

Luton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118318
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	358310
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Goulden
Headteacher	Jillian Oliver
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included seeing 13 teachers teach as part of the 25 lessons/part lessons or focused group activities observed. They looked at examples of pupils' work. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and a member of the governing body. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, which included such things as the school's improvement planning and assessments about pupils' progress. In total, 77 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective are leadership, teaching and learning in demonstrating a secure capacity to improve pupils' attainment, learning and overall achievement?
- Do pupils achieve well enough during their time at this school including those who have been at the school since Year 3 and those who arrive much later?
- What is the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities? Does this ensure that these pupils achieve well enough for their future lives?
- Are community cohesion, pupils' contribution to the community and links with others significant strengths of the school?

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and has increased to 50%. Pupils' needs link largely to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils leaving and entering the school throughout the school year is extremely high. At the time of the last inspection, it was identified that the school's intake had altered considerably and it continues to alter week by week. Currently, just over half of all pupils are of White British heritage and close to half come from minority ethnic groups. An exceptionally high proportion of pupils are new to education and often speak very little or no English. The proportion of pupils from Eastern European backgrounds has more than doubled since the last inspection; many join the school in Years 5 and 6, are of Slovakian or Gypsy Roma heritages and have not attended school before.

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

Luton Junior School is a satisfactory school. Pupils benefit from good support and guidance to achieve satisfactorily overall from their often exceptionally low starting points. In particular, the school does very well in improving all pupils' speaking and communication skills. Staff are dedicated to giving pupils better life chances and they have created a warm, welcoming oasis for pupils from all backgrounds. Pupils enjoy school, like their teachers and feel safe at school. As one pupil put it, 'You get friends easily', while another said, 'The school makes me feel nice'.

Attainment, by the end of Year 6, is very low overall. However, those pupils who have remained at this school since the beginning of Year 3 reach the average expected levels of attainment in English and the majority reach these in mathematics. This group of pupils makes satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

Pupils who are new to the school often have many gaps in their learning, due to attending several schools or having no previous schooling. For example, of the current Year 6, only half were at Luton Junior School in Year 3. Moreover, in this year group, a quarter of all pupils joined in the last 18 months and six had not previously attended any school. These factors account for why attainment is low compared with the national average. These pupils sometimes need considerable help to learn how to behave in a suitable way and follow school rules and routines. They quickly learn to do this because of the good care and support that they receive.

Good progress is being made by pupils who speak English as an additional language and all pupils are rapidly improving progress in reading and writing. Leaders have been focusing well on these aspects of learning, although leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to write as frequently as possible and learn editing and extending skills. Leaders and teachers place a clear focus on making sure that pupils gain basic mathematics skills. There is still more to do to ensure that pupils are as skilled as possible in using different problem-solving strategies.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but is improving securely and quickly. In the last year, improvements have been the result of the increasing rigour of leaders' work, greater accuracy in their understanding of the effectiveness of the school and more precision in development planning. Leaders' good self-evaluation has led to the school becoming more effective in meeting the diverse needs of pupils. Leaders have raised all staff's expectations of outcomes for different groups of pupils. Notably, the monitoring of lesson and assessment procedures has become sharper and more closely focused on improving pupils' learning. Leaders have taken very firm action to eradicate past inadequate teaching. The proportion of good teaching has risen considerably. Leaders know that pupils need even more good and outstanding teaching to do as well as possible,

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especially when so many pupils have a short time at this school before moving on to secondary education.

