

Elmwood Junior School

Lodge Road, Croydon CR0 2PL

Inspection dates 4–5 July 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.

- Rigorous teacher assessment shows that increasing proportions of pupils are making faster progress in all year groups and achieving better scores than previously. In recent years pupils have attained above-average levels in English and mathematics by the age of 11 because of good teaching.
- When attainment and progress dipped for some groups last year, the response was rapid and effective. The teaching of reading was overhauled and achievement has improved.
- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Their work is regularly marked, and pupils use a system of self-assessment in writing across all subjects that motivates them to make faster progress.
- The headteacher and her leadership team understand what needs to be done to further improve the school. Their priorities include reviewing the ways in which mathematics is taught.
- Governors make sure that they are well informed, focus on learning, and are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, behave well in class and are keen to achieve. Pupils' involvement in many creative, sporting and social activities promotes respectful treatment of adults and each other.
- The curriculum offers carefully planned links between literacy and other subjects. As a result, pupils read purposefully across a range of topics and, for example, write well-structured responses in science and humanities as well as in English lessons.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils are not always asked questions that check their understanding, nor given tasks that help them to make rapid progress. Marking is thorough, but pupils do not always understand how to improve, especially in mathematics, because their next steps are not always precisely enough described.
- Senior leaders check the impact of teaching on pupils' progress carefully, but middle leaders are not yet fully involved in this process and as a result some inconsistencies in teaching remain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers and two learning support assistants. The inspectors also made short visits to a series of parts of lessons to observe how pupils were using their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Additional activities included observations at break time, a lower-school sports morning and a year group assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and the local authority, as well as school leaders and subject leaders.
- There were eight responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and inspectors took account of views communicated during informal discussions with parents as well as one telephone call. The views of staff were taken into account through meetings and 35 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and examined the work in pupils' books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current as well as previous academic years were checked in addition to published information on pupils' achievement. Planning and monitoring documents, the school's single central record of checks on staff, the behaviour logs and attendance records were also examined.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ken Bryan	Additional inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elmwood Junior School is four-form entry and much larger than the average-sized junior school. Most pupils join the school from the infant school that shares the same site.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided for children who are looked after by the local authority, children of service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is above the national average. There are no children from service families currently on roll.
- An overwhelming majority of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage with those from Indian, Pakistani, other Asian, African and Caribbean heritages forming the most sizeable groups. More pupils speak English as an additional language than the national average although few are at an early stage of acquiring the language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is also above the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school does not provide access to any alternative or specialist provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - enlisting the most skilled teachers to coach their colleagues in checking pupil responses and modifying their lessons if necessary to re-shape tasks and help all pupils to make rapid progress
 - making sure that the approach to marking used by the most effective teachers is used consistently across all years and subjects so that pupils are equally clear about the precise steps necessary to improve their work
 - reviewing plans for mathematics teaching so that pupils are given tasks that challenge them to use and describe different mathematical methods to solve problems, and are given feedback that helps them to assess and improve their own work.
- Strengthen the drive for improved achievement by involving the subject and special needs co-ordinators in more frequent reviews of pupils' progress across the school, so that they can evaluate the impact of teaching on groups of pupils, and intervene collaboratively and quickly in their respective areas if pupils are falling behind.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress across the school. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment broadly in line with national expectations, but by the time they leave the school at the age of 11, their attainment is above the national average. High expectations and good teaching contribute, in particular, to the higher trend in pupils reaching Level 5 in mathematics and English.
- Pupils progress most rapidly in lessons where teachers check regularly how well they are doing and promptly adapt activities to increase the challenge or provide support where needed, and ask questions to deepen pupils' understanding.
- School records, externally moderated assessments for the current Year 6, and pupils' books all show that more pupils in all years are producing a higher standard of work than pupils of the same age last year. Increasing proportions of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Schemes for teaching reading and writing have been overhauled, to include, in particular, books and topics that capture the interests of boys. Those boys who as a group underperformed in English in 2012, relative to their classmates, are now making more rapid progress to catch up in reading and writing.
- Customised support is well matched to individual needs. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their classmates, indeed attaining significantly above the national average in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are also making better progress than in the past. There is no disparity in the achievement of pupils from the different ethnic groups.
- The pupil premium grant is used to pay for additional staff. As a result, the majority of pupils in receipt of this funding are now making the same, or in the case of mathematics in Years 3 and 4 better, progress as their peers. There is less than a level's difference between the average scores in English and mathematics achieved by both groups.
- Younger pupils are taught effectively to use phonics (recognising and linking sounds and letters) to help them read accurately. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and are proud of the cosy book-corners in every classroom, stocked with new books.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school and occasionally outstanding. Lessons are well structured. Teachers prepare and plan activities which take account of pupils' previous learning, and gain their interest. They use assessment and target-setting to support learning, with an increased focus in reading and writing across the school.
- Professional development provides teachers with opportunities to learn from stronger practitioners in a 'Lesson Study' programme. Teachers' planning is now more precise, and tasks are usually matched to the needs of different pupils. Marking, particularly in English books, makes clear to pupils their next steps for improved responses, although this system is currently less well developed in mathematics. There has been an effective drive in the past year to track more precisely pupils' ability to understand what they are reading and this is beginning to have an impact on speedier progress in reading.
- The best lessons provide a range of activities for pupils working at different levels. In a Year 5 series of English lessons, for example, tasks had meaningful contexts that stimulated pupils' interest. They were challenged to decide about the characteristics of a good advertisement and then draft one. Video clips helped all groups to identify persuasive phrases. A pupil at an early stage of learning English had additional adult support and a netbook for translation, while higher-attaining pupils were set additional challenges to include alliteration and personification in their drafts. The planned progression to recording their own voiceovers excited the pupils and promoted a lively pace and constructive discussions when they assessed their partners' work.
- Learning support assistants skilfully question pupils who need additional help to draw out their

