

# Elson Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	116163
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379210
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Gehane Gordelier HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	261
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rick Bolger
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela MacCallum
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Elson Lane Gosport Hampshire PO12 4EU
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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	16–17 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	312196



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gavin Jones

Additional inspector

Diane Rochford

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed nine teachers, 17 part lessons, and undertook a learning walk focusing on provision for pupils with special educational needs in two classes, and for three groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants. They also listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading. Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, staff, pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and the school's Leadership and Learning Partner from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; action and improvement plans; lesson as well as curriculum plans; school data about the progress being made by pupils; minutes from meetings held by the governing body; arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils and samples of pupils' work from every year group. Owing to insufficient responses, inspectors were unable to make use of Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. However, the responses to the inspection questionnaires received from 93 parents and carers and 19 members of staff were taken into account.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than most infant schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, although rising, remains around half the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage; very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language. A higher proportion of pupils than in most schools are supported at school action, but few are supported by School Action Plus or a statement of special educational needs.

There have been many changes to the membership of the governing body in recent years; the new Chair of the Governing Body has been in post since April 2012. The school continues to be affected by staff turbulence. From January 2011 until January 2012, the school was without a deputy headteacher. At the time of the inspection, five members of staff were on maternity leave. The school is currently in the process of recruiting a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage and additional staff to help accommodate those due to return from maternity leave on a part-time basis.

**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>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school is not satisfactory because provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are all inadequate. This has led to a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics for the last three years and pupils are underachieving. Leaders, managers and the governing body have been unable to sustain improvements since the previous inspection. Despite recent improvements in the senior leadership team, key aspects of leadership and management are weak.
- Inadequate progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in children not being sufficiently well prepared for Year 1. This contributes to the low standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. While rates of progress have started to improve, boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are still underachieving, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is inadequate because expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and the support for vulnerable pupils in lessons is not always well planned. Weak teaching over time has contributed to pupils' inadequate progress and low attainment.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils say they feel safe and free from bullying.
- Leadership and management are inadequate because improvements to the quality of teaching and outcomes for all pupils have not been driven and embedded quickly or securely enough. The management of performance has

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not been robust enough to help bring about sustained improvements. The governing body does not hold the school to account for the progress made by pupils and is not contributing sufficiently to the strategic direction of the school. The role of middle managers is under-developed and, as a result, few curriculum managers are contributing to raising standards. The new senior leadership team is developing its role well, leading to recent improvements in pupils' learning, particularly in reading. Self-evaluation is not sufficiently rigorous and leads to an overly generous view about aspects of the school's performance.

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

- Significantly improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that at least the majority of children reach a good level of development by:
  - ensuring there is effective leadership and management for all staff working in Reception
  - identifying correctly the additional needs of vulnerable pupils and those at risk of underachieving early on in Reception
  - producing an action plan which communicates high expectations for all staff and children and includes challenging targets
  - ensuring that lesson planning specifies the intended learning outcomes, including key vocabulary, for all the required areas of learning
  - ensuring that all staff help children to focus on their learning
  - encourage children to practise the skills they have learnt in the activities they choose for themselves.
  
- Raise the achievement of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, so that all make expected progress and reach at least the levels expected for their age by:
  - ensuring there is rigorous and systematic daily teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) for all pupils and that pupils are encouraged to use and apply their phonic skills when reading and writing across the curriculum
  - increasing pupils' subject specific vocabulary in mathematics
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to write and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
  
- Ensure that a substantial and increasing proportion of teaching is good or better by:
  - making sure teachers take responsibility for meeting the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for this to be reflected in their planning
  - structuring lessons in a way that enables all pupils to work independently
  