Since the last inspection, as a result of leaders' good self-evaluation and development planning, many aspects of the school have improved from being satisfactory to become good. These include: the curriculum; care; provision and outcomes for pupils who speak English as an additional language; pupils' enjoyment of school; and the partnerships with others to promote learning and well-being. Community cohesion has been a challenge for the school and a major focus. As a result of many initiatives, this has improved well so that the school is a more racially harmonious place to be, where differences are celebrated and shared. There is a good partnership with parents and carers and well-established partnerships with others. These factors have contributed much to improvements in pupils' learning, achievement and well-being. Pupils now benefit from good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and their attendance has risen from being below average to become average. As the headteacher said, 'The school is a different place, the ethos has altered.' There is a relentless drive, vision, rigour and commitment by staff, especially the headteacher and senior leaders, to accelerate pupils' achievement and to improve teaching and learning. Taking all of these factors of improvement into account, the school has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2011, ensure that the vast majority of teaching and learning is good or better by:
 - accelerating the pace at which lessons proceed
 - ensuring that the most able are consistently well challenged
 - making sure that teachers do not talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and that they give pupils more time for their individual work.
- By July 2011, improve attainment and pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving strategies
 - making sure that all lessons are consistently well planned for all ability groups, especially the most able learners and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- By July 2011, improve pupils' writing skills still further by:
 - providing more time for pupils to learn how to edit and extend their writing and then try this out for themselves
 - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of marking, so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils grow in their confidence, self-esteem and in their ability to work cooperatively with others. In the time available, they are helped to learn the basic skills needed for their economic well-being. Learning and progress, as seen in lessons and from samples of work,

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are satisfactory and quickly improving. Virtually all lessons observed ensured a good emphasis on helping pupils to speak with growing accuracy and complexity. Pupils' learning was aided by interesting activities, which pupils thoroughly enjoyed. Pupils in Year 4 were excited when exploring how to make an electrical circuit and pupils in Year 5 dressed up as evacuees, wrote and acted out play scripts to help them to understand more about the Second World War. In this lesson, the use of a digital film recorder made learning fun and helped them to explain their views and feelings. In this lesson, and others, there was a clear link with purposeful reading and writing but there is room for more extended writing. Reading skills are being considerably strengthened by the introduction of focused support, including catch-up work for letters and sounds (phonics) and better guided reading. The emphasis on 'Talk for Writing' is beneficial, as pupils are keen to write, as seen when Year 6 wrote about their perceptions of 'Scrooge'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make uneven progress in mathematics but they do well in developing their English skills. Overall, they achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils are keenly improving their attendance and enjoy the rewards for this, such as being invited to a special picnic. Pupils know about different religions and cultures in the wider world and learn important moral and social skills well. Pupils are largely very kind, polite and helpful and keenly work on community projects. They often behave well in lessons and around school, although they can be a little boisterous. Exclusion rates were high and are now falling.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
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

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How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is satisfactory and is supported by a good curriculum that has become increasingly tailored to meet pupils' very wide-ranging needs. The range of visits and clubs makes a significant contribution to pupils' overall learning and enjoyment of school. As a result of improved assessment procedures, pupils who need extra help benefit from often good support in intervention group work. The sample of work seen indicated that some teaching is occasionally outstanding in English and science. In Year 4, some of the marking is of an exceptionally high standard. However, the overall quality of teaching, marking and challenges for pupils are variable and this is why they are graded as satisfactory rather than good overall. All teachers place a high emphasis on discussion in lessons, but occasionally teachers can talk too much at the beginning of lessons, which limits pupils' individual working time. Teachers help pupils to think hard in their English lessons but in mathematics, this is not always as well developed and in some lessons the pace at which they progress can be uneven. For example, in one lesson, the most able pupils did not have the strategies to solve 41% of 41 and this slowed the pace of learning. Nonetheless, overall, pupils are working effectively on basic skills, as was evident in a good Year 3 lesson where pupils worked on understanding place value to 1000 and where all abilities were equally challenged.

Relationships are excellent in lessons. Teachers make effective use of a wide range of resources to make learning interesting to pupils. Staff represent a good cultural mix and speak a wide variety of languages, which contributes to the good support and guidance given. For example, the school has a support teacher for pupils from Gypsy Roma heritages and a 'New Arrivals' teacher who works closely with new pupils to help them to settle quickly and to assess their needs. The school has an exceptionally high proportion of vulnerable and needy pupils and links with outside agencies to support them are extremely well established. Overall, the care given ensures that pupils overcome significant barriers to learning.