understanding. They lead small-group support work for pupils at risk of falling behind, and contribute well to these pupils catching up with their peers.

- Pupils' learning is usually well monitored so if some are unsure of how to tackle a question, this is quickly addressed. There are still some variations among classes or subjects in the impact of teaching upon learning. Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding frequently enough, particularly in mathematics lessons, to adjust tasks to help pupils make even better progress.
- Adults develop good relationships with pupils. 'In lessons if I don't understand something, there is always someone who will help me', was a typical refrain. Both the pupils and their parents are confident that they are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They value the recognition and rewards that come from behaving well, and pupils of all ages work well with each other and support their partners in the accomplishment of group tasks. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils sometimes become unsettled on the rare occasions when teaching is not stimulating.
- Pupils feel well looked-after by the adults around them. Those who have previously displayed challenging behaviour speak of the supportive ways in which they have been helped to improve.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils understand what bullying means and believe that adults can be relied upon to stop any incidents of unkind behaviour. School records support this view and pupils are proud of acting as buddies to help and comfort younger children.
- Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including cyber safety, because it is well covered in citizenship classes and anti-bullying week.
- Pupils are given opportunities in personal and social education lessons to discuss the fair treatment of each other and to participate in musical and sports events that reinforce their good social and cultural development.
- Good attendance has been sustained over time because effective strategies are persistently deployed to reduce absences among any groups who find it difficult to maintain high attendance.
- Inspectors agree with parents that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are pleased with the way that the school provides a rich and varied range of clubs and visits.

The leadership and management are good

- This is an improving school with capacity to improve further. The headteacher and her leadership team have deployed a robust system, based upon teachers' standards guidance, for evaluating teaching. Feedback to teachers is frequent, helpful and followed by classroom checks to ensure rapid implementation. The headteacher did not shy away from difficult conversations about performance in the past when these were necessary. Staff value leaders' guidance, which is seen as fair, and the support that enables them to meet their challenging targets.
- Subject leaders are developing their roles and have drawn on the support of local authority consultants to help them review the ways that reading is taught. The literacy leader is beginning to work more closely with her counterpart in the infant school to review assessments of pupils' attainment. Senior leaders are aware of the need for further training for middle leaders on making more frequent checks on pupils' progress, and adjusting teaching plans if progress is slowing for any groups.
- The curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils' pride in their local area and the diverse roots of the local community are encouraged by local history topics. Realistic writing challenges are woven into humanities and science topics. Moral viewpoints are considered in religious and social education lessons. Events such as class musical

productions and house sports days promote teamwork and extend social interactions. Visits to performances at the local Brits School and participation in Spanish classes at another secondary school, as well as a wide range of school clubs, extend the pupils' cultural horizons.

- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements, and policies are rigorously applied. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The local authority has adopted a 'light touch' towards this good school but has nonetheless supported the school, analysing pupil performance scores, and sharing in observations of history and geography lessons. Partnerships with other junior schools are also fostered so that this school's leaders can contribute to improvement across the borough.

■ The governance of the school:

- This is a committed and conscientious governing body that is well aware of standards of achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors equip themselves to ask challenging questions by attending school governors' days in which they visit lessons and discuss a key theme, such as guided-reading, with teachers and pupils. Governors know how well pupils are performing compared with national standards because they have attended training in how to check pupils' progress in the school and make comparisons with national standards. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' achievement, and the personnel committee checks the reasons for teachers' progression to upper pay spines. Governors confirm that pupil premium funding is spent on the intended groups and receive reports on the impact on attainment made by the additional support provided by the funds. Governors' oversight of safeguarding is systematic. The Chair of the Governing Body meets leaders regularly to monitor and evaluate the impact of school development planning on learning and teaching.

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	101720
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	413159

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	711
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	479
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Dancy
Headteacher	Ann Read
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2008
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