

# Elton Primary School

## Inspection report

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|                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 111225                    |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Cheshire West and Chester |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 378256                    |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 1–2 February 2012         |
| <b>Lead inspector</b>          | Nigel Cromey-Hawke        |

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>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 208  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Alex Jones   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sue Moorcroft  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 24 June 2009   |
| <b>School address</b>                      | School Lane<br>Elton<br>Chester<br>CH2 4LT                                   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01244 981170   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01928 724312   |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:admin@elton.cheshire.sch.uk">admin@elton.cheshire.sch.uk</a> |

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Maureen Coleman

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, including joint observations with the headteacher, observing nine teachers and eight classes. The inspectors also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. No responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available to assist in planning the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised paper questionnaires from 66 parents and carers, 20 staff and 106 pupils.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number of Asian British and Caribbean pupils. The number of Traveller pupils is well-above average and increasing. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average but increasing. This includes pupils on the Autistic spectrum. There are two children in local authority care. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in a specialist class within Key Stage 2. A higher than average number of pupils than is usual leaves or joins the school partway through each key stage. The school has gained the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Artsmark Silver award and Healthy School status. The school met government floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government, in 2011. There is an on-site children's centre, a pre-school and an after-school club. Each of these is subject to separate inspections. These reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall Effectiveness</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Achievement of pupils</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Quality of teaching</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>      | <b>2</b> |

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has a number of strengths. Pupils and most parents and carers are very positive about the school and the way it prepares the pupils for the next stage in their learning.
- Achievement is good. Attainment on leaving the school in Year 6 is above average. Pupils' progress from their starting points in the Reception class to when they leave in Year 6 is good. Attainment in reading throughout the school is above average. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, disabled pupils and those Traveller pupils, who attend regularly, is good. The progress of persistent absentees is more limited, however.
- Teaching is good overall. There is some that is outstanding but also some that is satisfactory. In most cases it ensures that the needs of pupils are well met. The best teaching is characterised by good pace and challenge, high quality planning and the good use of assessment to help pupils improve their own work. Weaknesses in teaching are too much teacher-talk and limited opportunities for independent learning, as well as lessons that lack sufficient pace and challenge.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Almost all pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their time in school. Behaviour is good and bullying is generally of a low level and dealt with well by the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Leadership and management are good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, and achievement has been improved since the previous inspection, as has the quality of teaching and the curriculum. A very positive climate for learning exists within the school. Communication with parents and carers over how the school deals with its changing intake is not yet fully developed.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching to at least good by:
  - providing more pace and challenge in these lessons
  - developing pupils' abilities to work independently by encouraging them to better explain their learning without adult support.
- Continue to focus upon strategies to improve the attendance of persistent absentees.
- Engage more effectively with all groups of parents and carers to better explain the school's expectations and actions in adapting to its changing intake.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The achievement of pupils is good, as the schools' self-evaluation shows. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with basic skills and understanding that are typical for their age, but sometimes lower than this in language development. The teacher and her skilled assistants make sure that children are provided with a wide range of stimulating activities in the bright and attractive Reception class that capture children's imagination. Adults in this setting have high expectations, teaching is good and, as a result, children are happy to learn and make good progress. The provision outdoors is also good and is linked very well to what happens in the classroom sessions through high quality planning. Assessments of children's progress are regularly made and communicated well to parents and carers. Particularly effective arrangements are made to develop children's reading skills within the Reception class. These are built upon well in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that, typically, attainment is above average in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Attainment in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave in Year 6 is above average. Across the school, pupils are therefore making better progress than similar pupils nationally, given their starting points. This is because of the good teaching and stimulating learning environment, reflecting the school's awards in the arts. Consequently, in most lessons, pupils acquire knowledge quickly and securely across different subjects. Pupils also develop and apply a good range of skills well, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, they are prepared well for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, those in local authority care and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because of the additional support they receive, often within the specialist class. Pupils entering the school partway through a year have their needs assessed rapidly and they are well integrated into school life. The achievement of Traveller pupils is closely tied to their attendance. Where this is at least average, the progress many of them make is good and in some cases is outstanding. Where this is poor, pupils' achievement is more limited. The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children make in the school and the inspection endorses this view.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching and learning across the school are good. Some teaching is outstanding. There is a small amount of satisfactory teaching. Most parents and carers are highly appreciative of the teaching, although a small minority recognise its variability. As a result, most pupils are achieving well over time.