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 headteacher knows exactly what she wants for the pupils in her care and this was summed up simply by her as, 'giving them better life chances'. All staff now share the vision of, 'We expect the best'. Team work is strong. Leaders have a wealth of assessment information about how well different groups are doing. Class teachers and subject leaders take an active part in very regular meetings about pupils' progress. Everyone is focused on the needs of pupils as individuals. Pupils' learning, enjoyment and progress are being

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accelerated by increasing links with parents and carers. For example, parents and carers worked with the children on designing and making chairs and 'Question of the Week' challenges.

The governing body provides satisfactory support for the school. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and, with staff, they ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous. They have taken firm action to support the headteacher in acting to overcome instances of inadequate teaching and are becoming increasingly skilled at asking challenging questions about the outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have made a concerted effort to secure additional funding to promote equal opportunities well. As a result, the school has a good number of staff for group work. This is helping the overall quality of learning to be better tailored to pupils' needs and is a significant factor in the good progress being made by pupils who speak English as an additional language. Staff tackle any form of discrimination, especially racial, rigorously and this has resulted in good local community cohesion. The school's stable population has become increasingly welcoming and respectful of other children's cultural heritages. Arts events, including the making of large murals and dancing workshops, have helped the community to work together well. Leaders have developed a thorough understanding about the context of the local community and are working well with hard-to-reach groups. For example, a translator has been employed to work with pupils and parents who speak Slovakian, which has strengthened the support and involvement of this group well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
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

Overall, parents and carers are happy with the school. They commented about the happy ethos and environment. They are pleased with the support for pupils with particular difficulties, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few commented that

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they would like more feedback on their child's progress and better behaviour management. A very few were not happy with homework and a few felt that provision for gifted and talented pupils needs to be better. Inspectors found that the school has reviewed behaviour management procedures and these are working well. As a result, behaviour is satisfactory. Inspectors found that some more-able pupils could be better challenged. They also found that homework activities are often supporting pupils' learning well. A few parents and carers felt that the school does not take account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors found that the staff are always willing to listen to parents' and carers' suggestions and concerns and want to do all they can to involve them as much as possible.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Luton 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 266 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	48	38	49	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	42	37	48	5	6	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	32	48	62	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	25	46	60	8	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	30	46	60	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	25	54	70	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	39	41	53	3	4	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)	20	26	44	57	6	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	26	50	65	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	29	38	49	9	12	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	22	47	61	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	26	47	61	6	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	27	47	61	6	8	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.



29 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Luton Junior School, Chatham ME4 5AW

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently.

You go to a satisfactory school that is quickly improving and this is because the adults want the best for you. You told us how much you like school and that adults are caring and give you plenty of support when you need it and we agree that you receive good care, support and guidance. You are all making steady progress and those of you who are just beginning to speak English are doing well in learning how to do this. You told us that you make friends easily and get on well together. Occasionally, you said that some pupils do not behave as well as they should but you also told us that the adults make sure that you are safe and everyone tries hard to follow the rules. Almost all of you are kind, polite and helpful. We were especially pleased to see how you are learning about the differences and similarities between people from different backgrounds; well done for showing respect and please keep this up. Congratulations for doing many things for the community. You agree that you learn new things as teachers make activities interesting. In particular, we enjoyed seeing your work about 'Scrooge' and your drama about being an evacuee and thought that you get plenty of extra help when working in groups.

We have asked the adults to work on the following important things to improve the school.

- Make more of your lessons and learning good or even better.
- Help you to do better in mathematics so that you have plenty of ways to solve mathematical problems, especially those of you who find learning easy and those of you who need quite a bit of extra help.
- Give you more opportunities to improve and extend your writing and to make sure that teachers mark your work so that you know exactly how to improve.

We hope that you all enjoy the rest of the autumn term and continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons Lead inspector

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