

Elm Grove Primary School

Elm Grove, Brighton, BN2 3ES

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in a range of subjects because teaching is consistently good, with examples of outstanding practice, throughout the school.
- Leaders have improved the school's systems for assessing pupils' attainment and their progress over time, so that staff can act promptly to prevent pupils from underachieving.
- Senior leaders, working closely with the local authority and other schools, have acted decisively to improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and have few concerns about bullying. Staff respond quickly if pupils need their help and make sure they feel safe.
- The school is a harmonious community in which pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well through its rich and diverse curriculum.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and have an excellent understanding of its strengths and priorities for further improvement.
- Most parents are highly supportive of the school, and are particularly appreciative of the care and support which the staff provide for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning thoroughly enough during lessons, in order to ensure that they are all working at the right level.
- Pupils are not routinely expected to respond to teachers' written comments on their work and thereby to reinforce and extend their learning.
- Not all leaders are as yet fully effective in helping to improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, two of them together with school leaders, observing all classes in the school and all the teachers who were present during the inspection, at least once. They also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons, looked at pupils' written work, listened to pupils read, and attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors held discussions with: groups of, and individual, pupils; three members of the governing body, including the Chair; a representative of the local authority; members of staff; and, informally, a number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, and data on attendance. They examined safeguarding procedures and records of the school's own lesson observations, as well as the school's self-evaluation and planning documents.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 86 responses to the online survey (Parent View), which were submitted before and during the inspection, as well as three letters received from parents, and 37 questionnaires completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lee Selby

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. About one in eight pupils is supported through school action. About one in 16 pupils is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs. This proportion is below average.
- The proportion of pupils, just over one in seven, who are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children with a parent in the armed services and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below the national average. There were no children from service families in last year's Year 6 classes, and there is none in the current Year 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs, managed by an outside body. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers check pupils' learning and progress sufficiently thoroughly during lessons, and adapt activities if necessary to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as they can
 - teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to extend and reinforce their learning by regularly responding to the comments teachers write on pupils' work
 - all leaders are fully effective in helping to improve teaching in the areas for which they are responsible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in the Reception class with levels of skill and attainment that are below those expected for their age. They learn to work well and play safely together and on their own, and enjoy learning to link letters with the sounds they make, and to count and measure accurately. Pupils from all backgrounds continue to make good progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2, and, by the time they leave the school, the standards that pupils reach in English and mathematics are generally in line with or above national averages. This indicates that they make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- In 2012, pupils' attainment in English, as demonstrated by their performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, was well above average. The standards they reached in mathematics, however, were well below average. Inspectors' observations and their scrutiny of current Year 6 pupils' work, together with the school's own reliable assessments, confirm that this dip has been reversed. This is because improvements in the way mathematics is taught throughout the school are now resulting in pupils making much faster progress, so that standards are rising quickly in this subject.
- Pupils gain a good grasp of mathematical principles and problem-solving techniques because teachers make good use of a range of methods and activities which are well suited to pupils' interests and their different levels of ability.
- The standards reached in English by those pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium in the 2012 national tests indicated that they were just over a term behind other pupils in the school, although their attainment was in line with that of all pupils nationally. In mathematics, these pupils' results showed that they were almost two terms behind other pupils in the school and almost two years behind all pupils nationally. However, the school has made effective use of the additional pupil premium funding to provide extra teaching and support for this group of pupils. As a result, they are now making good progress in mathematics as well as in English, and the gap between their attainment and that of all pupils nationally is narrowing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching and support they receive from both teachers and teaching assistants. They ensure that tasks are well adapted to meet these pupils' needs and that they are fully included in lesson activities, such as pair work and whole-class discussions.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and confirm that they read widely both at school and at home. Those pupils who find reading difficult successfully use the techniques they have been taught, in order to make sense of what they have read. Pupils learn to write confidently and accurately, and understand how to gain the interest of readers, for example by making good use of adjectives and devices such as rhetorical questions.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and achieve well in a range of subjects, including science, history and art, which the school links successfully through themes, topics and special events. Parents of Year 5 pupils, for example, commented very favourably on the way their children had been inspired to learn by their study of the Second World War, which had included opportunities to meet people who had lived through the period.
- When pupils, occasionally, make slower progress than they could in lessons, this is usually because teachers do not check carefully enough on how quickly they are completing tasks, and whether or not pupils are finding them too hard or too easy.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is very rarely less than good, and often includes excellent features. School leaders recognise the need to ensure that there is more outstanding practice, however, in order to improve pupils' achievement still further.
- Teachers have good working relationships with pupils and make their expectations, in terms of

both work and behaviour, clear to them. This helps most lessons to proceed at a good pace.

