

Elkesley Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122640
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380504
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Adkin
Headteacher	Celia Oates
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2008
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed four teachers in eight lessons. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, with representatives of the governing body and with a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, including the school development plan and a range of policies and procedures. The inspectors analysed the staff's and pupils' questionnaires and the 29 responses from parents and carers.

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

- It investigated the extent to which the quality of teaching is accelerating pupils' progress in English, particularly in writing, and how it enables higher ability pupils to reach their potential through the school.
- It determined the capacity of leaders and managers and the governing body to move the school forward and to sustain improvements.
- It explored the impact of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage on the pace of children's progress.

Information about the school

This is a small school, compared to others of its type, which serves the village and adjoining areas. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities, of which most are moderate learning difficulties. An above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the expected times.

The headteacher took up her post in January 2009. The school joined the Tuxford Family Collaboration in April 2010 in order to share resources and expertise. Since May 2011, it has received support from a Local Leader of Education and from a local authority improvement adviser. There has been some recent instability in staffing.

The school was awarded Dyslexia Friendly Schools status in 2010.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is average, demonstrating their satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils are cared for well, within an environment which promotes their good personal development, and in which they feel secure and included.

The headteacher and the assistant headteacher, working in partnership with a leading headteacher and the local authority, have created a secure basis for school improvement. It follows on from recent inconsistencies in pupils' progress, due to staffing issues, which have been addressed. Good tracking systems and detailed monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning have led to very appropriate priorities for improvement. Leaders' and managers' impact on pupils' achievement is satisfactory, with pupils' on track to reach their appropriately challenging targets in 2012. Middle leaders are focusing on driving improvement in their areas of responsibility. They show a quickly-developing knowledge and understanding of provision in their areas, although they are not giving enough focus to ensuring that planning for learning responds accurately to data about the levels at which pupils are working. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school's work but governors do not yet find out enough for themselves about the school's performance to be able to influence its direction. These developments, together with satisfactory progress in the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, show that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their individual levels of skills and knowledge on entry to the school, which are typical for their age in several aspects, and often below in communication and number. Their progress is due to carefully planned provision, both in the classroom and outdoors, which is accurately matched to children's individual needs. The school's focus on communication and numeracy begins in the Nursery. Pupils' satisfactory progress through the rest of the school is because teaching is satisfactory overall. While it is good in the Year 5/6 class, there are some inconsistencies in practice which restrict progress over time to satisfactory. The purpose of learning is very clear in a lot of lessons but it is not always the case. Staff use information about pupils' levels to plan work but tasks, particularly for those capable of reaching higher levels, are not as carefully devised in literacy and numeracy, both to enable them to apply the skills that they have learnt and to develop more complex skills. Some marking is excellent in telling pupils the next steps in learning, but it does not consistently do so throughout the school.

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Following the school's detailed analysis of pupils' attainment, teachers are focusing on the specific writing skills which assessments of their learning confirm need to be embedded. They are supported by intervention strategies for those pupils who have gaps in their learning. Consequently, pupils through the school are building up progressively their writing and literacy skills. Progress quickens in the Year 5/6 class, where teaching is good and pupils practise their newly learnt writing skills in other lessons, as well as those aspects that they need to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics, through ensuring that teaching is consistently good, by
 - providing pupils, particularly those capable of reaching higher levels, with an accurate level of challenge in all of their tasks
 - making sure that marking of pupils' work tells them the next steps in learning as well as their achievements
 - ensuring pupils are very clear about the purpose of learning.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior and middle leaders are checking very regularly that assessment information is being used effectively in the planning of all learning, in order to drive improvement more quickly
 - the governing body finds out enough for itself to be able to help to steer the school's direction.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress. Both boys and girls respond very positively to lessons which give them plenty of time to learn independently. In such lessons, they develop skills in making choices and decisions. In Year 6, where progress is accelerating, pupils included powerful vocabulary in their writing about 'Scrooge,' meeting their learning objective of creating suspense. They have a good understanding of grammatical concepts, including figurative language. In most classes, there is a focus on methods of working, rather than on just the answers. Pupils in the Year 3/4 class showed increasing confidence in partitioning numbers and in explaining how they arrived at their answers. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress in sentence construction, aided by appropriate support from teaching assistants. Those pupils who have the potential to reach the higher levels are not regularly given enough opportunities to apply their skills to more demanding literacy or numeracy problems and thus to extend their learning. The needs of the pupils who join the school late

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are identified promptly, so that they make satisfactory gains in language and number work. Pupils who are dyslexic develop their spelling skills at a good pace, through working on patterns with teaching assistants and often use computers to aid their recording of their learning.

This is a close-knit and happy community. Pupils develop good personal and inter-personal skills through opportunities to work together in lessons and to take on roles of responsibility. They behave well, are supportive towards other pupils and through daily routines and the curriculum are developing a good understanding of right and wrong, equality and fairness. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with pupils’ cultural understanding increasing. Pupils feel safe and a programme of learning throughout the school, which incorporates emotional well-being, ensures that pupils know potential dangers and learn how to handle their feelings. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and many adopt them through nutritious eating choices and keeping fit. Their average attainment and attendance confirm their satisfactory preparation for secondary school.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
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?

Positive relationships between pupils and staff promote pupils’ enthusiasm for learning. Many, but not all, lessons have a clear purpose which is regularly reinforced as the lesson proceeds. The most effective lessons have an interesting stimulus and a range of teaching and learning styles, motivating both boys and girls. Some specific questioning was observed, which quickened pupils’ progress. Tasks do not always offer accurate challenge, particularly for those pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels. Teachers’ use of assessment information, while still developing, has led to pupils knowing their targets. Marking, in most lessons, tells them what they have achieved but less regularly tells them the next steps to take. In some lessons, pupils are evaluating their own learning and that of their peers.

