

Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102211
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	355149
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Taylor

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Scantlebury
Headteacher	Kathryn Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers as well as nursery nurses and other support staff. They held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to parents and carers bringing their children to school. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including those related to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance data, pupils' work, local authority reports on the school, curricular documents and safeguarding information. They analysed questionnaires received from 118 parents and carers as well as those completed by staff.

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

- Attainment levels at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage and the improvement in standards reached by the end of Year 2.
- The day-to-day learning and progress of different ability groups and the extent to which provision is helping to raise attainment.
- The impact of the school's efforts to improve attendance.
- The contribution that leaders at different levels make to evaluating the school's work.

Information about the school

Pupils in this large school are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average, though a smaller but increasing number are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average because the school is additionally resourced for pupils with physical disabilities.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery in September on a part-time basis. They join Reception in September of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. The school runs a breakfast club and after-school provision managed by the governing body. It has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards.

An acting headteacher is currently in post, as plans are in place to amalgamate the infant school and the junior school on the same site.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery provides a good standard of education. Parents and carers are rightly confident that their children are very happy in school, enjoy learning and are very well cared for.

Pupils achieve well. Attainment by the end of Year 2 has risen since the last inspection and is in line with the national average. Children get off to a really good start in Nursery and Reception because provision and the quality of teaching here are consistently good. Although there are some inconsistencies, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good overall. The overall good teaching, combined with a good number of intervention programmes, enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress.

Staff have good subject knowledge, are well organised and prepare interesting lessons. Because of the good assessment system, teachers know their pupils' attainments well. In most lessons, they match teaching and tasks to different ability groups. Where this does not happen, pupils of average and above-average ability are sometimes not challenged to make good progress. Marking also does not make a strong enough contribution to guiding pupils towards improvement.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Staff know pupils very well and quickly identify those who need extra help and support. Excellent partnerships with external agencies and other schools enable staff to support pupils and families very well, including pupils with complex needs.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs, is very good. Well-trained support staff and teachers ensure that these pupils are fully included and work is consistently well matched to their needs. Similarly, pupils who are new to learning English are well supported to access the curriculum and develop their skills.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, enjoy physical activities, healthy snacks and school dinners.

Leaders support colleagues well, set very challenging targets for the school and pupils, and keep a very good overview of data on pupils' progress. Evaluation of pupils' day-to-day learning and progress in lessons is less incisive and does not include subject leaders often enough. This is in part why the school's self-evaluation in one or two areas is over-generous and, although school improvement planning identifies the right priorities, some of the success criteria lack precision. That said, the governing body and other leaders have ensured that provision and standards have improved well since the last inspection and remain committed to building on the school's successes. Their good leadership, combined with high expectations and strong teamwork, provides the school with a good capacity for continued improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Address the weaknesses in some of the teaching, especially the use of marking, the pace and challenge in lessons, and the match of work to different abilities.
- Improve the quality of school improvement planning by bringing greater precision to evaluating day-to-day teaching and learning in lessons and extending subject and year group leaders' role in this process.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and learn well, although occasionally the more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in lessons. Attainment has improved in the past two years, despite a decline in attainment on entry to school as more children enter with complex needs or additional needs in learning English. Attainment in writing has improved markedly as a result of a whole-school focus on teaching letters and sounds, developing vocabulary, modelling writing and building on pupils' interests.

Most pupils learn well in lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils learned well because different ability groups were well supported and fully engaged. The teacher challenged them throughout the lesson and addressed misconceptions quickly. Similarly, in English lessons in Years 1 and 2, the introduction, repetition and reinforcement of new vocabulary, along with engaging activities, captured pupils' imaginations. Pupils then produced varied lively teddy bear poems and dinosaur stories.

Regular assessments that identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, linked to an increased number of interventions, have contributed well to improving pupils' progress and challenging different ability groups. This was evident when lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 were taught individually or in small groups to sound out unfamiliar words, use picture clues and self-correct. Similarly, in a writing group, more-able pupils in Year 2 were challenged effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of British and other cultures. They behave well, are considerate and tolerant, grow in confidence and willingly take on responsibilities. They suggest where improvements might be made and what they would like to learn more about.

Pupils are keen to learn and to 'have a go' when attempting something new. They say they feel very safe in school, noting that, 'Our teachers look after us and help us.' By the time they are ready to leave Year 2, pupils' good social skills and ability to work collaboratively mean they are well prepared for junior school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching include clear explanations and planning, and preparation of interesting, practical tasks that young pupils enjoy. Staff give pupils time and good support to discuss and develop their ideas, recognising that this benefits all pupils, including those new to learning English. Well-trained support assistants often contribute well to pupils' learning, including pupils who have learning difficulties. Together with the class teachers, they support pupils with physical disabilities very well, providing good personal care, engaging with them in their learning while also drawing other pupils in to work alongside them.

In lessons, teachers also explain in simple terms what pupils are meant to be learning and often question pupils well to challenge their thinking. They usually use assessments to match work to different abilities, though this is not consistent in every class. The recent introduction of pupil conferences and self-assessments are helping pupils to understand how well they are doing and where they need to improve. Marking, however, does not make a strong enough contribution in this regard.

