

Elm Park Primary School

Nicholls Lane, Winterbourne, Bristol, BS36 1NF

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is school that requires improvement. It is not a good school because:

- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all year groups, particularly in mathematics.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent over time. This legacy of underachievement means that pupils are not reaching the standards they are expected to attain by the time they leave the school.
- The work that pupils are given in mathematics lessons is sometimes too easy so that pupils do not make sufficient gains in their learning.
- The extra help given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not regular enough to help them catch up with their peers.
- Information about how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are doing is not used frequently enough to check that the extra help they are getting is working.

The school has the following strengths:

- Achievement is rising, particularly for pupils in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is improving and there are examples of good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and both key stages.
- Reading is given high priority and, as a result, pupils develop a love of reading.
- Teachers mark work very carefully which helps the pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to improve.
- Pupils behave well. They get on well together and they get on well with their teachers.
- Pupils feel safe and they like coming to school. They are proud of their school and the way the school makes them feel special.
- Leaders in school are committed to making sure that the school is as good as it can be. They know what is going well and what needs to improve and the things they are doing are making a difference.
- Governors provide support and challenge to leaders and they check that the school is continuing to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, parents and carers and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 121 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of parents and carers from discussions in the playground.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings with the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures were examined.
- Inspectors analysed 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Colin Lee

Additional Inspector

Simon Kingwell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elm Park is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that pupils of all abilities are given work which challenges their thinking and helps them to make as much progress as possible in the lesson
 - providing pupils with opportunities to use and develop their English and mathematical skills in meaningful contexts in a range of subjects.
- Improve the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs by:
 - giving them the extra help they need more regularly
 - using information about how well they are doing to check that they are catching up.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils who left the school in July 2013 was below national averages, particularly in reading and mathematics. The progress they made from the end of Year 2 was well below what is expected because the school's monitoring shows they made inadequate progress for the first two years that they were in the key stage. Though their progress improved during Years 5 and 6, they were not able to catch up with where they were supposed to be.
- This is particularly true for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who left the school about a year behind their peers. Their progress also accelerated during Years 5 and 6, but the help they received did not happen regularly enough during the key stage to make the difference necessary.
- Information about how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve has not been used frequently enough to check on whether the extra help is working. The recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress is now giving leaders the information they need to monitor the progress of all pupils more closely.
- When children start school, their skills and understanding are broadly in line with those typical for their age. The classrooms are well organised so that children are stimulated by all the activities they can do and they learn well. There are lots of opportunities for them to develop good communication skills and an early love of reading. By the time they enter Year 1, a higher percentage than the national average are reaching a good level of development.
- Pupils use their understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) well to tackle unfamiliar words and this helps them to continue to enjoy reading. Outcomes in the phonics screening check have improved and are now above national averages.
- Reading has high priority. There are recommended reading lists for pupils to share and displays around the school encourage a love of reading. There is an army of volunteer helpers who regularly come to school to read with pupils and this helps them to make good progress.
- The good progress made by pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues during Key Stage 1. Standards have risen steadily in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years and standards in writing are now well above the national average. Though attainment in mathematics is also above the national average, the gap is narrower than in reading or writing.
- In Key Stage 2 progress has been inconsistent which has resulted in variable standards of attainment. The reasons behind the fall in standards for pupils who left the school in July 2013 have been carefully analysed and appropriate steps have been taken to address the issues.
- Progress in mathematics across the school is not as good as in reading and writing. Leaders are aware of this and mathematics is the focus area for improvement this year.
- Challenging targets have been set for the oldest pupils and closer tracking of the results of teachers' ongoing assessments, as well as meetings between teachers and leaders about the achievement of all the pupils, means that the school can respond much more quickly if progress slows. Current work in books indicates that standards by the end of the key stage for pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are on track to be significantly higher than in 2013.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for the additional funding through the pupil premium is accelerating and is now helping them to catch up with their peers. There are too few pupils in each year group to make meaningful comparisons about their attainment.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to talk about their learning. This helps them to develop their communication skills and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- There is not enough teaching which is good or outstanding to ensure that all pupils make good progress during their time in the school. This is reflected in too many pupils not making the progress they should in recent years.
- This is most evident in mathematics lessons where the work is sometimes too easy and the lack of challenge means that pupils practise previous learning rather than move on to more challenging ideas.
- Teachers mark work carefully and their comments help pupils to know where they have been successful and how they need to improve. They sometimes give extra examples for pupils to do to show they understand where they have gone wrong. Pupils know about 'red to respond' pens which they can use to write their own comments or respond to what the teacher has said, but this is a new idea and it is not yet being consistently used.
- Teaching assistants mostly provide good support for pupils' learning, although they are sometimes too anxious for the pupils to get things right and they give them the answers rather than making them work things out for themselves.
- Some of the most effective teaching was seen in mathematics lessons in Years 5 and 6 where expectations were very high and the pupils were given work which was very precisely matched to their abilities. In these lessons, pupils made excellent progress. Pupils could explain how that day's learning built on what they had done the previous day and the teachers made very careful checks on how pupils were doing throughout the lesson. This meant that they could see where misconceptions were stopping pupils from learning and they provided very careful support to put the pupils back on track.
- In most classes pupils come ready and eager to learn. Pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers and they work hard because they want to please their teachers. Teachers give pupils interesting work to do so that the pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Where learning is most successful, teachers use questioning skilfully to check on how well pupils understand new ideas. They often ask the pupils to decide for themselves whether they are confident to start their independent activity and they let them go off and start their work. This allows the teachers to give their focus to the pupils who need more support.
- Most teachers break the learning into bite-sized chunks which helps the pupils to keep up their levels of concentration. When they see that pupils are ready to move on, they explain the next part of the learning, which helps pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils know what they need to be able to do by the end of the lesson because the success criteria for the lesson are shared with them. The criteria help them to check on their progress when they are asked to decide how well they have done, both when looking at their own work and when sharing their work with a partner.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and friendly and they show high levels of respect to each other and to adults. They understand the importance of good manners, saying please and thank you without being reminded. They enjoy each other's company and they play well together in the playground.
- Levels of supervision in the playground are high and pupils enjoy playing in the ample space. Playtimes are positive social occasions and pupils enjoy the climbing activities and trails that are available for them.
- In lessons, behaviour is good and there is no difference in the way pupils respond to the requests of teachers or teaching assistants. Pupils sometimes need to be reminded about the expectations the school has of their behaviour but teachers use the behaviour policy well and learning is rarely disrupted.
- Pupils think that the behaviour policy is fair. They know how they are rewarded for good

