



# Sundon Lower School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109485  
**LEA** BEDFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278204  
**Inspection dates** 13 October 2005 to 14 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Raymond Jardine LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Streatley Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		LU3 3PQ
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01525872357
<b>Number on roll</b>	75	<b>Fax number</b>	01525872357
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Frances Wood
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Susan Stokes

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 13 October 2005 - 14 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278204
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school was established in 1847 and serves the village of Sundon, near Luton and the surrounding areas. It is much smaller than most other primary schools. Almost all the children are of white UK origin but a small number come from other white and Asian backgrounds. None have English as their second language. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above average and has been rising in recent years. It is currently 40% of children, although the numbers vary considerably within year groups. Eleven of the 30 children on the register receive additional support from outside agencies, including one with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Their needs include physical disability, autistic tendencies and behavioural difficulties. Children's attainment on entry to the school is wide in range and varies from year to year, but is mainly average or below. The proportion of children joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is considerably higher than average in some year groups.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The inspection judges that the school's overall effectiveness is good, a view that is shared by the school. Children in Years 1 and 2 make good progress and generally reach standards that are above average and sometimes very high. This good progress continues into Years 3 and 4, although progress in reading is not as strong as in writing. Children receive a very good start in the Nursery and Reception class where a rich and well-resourced range of activities is provided and where some teaching is outstanding. Teaching in later years is good, particularly the teaching of basic skills in literacy and mathematics. The early assessment of and support for those children with special educational needs is a strong feature in the school. There is good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants to guide these children in lessons. The curriculum is planned well to meet the range of children's needs and interests. The many visits and additional activities provided help to ensure they gain much from school life. Teachers are receiving further training to help children in Years 3 and 4 to use information and communication technology (ICT) in a greater range of subjects. Children like school and make good progress in their personal development. They play a full part in influencing the school community and enjoy taking responsibility and caring for others. Much attention is given to encouraging children to adopt healthy lifestyles which they much appreciate and are committed to. There is good quality care provided and the school's leadership and management are also good. The effective actions taken to address the issues identified at the time of the last inspection, such as the quality of subject leadership, demonstrate that the school can tackle its weaknesses. Overall, it provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Focus on raising standards further in reading - Extend further the use made of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects in Years 3 and 4

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's attainment on entry to Nursery varies considerably from year to year but is generally a little below average, particularly in their language and social skills. By the age of five, their overall attainment is considerably higher and most reach or exceed the goals expected for the end of the Reception year. The children make good progress throughout their Foundation years because of good and sometimes outstanding teaching of a stimulating and well-planned curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, this good progress continues and children typically reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2004, the school's results were consistently and exceptionally high in all these subjects. In both reading and mathematics, a very high proportion achieved above the level expected by the end of Year 2, but fewer children achieved at this level in writing. Overall standards in 2005 were lower than the previous year. However, taking account of these children's lower attainments on entry, their

progress remains good. Indeed, the school's focus on improving writing last year was very successful and results in it improved. Throughout the school, those with special educational needs do well. There is early diagnosis of their needs, good use is made of external expert advice and there is effective in-class support for them. In Years 3 and 4, children continue to achieve well in English, mathematics and in science, although progress in reading is not as strong as writing. The school met its challenging targets for Years 2 and 4.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Through its welcoming and encouraging climate for learning the school helps children to enjoy their education, form good relationships and develop a range of personal skills. Children are keen to do well and this is reflected in their good behaviour and regular attendance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school is a harmonious community where children learn to respect and be kind to each other. In the playground, children ensure that anyone without a friend to play with can join in with others through the 'friendship ring'. Those few from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated and progress as well as others. Children say that bullying or harassment is very rare and that when it does occur it is dealt with promptly. Consequently, they like school, feel safe and contribute much to it. The well-attended gardening club has enhanced the school's environment with many attractive plants and a vegetable plot. Members sell their produce to the school kitchens, and all children are encouraged to eat healthily. Much has been done to provide healthy menu options at lunch, and Year 4 children run their own healthy tuck shop. The school's work has been recognised through its recent achievement of the Healthy Schools Award. Children also learn how to stay safe. For example, the school takes part in a road safety programme that involves children and their parents. Through the very active school council, children's views influence the school's work. Children helped to decide on reading books as the school extended its range recently, and they were also involved in adding more play facilities to the playground. During their time at the school, children acquire many skills that prepare them well for their future. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to consider the needs of others. For example, children raise considerable funds for local charities. In subjects such as religious education and through visits and visitors, children are acquiring an appreciation of the customs and beliefs of the many cultures and faiths that make up our society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching, particularly for those children in Nursery and Reception years, is outstanding. Lessons are planned well to create interest and engage all children in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely to

