularly throughout the school year.
- Teachers have a detailed understanding of pupils’ personal circumstances. Consequently, they establish supportive relationships with their pupils and aim to do the best for them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are generally developing into confident learners. Less-able pupils wait for guidance from an adult rather than investigating further learning themselves when they finish an activity. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and answer questions willingly, using accurately modelled language.
- Adults in the school model respect towards pupils all the time. This develops strong relationships between pupils and their classmates as well as with the staff.
- Pupils feel safe. Staff and the majority of parents who responded to surveys agree that pupils are kept safe in school. Pupils are satisfied that any concerns they have are dealt with promptly by staff. As a result of effective teaching, pupils are confident in their ability to stay safe online.
- Teachers listen to their pupils and plan lessons in response to concerns or questions from members of the class. For example, in response to questions about defining bullying recently from pupils, the teacher developed pupils’ understanding of bullying. Leaders keep accurate records of any bullying or racist incidents that are reported to staff. Reports show that appropriate action is taken until the incident is concluded.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- During lessons where teaching does not meet pupils’ needs effectively, some pupils lose focus on their learning. Sometimes their behaviour disturbs the learning of others in the class. This is often as a result of teachers planning learning that is too simple, too challenging, or that does not enthuse learners.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions in the school is above the national average and has been for several years. It has increased further during this academic year. Leaders liaise well with external services to attempt to prevent the same pupils from being excluded repeatedly. There is evidence that this is successful for some individuals.
- Attendance has improved as a result of leaders’ actions. It was below national expectations in 2016 and is now above. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged do not attend school as regularly as their peers. However, their attendance is still broadly in line with national averages.

- School leaders, especially the pastoral support team, work hard to support pupils and their families. They do whatever they can to ensure that pupils are safe and ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders recognise that raising achievement remains the school's top priority. Results in the 2017 national tests showed improvement since the previous year but still represented underachievement. Fewer than half of Year 6 pupils met national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's current assessment information shows that few pupils are working at greater depth in any subject. There is little evidence in pupils' work that the most able pupils are given opportunities to think deeply and achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils made better progress in writing last year, but did not make enough progress in reading or in mathematics.
- Too few pupils leave the school with the basic skills they need in English and mathematics to succeed in the next stage of their education, although this has improved since 2016 and current teacher assessments suggest that it is continuing to improve.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 from all starting points, including the most able, made greater progress in 2017 in writing and mathematics than they had done in previous years and more progress than their peers. This helps them to catch up.
- The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is better than that of their peers in reading and mathematics but weaker than others in writing.
- Pupils are beginning to make better progress from their starting points, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- According to the school's most recent assessment information, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in some year groups, particularly in the lower school. Where teaching is less strong, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, while not good enough, differs little from their classmates.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong progress. In 2017, outcomes for these pupils improved and they continue to improve for current pupils. The leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has trained support staff effectively to provide one-to-one guidance in and outside the classroom. This is enabling vulnerable pupils to participate increasingly in all aspects of school life.
- Teachers expect pupils to use reading skills in other subjects. Adults, staff and visitors model an enthusiasm for reading and show pupils how to read fluently. Reading progress declined in 2017, but the recent focus on reading is having a positive impact on standards, especially for younger pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	109555
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10044750

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Polly Fryer-Saxby
Headteacher	Jennifer Wightman
Telephone number	01582 571619
Website	www.sundonpark.luton.sch.uk
Email address	school@sundonpark.luton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- Sundon Park Junior School is an average-sized junior school.
- Just over half of the pupils come from 14 other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above the national average.
- The school works in collaboration with and receives the support of Whipperley Infant Academy and The Meads Primary School, where the headteacher is a national leader of education. Sundon Park also accesses support from the Lantern behaviour unit, which is based at Whitefield Primary School.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and who are supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school meets the Department for Education’s definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015 to 2017.
- The school meets the government’s current national floor standards, which set the

minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all classrooms, many with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They also visited an assembly, playtime, lunchtime and after-school activities.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in all subjects. They heard pupils read and spoke to pupils about their opinions of Sundon Park.
- Discussions were held with staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of school documents were looked at, including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the school improvement plan; records of governors' meetings; policies; and external audits of the school's performance.
- Inspectors spoke to parents who accompanied their children to school. The lead inspector considered the 35 responses and free-texts to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. She also analysed the parent survey that the school had carried out recently, which had far more responses. Inspectors considered the 17 responses from staff to the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paula Masters, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector

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