

Elburton Primary School

Haye Road South, Plymouth, Devon, PL9 8HJ

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding and pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, make outstanding progress.
- Achievement in all year groups is outstanding, and pupils leave Year 6 with well above average levels of attainment.
- The outstanding teaching is notable for teachers' very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and teachers' skill in setting tasks for pupils which are well suited to their varying abilities.
- Behaviour and pupils' attitudes towards learning are outstanding. Attendance is well above average and pupils love coming to school. They feel very safe, love taking on responsibility and enjoy the wide range of activities both in and outside of lessons.
- There is outstanding support for potentially vulnerable pupils, who steadily grow in confidence and other personal qualities as well as making excellent academic progress.
- The school ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed in all the activities offered.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels check the quality of teaching and progress rigorously.
- The leadership, strongly supported by governors, has the full backing of staff and has created a culture which promotes excellence and a commitment to continued improvement.
- The school is very outgoing, as seen in its links with other local schools and its commitment to strengthening pupils' global awareness through links elsewhere, including those with schools in distant countries.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school and greatly value all aspects of its provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons. Seven of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited some classes for shorter periods and observed some small group sessions outside lessons, led by support staff. Inspectors heard several pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, four governors and pupils.
- The inspection team took account of 65 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 33 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's checks on its own performance, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body, information on pupils' current progress, records of monitoring and records relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also scrutinised examples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Phil Taylor

Additional inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elburton Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2012. When its predecessor school, Elburton Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There are two classes in Reception (Early Years Foundation Stage) and in each of all the other year groups in the school.
- The school holds several awards, including the International Schools award.
- The school operates before-school and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further build on the school's efforts to promote writing of more consistent depth and challenge outside of English lessons, and further apply mathematical skills outside of numeracy lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Reception classes with skills and levels of knowledge which are just below those usually expected for their age. As the result of high quality teaching, by the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven their attainment is well above average, particularly in English and mathematics, having made outstanding progress.
- Achievement is also outstanding because pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils love coming to school, learning new skills, rapidly acquiring new knowledge and contributing their views confidently in lessons. Attainment in all aspects of English and mathematics has been consistently well above average, including in the last national test results.
- The enthusiasm is seen from an early stage, being very evident in Reception, where children begin to make the outstanding progress which is then sustained throughout their school life. Children quickly learn the conventions of working together, sharing their ideas, listening well both to staff and each other, and making sensible choices about how they will spend their time at work and constructive play. Many of these children reach levels of attainment above expectation by the time they join Year 1.
- These qualities were observed, for example, when a Reception teacher was explaining ways of measuring and comparing everyday objects. Children rose to the challenge of discussing problems with their talk partners and then outlined their ideas to the class. When answering the teacher's questions, the children were expected to explain their reasoning and say how they would test their theories in practice. As a result, the children quickly developed very good communication skills as well as personal qualities such as confidence.
- In the great majority of lessons observed during the inspection, all pupils made outstanding progress. This is because teachers expect much of pupils, both in terms of work rate and in the depth of thinking required.
- When listening to the teacher, skilful questioning and encouraging pupils to respond at length ensure that pupils both consolidated and extended their skills and knowledge to an impressive degree, particularly in the subsequent writing tasks. The resulting work showed a very good range of language as well as accuracy and good presentation.
- Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, along with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, share in the outstanding progress made by other pupils. Some previous small gaps in rates of progress between groups have rapidly narrowed and have almost been eliminated. This is because any pupil in danger of underachieving is rapidly identified and given appropriate support, either through getting additional staff support in lessons or by working with staff in a small group outside lessons for part of the time.
- The leadership sets ambitious targets for pupils' progress. A significant proportion of pupils in every year group, of all abilities and from all backgrounds, progress at a much faster rate than is the average for pupils nationally.
- Pupils in Year 1 do significantly better in the phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) check than is expected nationally. As they move up through the school, pupils read with a high level of fluency, accuracy and confidence. The school's successes in developing well above average English and mathematics skills are reflected in both test results and teacher assessments.
- When the school identifies a potential weakness, for example in the quality of writing of a few able pupils in Key Stage 1, it quickly puts strategies in place to give additional support to these pupils. The effect has been very positive, as the pupils have learned to write in more depth.
- Teachers use homework regularly to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example through research tasks.
- All pupils benefit equally from the opportunities to learn in the classroom and to enjoy the many other school activities, as seen in test results and the large take-up of activities.
- Although pupils make outstanding progress in most lessons, occasionally when studying topics or subjects such as geography, teachers occasionally miss opportunities to develop high level

writing skills to the extent that they do in literacy lessons. Similarly, there are a few missed opportunities to apply practical mathematical skills across a range of subjects. The school leadership recognises this and is developing the school curriculum to encourage a more consistent spread of skills across all subjects, so that, for example, the quality of writing in history topics matches that which is expected in literacy lessons.