ensure children's diverse needs are catered for. A strength in teachers' planning is the attention given to those with special educational needs. Children's education plans provide detailed guidance, and the well-trained teaching assistants work effectively on tailored programmes of work for these children. Children say they enjoy many subjects, particularly mathematics and the creative arts. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, especially the emphasis placed on developing creative writing. Children are appropriately challenged by the level of work provided. Those who are gifted and talented have their own education plans to ensure that they make the progress expected of them. Children are encouraged to work independently and in groups and they show good skills in sustaining their concentration and solving problems for themselves. Teachers' questioning is a strong feature of many lessons. Children are expected to be creative in suggesting ideas and solutions of their own. A very good foundation for this good learning is laid in the Nursery and Reception class where the strong emphasis placed on personal, social and emotional development prepares children very well for later years. For example, Nursery and Reception children were very proud of the seeds collected from the sunflowers that were grown from seed during the summer. They co-operated well as they examined them with hand lenses and talked about their features.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is stimulating and well-planned to meet the range of children's needs and interests. Good provision is made for children with special educational needs. Their education plans are very specific and the good range of resources available is used effectively to meet their needs. A thematic approach links subjects to create stimulating contexts for learning. Much is done to enrich children's experiences and broaden their horizons through visits to museums and galleries and the use of visiting artists. Children receive a good start to their education in Nursery and Reception class where they receive a lively and stimulating curriculum with an emphasis on improving these children's language and social skills. Children acquire good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT which prepares them well for their future. The provision for ICT is much improved since the last inspection. Children apply their ICT skills well in subjects such as English, mathematics and art but in Years 3 and 4 the need to extend its use in some other subjects is a focus of current training. Children readily take responsibility in the school community and learn how to stay safe and healthy through the school's personal, social and health education curriculum. A good range of popular clubs and sports further enrich children's experience of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect of the school's work is good and children are looked after well. Parents feel their children are well cared for and children report that they feel safe and secure at school. There are robust systems in place for ensuring children's safety and security that are well understood by all staff. In this small school, all the staff know each child

very well. The support and guidance children receive ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Children's progress, both academic and in their personal skills, is closely monitored and recorded by teachers and teaching assistants. Each child has a target in reading, writing and mathematics and there are regular standardised assessments of their progress towards them. These are kept centrally as well as by teachers in their classrooms. The regular reviews with children and reports to parents ensure that those who might be underachieving are identified quickly. A strong feature is the partnership the school enjoys with external agencies to ensure that those with special educational needs are diagnosed early and their progress is closely monitored and regularly reviewed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Staff are committed to raising standards and work closely together towards common goals, and in ensuring the school day runs smoothly. The school's encouraging climate for learning and the quality of care provided are major reasons for children's good personal development and progress. There is a strong commitment to the inclusion of all learners in the school community. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate and based on robust and well-developed systems for monitoring its performance. Children's progress in key subjects is monitored and reviewed in relation to challenging targets by the headteacher and subject leaders. Patterns in achievements are compared with external benchmarks to help guide the school's work. A relative weakness in writing two years ago was quickly diagnosed and the improved results in 2005 bear out the positive impact that the school's attention to it has had. The monitoring and development of teaching quality is central to the work of the headteacher and subject leaders and contributes to the good teaching. The role of subject leaders in particular is much improved since the last inspection and demonstrates the school's capacity to tackle relative weaknesses and to improve further. The school's cycle of self-review is broadly based. Children's views are taken account of and acted on. The school's current improvement plan rightly includes a priority to improve day-to-day communications with parents about the school's activities as a result of surveys it has carried out. This has not yet been fully implemented but it is improving. Governors are much involved in monitoring and challenging the school's work. They receive reports from a number of sources and their regular visits contribute to a good partnership. The resources available are used efficiently to raise standards.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You probably remember that I visited your school recently. I want to thank you for the help that you gave me and tell you how much I enjoyed my two days in your school. I was especially impressed by the politeness that you showed to me, how well behaved you all are and how much you enjoy school life. I met many of you in lessons and talked to some of you in groups. What you said helped me come to some judgements about the quality of education you receive. I have written a full report of my visit, which has been sent to Miss Stokes. I set out for you below some of the main things I found out about your school. I was impressed with the following:

- You are given many opportunities to develop knowledge and skills, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, that are preparing you well for the future
- You receive a good start to school in the nursery and reception class
- The teachers and other adults know you well and plan lessons carefully to help you to make good progress
- Your positive attitudes, together with the friendships you extend to those around you, make the school a happy place in which to learn
- You take seriously the need to stay fit and to eat healthily
- Your views and actions are helping the school to develop, for example, through your school council's decisions and through the work of the gardening club
- The staff work closely together to try and improve the quality of education you receive.

There are also a few areas that could be even better:

- More attention is needed to help you enjoy reading and develop your reading skills further
- Your good skills with computers could be used more in some subjects than they currently are, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

With my good wishes for your future at Sundon Lower School,