- Teachers include a good range of activities in their lessons. Children in the Reception class are given a good balance of activities which they have chosen themselves and those which require them to respond to staff's direction. In a Year 5 science lesson on the topic of forces, the teacher captured pupils' attention by showing them a short video clip which showed how a sky diver's parachute counteracted the force of gravity sufficiently for him to land safely despite falling from a great height. The teacher then successfully set up a competition between groups of pupils to design their own parachutes which would stop an egg from breaking when it hit the ground. This enabled pupils to develop their team-working and design skills, as well as their grasp of science.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide activities, in whole-class and small-group sessions, which are well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enabling all groups of pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques to develop pupils' understanding of concepts and topics, often encouraging pupils to build on one another's answers. They do not always, however, adapt lessons quickly enough when pupils make faster or slower progress than the teachers had anticipated. Occasionally, they take too long to explain tasks before allowing pupils to work independently.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and thoroughly. They give them detailed feedback, which enables them to know where they have succeeded and to understand what exactly they should do to make their work even better. Teachers do not, however, regularly encourage pupils to respond to their comments, by correcting or extending their answers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave safely and sensibly around the school and in the playground, needing relatively little adult supervision in order to act responsibly. They show concern and consideration for each other, and are welcoming, polite and helpful to visitors. Pupils develop good social and team-working skills. This, together with their good academic achievement, prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- In lessons and assemblies, pupils are attentive to teachers and are prepared to listen to and learn from each other. They said that disruption to lessons is extremely rare and is dealt with very effectively when it does happen. When, very occasionally, behaviour in lessons requires improvement, this is usually when a few pupils lose interest and become restless because teachers have not given them the opportunity quickly enough to work independently.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as prejudice-related and cyber bullying. They understand and fully support the school's policies about bullying, and report that staff deal firmly and fairly with it on the few occasions when this is required. Mostly, they say, they are able to resolve difficulties themselves without adult intervention, but they know that staff are always prepared to help if necessary.
- The school has acted very effectively, working closely with parents and, when appropriate, outside professionals, to improve the behaviour of the small number of pupils who find it difficult to live up to the high expectations which it sets.
- Pupils' attendance has risen since the school was last inspected, and has been above the national average over the last few years.
- A very large majority of those parents who responded to the Parent View survey confirmed that their children are well looked after at the school, and that it makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is passionately committed to ensuring that the school provides the best service it can for its pupils. Aply supported by his senior team, he has accurately identified the school's

strengths and the key priorities for further development. Senior leaders manage the staff's performance well, and staff, including those who are relatively new to teaching, are highly appreciative of the encouragement and support they receive.

- Leaders have increased the frequency with which teachers formally assess pupils' attainment and progress, and have ensured that they are able to judge more accurately the standards pupils are reaching. This has resulted in staff being able to identify quickly any individuals or groups of pupils who need extra help, and give them the support they need to make up any lost ground. The school's successful commitment to ensuring that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve as well as they can and are fully included in all aspects of school life demonstrates its effective promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Well supported by the local authority, which has provided appropriate training and advice, and working closely with colleagues in other local schools, leaders have significantly improved the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. As a result, standards are rising quickly because pupils are making faster progress.
- Leaders at all levels regularly and thoroughly check the quality of teaching, and of pupils' work, in different subjects and year groups. They provide robust and supportive feedback to staff following observations of their lessons, and ensure that they are able to take advantage of good opportunities for training, in order to develop their knowledge and hone their skills. Leaders do not, however, always make sure that staff have enough opportunities to discuss and to share examples of excellent practice, in order to help raise a higher proportion of teaching to the level of outstanding.
- Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum is well tailored to the needs of pupils from different age groups and with different abilities. Through, for example, the strong links it has established with a school in Mexico, it enables pupils to learn about ways of life in different countries. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to develop their skills in music, drama and art. A high proportion enjoy taking part in a wide range of after-school sporting activities, including competitive events.
- The school ensures that pupils learn to respect each other's beliefs, values and ways of life. As a result, pupils of different abilities and from a range of different traditions and backgrounds work and play happily and harmoniously together. There is no evidence of any discrimination.
- These factors, together with the good opportunities which assemblies give pupils to reflect upon moral issues, indicate the school's strong and effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most parents confirm that the school responds well to any concerns they may raise, believe that it is well led and managed, and would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a detailed knowledge and an acute understanding of pupils' achievement in comparison to other schools, and of the quality of teaching. They know how leaders have improved teaching and assessment, and what needs to be done to make the school even more successful. They are extremely rigorous in holding the headteacher and his senior team to account for the school's performance. Governors bring to the school a wide range of experience and expertise, and are prepared to update their skills by very regularly undertaking relevant training. They are very much aware of how the pupil premium funding is being used for the benefit of eligible pupils, and of the positive impact it is having on their attainment. They also understand how pay increases and promotions are linked to teachers reaching their targets and to the quality of their work. The governing body ensures that the school meets all requirements with regard to safeguarding children. Governors carefully check on how the school uses its financial and other resources. Their clear vision and high ambition for their school, together with leaders' proven track record of improvement, demonstrate the school's capacity to improve still further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114477
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	403241

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beth Thomas-Hancock
Headteacher	John Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 March 2008
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