Pupils are enjoying increasing opportunities to learn through themes, which enable them to learn in greater depth, in a variety of ways. Planning allows pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and ensures that all pupils have full coverage of the curriculum in their mixed-age classes. Those who find aspects of learning difficult are provided for satisfactorily, through individual, focused programmes. All pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play the violin and have weekly French lessons. Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory and quickly improving, with built-in opportunities to develop new competences and to practise them in other subjects. Sports coaches provide specialist teaching on a weekly basis. There is a small range of popular after-school clubs, presently mainly sport, which enable pupils to develop and refine their skills and talents.

Pupils feel secure in the caring environment. They show great confidence in the staff, who they say help them with any concerns they have. The school’s detailed knowledge of pupils’ circumstances and issues, supported by positive relationships with parents and carers and enable the staff to address pupils’ individual social and emotional needs quickly and effectively. Consequently, there have been marked improvements in the attitudes and behaviour of a number of pupils. Arrangements for pupils to move to secondary school take place over time, are comprehensive, and take into account pupils’ specific needs.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The staff show commitment to the headteacher’s vision and ambition to drive the school forward. Much improved systems have been put in place to track pupils’ progress and to address the findings. As a result, both the regular assessments of pupils’ learning and monitoring of the quality of teaching are leading to consistent classroom practices being implemented. While many initiatives are ‘work in progress’, their impact on the achievement of all pupils is satisfactory. Consequently, equality of opportunity is also satisfactory and the school’s knowledge of pupils’ involvement in activities outside lessons ensures that there is no discrimination. Middle leaders are developing a greater understanding of the quality of provision in their subject areas through their regular monitoring. However, they are not focusing enough on the impact of staff’s use of assessment data in planning learning. The satisfactory governing body is similarly increasing its understanding of the school and has put in place a programme of monitoring visits, including a working party to monitor pupils’ achievement. Nevertheless, its gathering of independent information is not broad enough to enable it to influence the school’s direction. The governors oversee safeguarding arrangements satisfactorily.

The school has a range of partnerships which have a satisfactory impact overall on the quality of provision. Links with the Tuxford family of Schools have resulted in sharing of resources and skills and knowledge. Relationships with parents and carers are good because they are comprehensive. In particular, parents’ and carers’ views are taken into account and their involvement in school life is welcomed. Their children’s targets are agreed with them and a homework club for Key Stage 2 pupils is enabling parents and carers to work alongside their children. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily through the school, with local links a strong aspect. However, planning to address all of the required elements does not have a clear structure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a mbition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Nursery because they and their parents and carers have had several opportunities to spend time in the Early Years Foundation Stage before they start school, and the staff have discussed the children’s needs with their parents and carers over a period of time.

The classroom has lots of very appropriate resources to cover all of the areas of learning and development so that the children find plenty to engage them. There is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-led learning and the children have plenty of opportunities to learn for themselves. The teacher provides interesting stimulus to interest the children, such as socks which hid a variety of tasks and which encouraged them to count and sort. Outdoor provision has improved since the last inspection and is used effectively as an extension to classroom learning. Questioning is variable and does not always enable children to extend their thinking or add to their lines of enquiry.

Children’s personal development is fostered throughout the Nursery and Reception and incorporated into all planning and daily routines. They behave well and show consideration to other children. The importance of good hygiene, eating healthily and behaving safely is promoted daily.

There is good team work between the staff. Children’s learning is observed throughout the day and recorded in learning journals, to which parents and carers are encouraged to contribute. The joint planning between the teacher and the teaching assistant is an important factor in the children’s good progress through the Nursery and Reception because it ensures that learning is an accurate match to their needs.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was around average. All of the parents and carers who responded judged that the school enables them to support their children's learning. A very large majority agreed with all of the other statements. A minority of parents and carers added comments about specific aspects of the school's work. These focused on the good communication between home and school and the good team work of the staff and governing body. The inspection team found evidence to endorse their views. A concern about the previous instability of staffing was raised. The inspection team found that this is now stable. Inspection evidence and the school's records over time confirm that behaviour is good throughout the school and that strategies to deal with unacceptable behaviour are appropriate. The inspectors confirmed that pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elkesley Primary 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	83	3	10	2	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	66	9	31	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	52	11	38	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	52	13	45	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	66	10	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	59	11	38	1	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)	16	55	11	38	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	16	55	11	38	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	48	9	31	4	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	48	14	48	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	55	12	41	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	21	72	6	21	2	7	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



8 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elkesley Primary and Nursery School, Retford, DN22 8AQ

We enjoyed the two days that we spent with you recently inspecting your school. Thank you for welcoming us into your school and for sharing with us your views about the education that you receive. We were pleased that you enjoy school. You behave sensibly and considerately. The staff look after you well and you feel safe.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 6, you reach average levels in English and mathematics. Your progress through the school is satisfactory.

You like learning and find topics interesting. They give you the opportunity to find out lots of different information and to practise the skills you have learnt, including in literacy and numeracy and to build-up your computer skills. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that teaching is consistently good so that your levels of attainment rise. To do that, we have asked her to make sure that you are always clear about the purpose of learning, that the work that you are given is at just the right level for you and that marking tells you what you have done well and how to move further forward. Senior and middle leaders will check very regularly that planning of learning is enabling these areas for improvement to be fulfilled. The governing body has started to check the work of the school and will find out more for itself, so that it can also help the school to move further forward.

I hope that you will all work as hard as you can, to help the school to make these improvements.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead inspector

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