In the better lessons the school's excellent planning format is used to good effect to provide varied activities that capture pupils' interests and meet their needs well. This ensures that the planned curriculum is taught well across the school. Planning makes good use of data regularly gathered on pupils' progress to create challenging learning objectives and structure the lessons. The information is also used to create individual learning targets for all pupils that are reviewed at least termly and clearly identify the school's expectations for each pupil. The school has undertaken extensive training over the last year to extend its use of assessment in lessons to provide pupils with a framework for improving their own work. In the best lessons this is used to good effect, pupils enjoy the challenges presented and work well both independently and together by assessing each other's contributions to learning. In one outstanding Key Stage 1 English lesson, pupils created their own success criteria for assessing each other's work and then tested them by circulating around groups within the class to check their effectiveness. This boosted pupils' confidence and understanding significantly. Much teaching therefore deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. It teaches them a range of skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics that contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The best lessons are characterised by good levels of pace that maintain pupils' interest. In satisfactory lessons this element is lacking and progress and engagement with learning are no better than satisfactory in these cases. Most teachers are good at using questioning to build up pupils' understanding and to share learning across the class. This is especially the case in upper Key Stage 2 where one teacher constantly challenged pupils' thinking about how they might structure a new scene in a play, prior to their performance of it to the class. In some lessons teachers talk too much, however, and provide limited opportunities for pupils to work independently or to fully express their understanding through their answers without adult support.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of pupils both within classes and around the school are good as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are, typically, considerate, respectful and courteous to staff and to each other and consistently meet the school's expectations. The vast majority of parents and carers consider that behaviour is good and almost all pupils agree. A few parents and carers expressed concerns in their questionnaire returns about instances of poor behaviour. Discussions with pupils revealed that they have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and they consider that it is of a low level in school, and any instances of it are promptly and effectively dealt with. This includes cyber-bullying, racist incidents, bullying of pupils with special educational needs and bullying by or of minority groups. Staff effectively operate a comprehensive system of rewards and consequences, and often involve the active school council in discussions about the implications of any incidents that occur. Consequently, the school is a warm and very largely harmonious community in which different groups are well integrated and willing to learn. The school has made good use of partnership working, including the public services, to

develop pupils' understanding of the danger of strangers, behaviour in public and safe or unsafe situations. Links with the children's centre are good. The attendance of almost all pupils is above average and improving year-on-year. Punctuality to school and to lessons is very good. However, attendance overall is no better than satisfactory because of the impact of a small group of persistent absentees that the school is working with.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher consistently communicates high expectations and ambition for the school and is driving improvement forward with energy and skill. She is ably supported by the senior leadership team and together they model good practice and exemplify the values of the school. Teaching is improving and overall good, with an increasing amount that is outstanding, as new ways of working begin to have an impact. The school is highly committed to the professional development of its staff and has extensive links with higher education establishments locally to provide this. This has resulted in a large number of teaching assistants who provide good support for pupils' learning in lessons, some of them being parents and carers, who have been trained in school. Achievement has improved since the previous inspection, despite a significant change in the school's intake. The school is aware, however, that it has yet to communicate effectively its expectations and practices in respect of these changes to some parents and carers. Self-evaluation is a strength of the school, at senior leadership, subject manager and governor levels. This includes regular observations by all these groups of the quality of teaching and the sharing of good practice. This is combined with comprehensive plans to help move the school further forward. As a result, the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The curriculum is good. It is well structured and provides effective and interesting opportunities for learning for all groups of pupils. The use of heritage education and the local area, including links with local churches, are particularly strong. The school has good links with the on-site before- and after-school clubs. Many pupils take advantage of these facilities to get a good start to their day in school or to pursue additional interests at the end of the school day. The school's involvement in the arts, music and sport are also extensive, and there is a good link with South Africa that helps develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of the wider world. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including Spanish and a Wildlife club. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding requirements are met and the school demonstrates good practice in the vetting and checking of staff and in site maintenance and security. The promotion of equal opportunities is good, with instances of discrimination rare and, if encountered, dealt with well. Members of the governing body are closely linked to subject areas of the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very active in supporting its work and provide good levels of challenge in its drive for further improvement.

## 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      | 46  | 46   | 8            | 0          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 47   | 40           | 5          |
| Secondary schools    | 14  | 38   | 40           | 8          |
| Special schools      | 28  | 48   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 15  | 50   | 29           | 5          |
| All schools          | 11  | 46   | 38           | 6          |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Behaviour                  | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.   |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:     | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.  |
| 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. |
| Safety                     | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.             |

**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.**



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Elton Primary School, Chester CH2 4LT**

Thank you for the warm reception you gave my colleague and I when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly and polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

Elton Primary is a good school. You get a good start to your learning in the Reception class and make good progress there. This continues throughout the rest of the school so that by the time you leave in Year 6 you have reached above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Those of you who find learning difficult also make good progress because of the extra support you receive, especially in the specialist support class. Teaching across the school is good, with some that is outstanding but also some that is satisfactory. The school looks after you well and you obviously enjoy being there. Your behaviour is good and the attendance of most of you is above average, but overall attendance is satisfactory because of the persistent absence of a small group of pupils. Senior leaders do a good job and the staff provide a good range of subjects for you to enjoy. You particularly enjoy the opportunities provided in sport, music, art and craft and the residential visits. These contribute much to your personal confidence and prepare you well for the next stage in your learning.

We have asked the school to consider the following things that will help it to improve further:

- make sure that all your lessons are at least good
- further encourage those of you whose attendance is poor to come to school regularly so that their learning is not disrupted
- communicate more effectively with parents and carers about what the school is doing.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Lead inspector

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