

# Sundon Park Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109555
<b>Local Authority</b>	LUTON LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310021
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raymond Jardine

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick Bright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Karen Hooker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kinross Crescent Luton LU3 3JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 571619
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 508508

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average junior school that serves the district of Sundon Park and surrounding areas. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is also about average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is typically broadly average.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2004 following a period when the school was under temporary leaderships. There have also been considerable changes to staffing during the last three years. The school has recently gained a Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Sundon Park Junior is a satisfactory and improving school that provides satisfactory value for money. The school has emerged from a difficult period of temporary leadership and staff changes in recent years. Standards are rising because of the good leadership and direction provided by the headteacher since her appointment in late 2004. The clear direction for improvement that she provides has resulted in a common understanding of the school's key priorities and closer teamwork in driving them forward. Close attention to promoting good standards of care and welfare and a positive environment for learning has resulted in improvements, particularly to pupils' personal development and well-being that is now good. Parents say that they are pleased with the school's work, reflected in their children's good attitudes, improving behaviour and enjoyment of school life.

Standards and progress by Year 6 have improved since 2005 when both were significantly below average. Standards are currently about average and a little above in science. In relation to pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3, most now make expected progress and their achievements are satisfactory. Improvements have been most marked in English and science, although reading standards are considerably better than writing, which remains a school priority. The introduction of rigorous monitoring and regular reviews of each pupil's progress by senior leaders with class teachers is one key reason for the rising standards, particularly among lower and average attaining pupils. Progress and standards in mathematics have also improved in 2007 to be broadly average, although some more able pupils still did not do well enough. Targets and expectations for them were too low. Pupils' learning and progress is uneven across the school because teaching varies in quality. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and improving. Staffing changes have slowed, enabling the school to better share and build on the best practice, which is especially evident in Year 6. Relationships are typically good and most lessons are interesting so that pupils enjoy their learning. The main cause of the uneven progress between classes is the varying extent to which all pupils are appropriately challenged and working independently.

Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. They readily take responsibilities as learning mentors, playground buddies and school councillors. The school's focus on teaching children how to live healthily is evident in the good choices many are making. The satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with sound skills for their future lives and has some good features, including popular additional activities and visits. The school is planning closer links across the curriculum to better promote creativity and key skills such as those of information and communication technology (ICT).

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school accurately assesses where it needs to do better and the senior leadership team are effective in monitoring and driving forward these priorities. However, the role of some subject leaders, and of governors, is underdeveloped within the school's cycle of self-review, a weakness that the headteacher is keen to resolve in order to raise the school's potential for further improvement from its current satisfactory level.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, focusing particularly on all pupils' writing and the more able pupils in relation to their mathematics.
- Build on the good practice that exists to improve the overall quality and consistency of teaching across the school.

- Develop the role of subject leaders and of governors within the self-review cycle to better monitor the school's work and so quicken the pace of improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In the 2007 national tests, pupils attained standards in both English and mathematics that were broadly in line with the national average. In science they were a little above. The results demonstrate that the improvement in standards seen in 2006 continues, especially in science. Standards in both 2004 and 2005 were significantly below those of other schools because many pupils' progress at that time was too low in relation to that of other schools nationally. A focus on improving weaknesses in literacy in particular and closer monitoring of pupils' progress has reversed the school's decline. Both English and science had improved significantly by 2006. However, mathematics standards continued to lag behind improvements in other core subjects. The latest 2007 results show further improvement in mathematics to close the gap, although some higher attaining pupils still underachieved. Pupils' reading has improved considerably, but writing is not as strong. Progress is more consistently good in science.

Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as their peers. Pupils who have learning difficulties underachieved in 2006. Provision since then has improved considerably and they now make at least satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Relationships are very good and pupils get on well with each other and with staff. Consequently, pupils show positive attitudes, feel secure and safe at school. Attendance is above average. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem as they benefit from the many clubs and visits on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their cultural understanding is not as strong as the other elements. Pupils contribute much to their community. They are proud to take on extra responsibilities in the school and to help others, for example as peer mentors, playground buddies and prefects. Members of the school council are very active and their influence is seen, for example, in recent improvements to the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and most make good choices at lunch and other times.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, particularly for older pupils, but this is not yet consistent in quality across the school. The teaching of science is typically good, and most pupils build well on their skills and knowledge in the subject. Much of the teaching is lively and stimulating, with a good balance achieved between whole class discussion and individual or group work that challenges and involves all pupils. In less effective lessons, insufficient attention is given to meeting the full range of needs and abilities

in the class. While lower attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties are supported well, some higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons, particularly when they are involved in learning for themselves.