  - ensuring there is a good pace of learning by increasing the level of

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- challenge for the more able pupils so that their knowledge, skills and understanding progress well
  - providing regular opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas before they start writing
  - embedding the use of assessment strategies during lessons so that teachers check more regularly and accurately the learning and progress being made by different groups of pupils.
- Ensuring that leaders, managers and the governing body become effective in driving and embedding improvements throughout the school, by:
- developing the role of governors so that they hold the school to account for the progress made by different groups of learners and contribute more effectively to the strategic direction of the school
  - developing the role of middle managers so that they are proactive in leading their areas of responsibility in line with the school's priorities
  - improving the quality of action plans so that they all specify how initiatives will impact on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils
  - ensuring that all action plans include success criteria that are measurable, so that progress can be checked at regular intervals
  - making sure that self-evaluation is rooted in evidence about the impact that actions are having on the development, learning and progress of different groups of pupils.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

From broadly expected skill levels on entry to the school, children in Reception underachieve. The proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception year, although increasing, has remained lower than in most schools for the last three years. Expectations of children are too low and the progress made by different groups is not tracked rigorously enough.

In Key Stage 1, although work seen in pupils' books and in lessons shows that attainment is rising, it is still low, particularly in writing. School data indicate that attainment in mathematics is broadly average. However, this masks gaps in pupils' knowledge; for example, in shape, space and measures and in their ability to use and apply their mathematical skills. Attainment in reading by Year 2 is broadly average but pupils of lower ability are not secure in their basic knowledge of initial letter sounds, and those of lower ability in Years 1 and 2 cannot blend letters securely. Nevertheless, standards are set to rise this year with the more-able attaining levels more in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. However, few are expected to attain the higher Level 3. In the main, boys are performing less well than girls in reading and writing. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals generally attain less well than their peers, although the attainment gap is reducing. Disabled pupils and those

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with special educational needs are making good gains with their reading as a result of well-targeted additional support outside of the classroom. However, this is not the case in writing and mathematics.

In Year 2, the more able pupils use their phonics skills to help them with their writing. For example, in one Year 2 class, pupils wrote information about castles in sentences, spelling simple words correctly. However, pupils of lower ability in the same year group cannot spell simple words such as 'has' and the meaning of what they write is not clear. Where the teaching of mathematics has been effective in Year 2, pupils can add and take away two- and three-digit numbers. Conversely, for example, in Year 1, some pupils did not use the correct terminology to describe the properties of different shapes, referring to edges, for example, as the 'pointy bits'. This reflects a common weakness in pupils' knowledge of key vocabulary in mathematics. Furthermore, pupils struggle to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve simple problems.

Activities set for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs during lessons are not always suited to their needs and are generally overly simplistic. However, additional support out of class, delivered by skilled teaching assistants, helps to accelerate their progress. All pupils learn about other cultures through, for example, African stories and music.

Although the vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress their children are making, a few commented on 'progress in learning' not being 'of the same high standard it used to be'. The inspectors found that standards have declined since the previous inspection.

### **Quality of teaching**

Inadequate teaching in Reception results in children not being sufficiently well equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to access the National Curriculum successfully at the beginning of Year 1. Activities in most Reception classes are of a low level. Lesson planning in Reception is generally weak because it does not specify the intended learning outcomes and the key vocabulary for all the areas of learning. When children choose activities for themselves, most adults do not encourage them to use the knowledge and skills they have been learning.

There are pockets of good teaching in every year group, including in Reception. However, teaching is not consistently good enough to help pupils make up for the ground lost in their learning, such as the gaps that remain in Year 1 with pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures. Teachers do not encourage pupils to articulate what they are learning and what they understand during lessons. This limits teachers' ability to respond swiftly to the needs of pupils and contributes to a slow pace of learning and insufficient challenge for the more able. Teachers' planning does not cater well for the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and this slows these pupils' progress. Activities are rarely structured in a way that enables pupils to be successful when working independently.

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Teachers do not routinely encourage pupils to use their knowledge of phonics to help them to read and write unfamiliar words across the curriculum. Only a minority use discussion to help pupils to be well prepared to produce independent pieces of writing. Although teachers often model key vocabulary well themselves, few encourage pupils to use subject-specific terminology. Teaching provides opportunities for pupils to work together, talk about their emotions and learn about living things, such as growing plants. Teachers promote pupils' cultural development effectively, for example by teaching about Chinese New Year and the colourful Hindu festival of Holi.