The broad, interesting curriculum reflects pupils' diverse backgrounds and makes a good contribution to their personal development, including their physical and creative development, as reflected in the school achieving the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. Pupils enjoy a range of visits, visitors and themed events that capture their interest. Lunchtime and after-school activities are very popular and well attended.

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Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure a rigorous approach to pupils' well-being. Vulnerable pupils and their families are exceptionally well supported. Breakfast and after-school care provide a cosy and welcoming environment in which pupils can relax, enjoy each other's company and make choices about their preferred activities. The school's sterling work to improve punctuality and reduce persistent absence has been very effective in bringing attendance to a satisfactory level.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and other senior leaders have a shared vision, promote good teamwork and drive improvements well. Good staff morale is reflected in the staff questionnaire. Year group leaders and subject leaders support colleagues well. Along with senior leaders, they keep a good overview of progress data, but have few opportunities to formally evaluate learning and progress in lessons or by checking work in pupils' books. This inhibits the school's ability to have a complete picture of where further improvements in day-to-day provision might be made.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well, sets challenging targets for pupils and supports those at risk of underachieving. Consequently, the gaps in performance for different groups is closing. All aspects of special educational needs provision are led and managed well. The school invests heavily in staff training and employs sufficient suitably trained support staff, including bilingual staff, to ensure that pupils' diverse needs are well met.

Staff involve parents and carers in the life of the school, seek their views and ensure they know how to support their children's learning. Excellent partnerships with external agencies and other schools enable staff to share expertise and support families very well.

The governing body is in a period of transition due to the planned amalgamation of the junior and infant schools. Under the clear direction of a strong chair, the governing body supports the school well, provides an appropriate level of challenge and ensures that statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding, risk assessment and staff training, including that for child protection, are robust.

The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion at the local and wider community levels. Leaders are very well informed about the backgrounds and needs of families. Links with schools in the wider United Kingdom and internationally are as yet less well developed.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Because of the very warm welcome and high standard of care, children quickly settle into Nursery and Reception, establish friendships, clear routines, independence and good patterns of behaviour.

Children learn well and make good progress from a starting point well below expectations, especially children's skills in communication, language and literacy. By the time they leave Reception, although attainment remains below average, it is closer to that expected.

The teaching is consistently good with a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and early reading, writing and number skills. Children in Reception were able to draw on previous experiences of sounds they had learned when writing about 'What I like about the rain'. Meanwhile, other children were busy working on activities linked to 'Incey Wincey Spider', for example, exploring how pouring water through a drainpipe would force a spider out of the other end, counting eight legs to stick on clay models of spiders they were making, or making number stories to eight.

Nursery and Reception staff are very skilled, understand how young children learn best and provide a good mix of independent and adult-led activities. They interact well with children during play to support their learning and respond to their interests, often using languages spoken by children in addition to English, and asking probing open-ended questions. Very occasionally, there are missed opportunities to engage more fully with children.

Staff plan interesting topics that incorporate the six areas of learning well. In Nursery, children engaged enthusiastically in a wide range of activities linked to 'Journeys to Favourite Places'. They, for example, modelled stars and moons found in space, explored the ice their polar bears were standing on, incorporated their ideas into play or drew pictures on paper or large blackboards. In the Nursery, the outdoor environment is used

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well to support children's learning, but it is not used as effectively by staff in the Reception.

When adults work and play alongside children, they make timely assessments of their progress and plan how activities might later be amended to extend their learning and reflect their interests. They regularly assess the progress of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities against the targets in their education plans. Adults also ensure that children with disabilities are fully included and can work and play alongside other children.

Good leadership has helped to develop provision. Data analysis is used well to amend provision in the light of any weaknesses in children's attainments.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that their children really enjoy school and that this is a well-led, caring school where good teaching enables children to make good progress. The inspection confirms this. A small number of parents and carers would like to see improvements, especially to behaviour and the regularity with which they receive information about their children's progress. Inspectors found during this inspection that information is shared with parents on a regular basis. They found the majority of pupils behave really well, but that occasionally some pupils do behave inappropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elmgrove Infant and Nursery 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 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 307 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	53	54	46	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	47	62	53	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	41	57	48	11	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	36	63	53	6	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	39	60	51	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	36	69	58	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	32	76	64	4	3	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)	28	24	69	58	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	25	71	60	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	27	65	55	11	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	25	73	62	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	27	70	59	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	39	63	53	6	5	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



28 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Elmgrove Infant School and Nursery, Harrow HA3 8LU

I am writing you a letter to tell you what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and letting us look at your work. Your parents and carers think yours is a good school and we agree.

This is what we found.

- You behave well and get on well together.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy.
- You are happy in the school and make good friends.
- You make good progress and learn to do lots of new things.
- You reach standards similar to pupils in other infant schools.
- The staff make sure there are lots of different and interesting activities for you to do during school time and through clubs.
- Adults make sure that you are very safe, happy and well looked after.
- Your headteacher and staff lead the school well.

We think the school does most things well, but to help you to do even better, we are asking the school to:

- make sure you all learn well in every lesson and use marking to show you what you need to correct or do to improve
- check your work and learning in lessons more often to see how they might be even better.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Taylor
Lead inspector

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