- Parents rightly appreciate the outstanding progress their children make in school, along with the quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- School records, based on observations of teaching and learning, suggest that teaching in the school has been consistently good and often outstanding. This was confirmed by the inspection, where observations showed that no teaching was less than good, and the great majority of teaching was outstanding. It has had a very positive impact on the progress of all pupils, whatever their age, ability or background, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Typical of the outstanding teaching are the high expectations and enthusiastic commitment of all staff. Lessons start promptly and then, whether pupils are working as a whole class, on their own or collaborating with each other, teachers expect them to do their best, and almost invariably they do so. The inspection showed this in various ways. It resulted, for example, in high quality writing, which was accurate, fluent and used a wide range of language. It was evident in the confidence and fluency of many readers. It was also evident in pupils' mastery of mathematical skills such as accurate calculation.
- Support staff work very effectively with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, assisting their learning and also giving them the confidence to contribute willingly to class discussions. In particular, these pupils showed very good progress in the quality and range of their written work.
- When teachers mark pupils' work, they give constructive feedback so that pupils know exactly what they have done well and what could be improved. Pupils told inspectors how much they value this.
- Teachers ask challenging questions in lessons and pupils usually give well-reasoned answers, showing that they are developing high-level thinking skills. When pupils work on individual tasks, staff provide prompts and give support where necessary, but also train pupils to reflect on their own work so that they become effective learners. For example, younger pupils know how dictionaries and thesauruses can be used to improve their writing.
- There is a very positive climate for learning. Even younger pupils, when they have finished a task, are used to seamlessly moving of their own volition to something else suitable to the learning objective, and without any fuss.
- Teachers' skills are reinforced by good opportunities for training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. There is either an exciting buzz or meaningful concentration in most lessons. Pupils get on very well with each other. As well as in class, it was witnessed when they moved around the school and at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils are very polite and welcoming to visitors and show care for each other.
- Parents and pupils confirm that there is very little bullying or any untoward incidents in school. Any such incidents are promptly and effectively dealt with. The school makes considerable efforts to make pupils aware of the various forms that bullying can take. For example, teaching internet safety has a high priority.
- Attendance is high, well above average. It reflects pupils' enjoyment of all aspects of school life.
- Pupils love taking on responsibility, whether running their own school council or helping others.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning, which is a significant factor in their excellent

progress.

- Safety is outstanding and meets requirements, in respect of pupils feeling safe and the policies and procedures followed by the school. Pupils and parents confirm that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Guidance on safety is reinforced in assemblies and through a well developed programme of personal, social, moral and health education.
- As well as being successful academically, pupils develop the skill of being critical and reflective thinkers. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well developed. They enjoy the many opportunities for sport, music and art. The school is very successful in sports competitions, whilst the choir has a very high reputation locally. Pupils enjoy trips, including the residential ones. Large numbers of pupils attend the before- and after-school clubs, and told inspectors how enthusiastic they were about them.
- From an early age, pupils develop a strong awareness of other cultures, faiths and ways of life. This is reflected in the International Schools award which Elburton has received. Pupils have links with far-off schools in Japan, China and South Africa. Learning about the wider world has a strong focus in lessons and assemblies. French is the main foreign language in the school, but pupils also get a taste of other languages. Pupils benefit from attending a school which is at the same time very inclusive and outgoing, reinforced by strong community links.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership is committed to providing the best for pupils and ensuring that they do the best they can in school. This commitment is shared by all staff, as evident from staff questionnaires returned during the inspection. Staff are particularly appreciative of the leadership and the sense of teamwork that has been generated. The headteacher brings in outside professionals to check the school, sometimes through the local authority, in order to get an objective view of the school's provision.
- The school's continued capacity for improvement is clear from the thorough way in which the school checks how well it does and how it can improve. It is also evident from detailed planning, to which all staff, and especially middle leaders such as subject coordinators, contribute.
- Middle leaders play an increasingly important role in supporting staff and ensuring that pupils get the best possible education as they move up through the school.
- The leadership checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly and rigorously. This feeds into a strong programme of training for staff. Teachers' pay is linked to the progress pupils make and their individual targets and accountability at all levels are firmly established.
- The school's curriculum is very successful in developing key skills and preparing pupils very well for the next stage of their education. The formal curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities outside lessons. This was seen during the inspection, when pupils were captivated by a 'musical morning' led by visiting musicians. Pupils benefit in other ways from the school's extensive links with other schools. For example, local secondary schools host events and also provide additional teaching expertise.
- Primary sports funding is being used to buy in more specialist sports teaching and to support healthy living initiatives. The school's sporting successes are evidence of the positive effect.
- The leadership spreads its expertise beyond the school, with the headteacher providing support for other local schools.
- There are strong links with parents, who are very proud of, and supportive of, the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is a mixture of very experienced governors with a good range of educational experience and newer members. Governors have successfully presided over and been closely involved in successful developments since the school became an academy in July 2012. As well as fully supporting the school, the governing body is rigorous in challenging the leadership, for example about how pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching and other support for eligible pupils. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths in teaching and how well the performance of pupils in the school compares with

other schools. Governors get reports from subject leaders as well as the senior leadership. They carry out their responsibilities carefully in key areas such as performance management and ensuring safeguarding, and share the leadership's drive for improvement. Despite the many successes of the school, there is no sense of complacency. Governors are very active in checking all aspects of the school's work and considering how they can maintain the school's strengths and develop them 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	138310
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	441147

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Freida Court
Headteacher	David Bradford
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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