In their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents and carers expressed concern about the high turnover of staff and the frequent changes to class teachers. The inspectors found that staff turbulence is having a negative impact on the quality of teaching.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Although most pupils behave well most of the time, the behaviour of a few deteriorates when teaching fails to meet their needs. Pupils who finish their work quickly become restless or passive. Those who do not understand what they have to do, or are unable to progress any further with their work, at times display low levels of disruptive behaviour. However, most pupils remain compliant and will respond when adults ask them to either pay attention or stop any inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour in the playground is mostly good. Pupils show an awareness of the dangers of different types of bullying. They told the inspectors that there is no bullying in the school and that when there is 'naughty behaviour' it is usually just a bit of 'silliness' such as jumping in puddles. They are confident that the adults in school will help them if needed. Staff cater well for pupils' pastoral needs. This helps pupils with personal, social, emotional and medical needs to settle confidently into school life. The overall attendance of pupils is broadly average.

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour in the school is good and that their children are safe. The inspectors found that behaviour is no better than satisfactory because it is adversely affected when teaching is weak. The extent to which the school keeps pupils safe is satisfactory and the school is addressing more rigorously any concerns raised by parents and carers.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders, managers and the governing body have not been sufficiently effective at improving the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Because of the lack of improvement over time and remaining weaknesses in key aspects of leadership and management, the school has not demonstrated the capacity to sustain improvement. Recent restructuring and the appointment of a new



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deputy headteacher have strengthened the senior leadership of the school. There is a greater focus on providing training for staff, but the impact of professional development on improving outcomes for pupils is recent and still fragile. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and this is helping some teachers to improve their practice. However, formal records of lesson observations do not specify sufficiently the value that teaching adds to the learning and progress of different groups of pupils. Frequent changes to staffing compromise the ability of senior leaders to sustain any improvements in teaching quality. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are developing well. As a result, the specific learning needs of some pupils are being identified accurately. However, children with learning difficulties in Reception are not identified quickly enough.

There has been insufficient guidance and direction for staff who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage about how to improve their practice. Middle managers, although managing their areas of responsibility, are not leading school improvement. Too few subject action plans identify how initiatives are expected to raise standards or benefit pupils; plans do not link with whole-school priorities or include success criteria against which progress can be measured. The drive by senior leaders to raise standards of literacy and mathematics has led to recent improvements; however, the remaining uncertainty around staffing issues detracts from work to secure the necessary improvements.

The governing body does not challenge leaders and managers sufficiently about the progress and outcomes for different groups of pupils. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity is not monitored or evaluated formally or rigorously. Consequently, too many pupils underachieve. The school tackles the few incidences of racist behaviour effectively. The governing body has ensured that arrangements for safeguarding children are in place.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it is broad and balanced and contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, not all teachers use the curriculum well enough to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress in basic reading, writing and mathematics, including in Reception. Partnerships with parents in supporting the personal, social, emotional and medical needs of pupils is a strength, as is the pastoral support staff provide to pupils.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Elson Infant School, Gosport PO12 4EU**

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when the inspectors visited your school recently. We were very interested in your views and those of your parents and carers. We are pleased that you are happy at school, but have found that the school is not as good as it was when it was last inspected. We have decided that your school needs 'special measures' to help it to get better. This means that your school will get extra help and other inspectors will visit to see how well things are improving.

These are the things that are best about your school.

- The way you behave in the playground is good and you have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- The adults in school keep you safe and make sure you are well cared for.
- The school works well with your parents and carers to help those of you who need extra support to settle well into school life.
- The school teaches you about other cultures and countries and your lessons cover many different subjects.

We have asked school leaders and governors to do the following things to help make improvements.

- Make sure the youngest children in school get a good start to their education.
- Help you all improve your reading, writing and mathematics so you progress as well as pupils in other schools and reach the standards expected for your age.
- Make sure that most of your lessons are at least good or better.
- Ensure that all of the school leaders and governors are equally successful in helping it to improve.

You can help your school by telling your teachers when your lessons are too easy or too difficult and by continuing to come to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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