behaviour and what will happen if anyone makes the wrong choice about behaviour.

- More serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare but when they happen the school's systems are rigorous. There are regular occasions to highlight any pupils whose behaviour is causing concern both between leaders in school and with governors. The number of exclusions has reduced over time, showing that the school's actions are working.
- Attendance has improved dramatically. Leaders make sure that pupils are aware of the importance of good attendance and parents and carers are contacted on the first day of absence if no message is received.
- Praise is used at every opportunity to encourage pupils, which raises their self-esteem. They are very proud of their school and during the inspection they were keen to share the many things they enjoy about school life.
- Pupils feel safe in school and parents and carers agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they are on the internet. They enjoy the annual visits from the 'Life Bus' which help them to understand about the dangers of drugs and other situations they might meet outside school.
- Pupils know about all forms of bullying because they are taught to recognise bullying and what to do if they see any happening, but they are adamant that there is no bullying in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders make an effective team. They know what is going well and their plans for improving the school focus on the right things. They have high aspirations for the future success of the school and their vision is shared by other members of staff. The improvements in teaching and rising achievement, attendance and improved behaviour demonstrate the school can improve further.
- Parents and carers recognise how the school has improved. They feel able to approach the school to talk about things that are on their mind and they say that the headteacher and all teachers will listen to them and help them.
- Leaders know how well the school is doing because they regularly check on the quality of teaching and they are using the school's new system for recording pupils' progress to check on the impact of the changes they are making.
- The structure of the leadership team has recently been changed in order to make sure that leadership is shared across the school. As a result other leaders in school are increasingly involved in monitoring their areas of responsibility, though some of them are at an early stage in developing their roles. The headteacher is aware that further changes will be necessary to make sure that leaders have enough time to carry out their roles effectively, particularly in clarifying how the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is monitored.
- Teachers are given good support to help them to improve their skills, and the targets set as part of their appraisal make sure that teachers themselves know what they must improve. As a result, the quality of teaching is getting better.
- The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. Differences in the achievement of different groups, including pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, have been eradicated in Key Stage 1. However the impact of the changes is not yet fully evident at the end of Key Stage 2 because it is taking longer for the pupils to catch up.
- The curriculum is carefully structured to provide a focus for pupils' learning and they enjoy working on their topics. Visits and visitors make sure that learning is brought alive. Some teachers seize opportunities to use topic work to practise skills learnt in English and mathematics, but this is inconsistent.

- The opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding help them to become individuals who manage their behaviour well, get on well together and develop the skills and attitudes to enable them to move on successfully to the next stage of their education.
 - Careful thought has been given to the use of the government's additional funding for sport. In-school expertise is being used to develop curricular and extra-curricular provision, to improve the quality of teaching in sport and physical education and to broaden opportunities for pupils to become involved in a wide range of sporting activities. Challenging targets have been set and the higher profile of sport is making a difference to pupils' attitudes and their enjoyment of the subject.
 - Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are secure.
 - The local authority has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is contributing to its continued improvement through the good levels of support and challenge.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are appreciative of the information the headteacher is giving them about the progress of the pupils and the quality of teaching. However, they do not rely solely on her reports; they find out for themselves through regular visits and through looking at nationally available data about achievement. They know that, in the past, they were not sufficiently rigorous in holding leaders to account but they are attending courses to improve their skills and they make sure that all new governors have good induction into the role. They track the way in which the school is using funding carefully, including how the pupil premium is being spent and the difference it is making. They make sure that increases to teachers' salaries are justified and they know what is being done to make sure that teaching continues to improve.
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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	109117
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	426730

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	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Chrystal
Headteacher	Debbie Williams
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 January 2012
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