Professional development and training has made a positive impact on teaching quality. Teachers focus their planning on learning intentions and provide pupils with information on how to improve through their marking, particularly in English. Although most pupils know their learning targets, these are not used consistently by pupils to evaluate their own learning and progress when working independently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There are strengths in the good quality of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. This, together with the popular additional clubs, sports, visits and visitors that enrich the curriculum, contributes much to pupils' personal skills and confidence. Many Year 6 pupils were attending a residential visit to a centre in France during the inspection. Provision for basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are satisfactory and pupils are acquiring sound skills in working collaboratively and independently for their future lives. The curriculum serves the needs of many pupils well, although some higher attaining pupils are not extended enough, especially in mathematics. The recent opening of a new computer suite provides additional resources for staff to better use ICT to support learning across subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, well-being and safety, including child protection, are securely in place. Staff provide pupils with a good level of pastoral care and guidance. The school's recent focus on promoting consistently good behaviour has been very successful and pupils respond well to the encouraging atmosphere for learning that staff provide. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have improved and are good under the headteacher's leadership. Last year, the school also strengthened systems for tracking and reviewing all pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. More regular reviews are providing earlier intervention from teachers and teaching assistants to targeted pupils. This has been a key strategy to improving standards but is not yet extended to other subjects. Pupils receive good feedback and guidance through marking, particularly in English. Good arrangements aid transition between partner schools and Year 3 pupils have settled quickly to their new school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff share a sense of common purpose under the headteacher's leadership and they support each other well in their drive to raise standards. The impact is evident in improvements to pupils' behaviour, attitudes to school and their standards over the past year. The headteacher accurately compares and analyses the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally. The breadth of information gathered from staff, parents and pupils also ensures that priorities are appropriate within the school's detailed improvement plan. The senior leadership team are

mostly involved in driving through these priorities and in monitoring them, particularly pupils' progress and teaching quality within each year. The headteacher is rightly working to extend monitoring and development more fully to other staff beyond the senior leadership team, particularly the involvement of some subject leaders. The school's statutory targets could also be used better to help raise standards. Those for 2007, though exceeded, were only adequately challenging, and too low for higher attaining pupils. One consequence was that expectations were not consistently high across the school. Some, but not all of the targets for 2008, are appropriately higher.

Governance is satisfactory. Many governors are new. Through regular reports from the headteacher and others, they are reasonably well informed, but are not active enough in their role as critical friends to challenge how well the school is doing.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

20 September 2007

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for the polite and warm welcome we received when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed speaking with so many of you and visiting all your classrooms. Your contributions helped us to confirm what staff, parents, governors and your headteacher had to say about your school. We thought you would like to know what we found out about Sundon Park Junior.

You clearly enjoy school and gain a lot from the friendships and opportunities provided. Those Year 3 pupils we spoke to say that they have settled in very quickly. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the respect that you show one another and to grown-ups. Well done! You are also making some good choices to help you to stay healthy and fit. Many said how much they enjoy the healthy options provided by school lunches and the salad bar. So many of you enjoy helping others, for example, by being councillors, prefects, playground buddies or mentors. We think this is helping you to mature and become confident young people. Your attendance is good - keep it up!

You told us that you enjoy lessons, especially when you do things for yourselves. We can see that you are acquiring sound knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science and that these are improving, particularly your reading and science. We also thought you sang very well in assembly. The school is working to provide more opportunities for you to be creative and to ensure that you use the new computers to help you learn in all your subjects.

Miss Hooker has worked very hard with the staff and made a big difference since she became headteacher. With governors, they are determined to keep improving your school. We agree with Miss Hooker that the teaching can be even better across the school. More effort is also going to be put into improving your writing and some pupils' mathematics so that you all do as well as you can. You can help by using the targets in your books to think about what you can do better when you review your work. Staff and governors are also going to work more closely to check how well the school is doing to help ensure that it keeps getting better.

With best wishes to you all for your futures at Sundon Park Junior,

Ray Jardine Lead inspector