

Elworth Hall Primary School

Lawton Way, Elworth, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1TE

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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 a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. In some classes assessment information, including that gained from marking, is not used effectively enough to provide an appropriate level of challenge for groups of differing ability in lessons, particularly in mathematics and in the teaching of letters and the sounds they make in Key Stage 1.
- Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are too low. The progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven. Not enough pupils make more than the progress expected of them from their starting points in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The clear direction from existing and new leaders at all levels across the school is securing rapid improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching and therefore the progress pupils make.
- Leaders, including governors have acted swiftly and decisively, despite a period of considerable change, to ensure pupils make at least the progress expected of them in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing is above average. Pupils' progress from their various starting points is good in English.
- As a result of the good support they receive, pupils with special educational needs participate fully in whole-class activities alongside their classmates.
- Behaviour is good. All pupils are courteous and polite, get on very well together and enjoy their learning. Attendance is well above average. Pupils feel safe in school and play a full part in decision-making.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 part lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Six of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior leaders. Meetings were conducted with the Chair of the Governing Body and with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with the senior leadership team and read a range of documents. These included documents about the school's strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school-improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Batty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elworth Hall is a much smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well-below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is lower than that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the last inspection.
- The school no longer has a resource provision but still admits pupils with complex special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise attainment and increase the rate of progress pupils make in mathematics and in phonics (the letters and the sounds they make), by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information, including that gained from marking, to always provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in lessons, particularly in mathematics
 - reviewing the arrangements for teaching letters and sounds in Reception and Key Stage 1 so that all pupils are appropriately challenged and are able to make good progress, especially in their writing
 - making sure that marking always gives pupils the precise guidance they need to improve their work, including the accuracy of their spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Not enough pupils make or exceed the progress expected of them from their starting points in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, although pupils make good progress in reading and writing, their progress as they move through the school is uneven.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are below average and in reading and writing they are above average. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2013 because there were a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, some at the early stages of learning English and some who had joined the school later than is usual. In mathematics, pupils are now making up for ground lost in the past and school records indicate that a greater proportion are now making the progress expected from their starting points. Even so, too few do better than this. Plans to improve standards in mathematics are good but have not yet had time to produce results.
- Many children enter the school with skills and knowledge similar to those typical for their age, and a significant number below that. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their speaking, listening and personal and creative development. As a result, many enter Year 1 with skills that are above those typical for their age and are confident learners, well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards have improved over the last year and progress has improved significantly in writing so that the proportion of pupils that make more than expected progress has also increased.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress from their starting points in reading and writing with some reaching the highest levels by the end of Year 6. In lessons, however, there is scope to provide even more challenge for the most able to increase their rate of progress further, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences and use a good range of vocabulary and structures but sometimes their writing is hampered by some inaccuracies in spelling. Pupils make good progress in reading. The majority read confidently by the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6, they read a variety of texts fluently and with understanding.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, because letters and sounds are taught to whole classes which contain a wide range of ability, some pupils find tasks too difficult and others find them too easy and so the progress the most able and the least able pupils make in developing reading and writing skills, is slowed considerably.
- The extra support, such as help in the classroom and support from teaching assistants, that the school provides with the additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, enables these pupils to reach their targets and to make the progress expected of them. Nonetheless, gaps between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in English and mathematics and their classmates remain. In mathematics, some are up to two terms behind their peers.
- Those pupils with special educational needs benefit from support which is well-tailored to meet their needs and make the progress expected of them.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good across the school. In particular, teachers make too little use of assessments to judge what level of work pupils need, and so pupils' progress slows. In some mathematics lessons, for instance, some pupils find work too easy, while others struggle to complete the tasks set.
- Leaders have focused well on specific weaknesses in teaching, providing appropriate training and support to teachers in need of improvement so that many aspects of teaching are now improving strongly.
- New ideas are presented clearly and well-thought-out activities hold pupils' interest. For

instance, Year 4 pupils were entirely engaged by activities related to their topic work about 'Fair Trade', which included trying to produce goods to a specific standard within a limited time. As a result, they were able to debate the notion of 'Fair Trade' from their own direct experience.

- Teachers use demonstrations to capture pupils' interest and to make sure pupils know exactly what they have to do. For instance, Year 2 pupils were able to predict and retell the story of *Hansel and Gretel* confidently, as well as to explain the feelings of the main characters as a result of effective questioning by the teacher and imaginative use of illustrations from the story.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. They ask pupils searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood, and adapt activities in order to provide a higher level of challenge. However, in some lessons, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils further in this way so that pupils are not always working at full stretch.
- Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and there are instances of good practice within the school. However, marking does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve, particularly their writing. Marking does not always pick up errors in spelling, so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Some pupils respond to teachers' comments and improve upon the work they have done, but this is not always the case.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inconsistent but is particularly strong where pupils explore and communicate their ideas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and they are courteous and considerate to each other. They work and play well together. Pupils support each other well, for example, when working with a partner. They take responsibility very seriously and are proud of their contribution to the school, for example, as school councillors and playground helpers.
- Disruption to lessons is rare and pupils work responsibly and with enthusiasm, especially when given the opportunity to work together to solve problems themselves. They listen carefully to others and respect each other's views. Children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage settle down rapidly to routines, learn to take turns and play together well.
- Pupils have good relationships with adults, feel safe and are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, such as name calling and cyber bullying that can take place, and know how to deal with them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and residential trips, that are provided and which have a positive impact on their health and well-being.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils who may have challenging behaviour are supported effectively to make good choices and, as a result, incidences of poor behaviour are very rare.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, provides clear direction. The members of the leadership team have a shared understanding of the strengths of the school and what could be improved further, based on a close analysis of pupils' progress. The school has recently gone through a period of considerable change. Nonetheless, senior leaders have acted swiftly and decisively to eliminate underachievement, raise attainment and increase the rate of pupils' progress. As a result, standards have risen in writing and are now beginning to improve in mathematics. This is an indication of the good capacity they have to improve further.
- There are detailed action plans focused on raising attainment and on improving teaching and learning. The actions the school has taken to improve standards in writing have proved successful.

- Teaching and learning are closely monitored by senior leaders and teachers new to the school are effectively supported. Although there is now a greater consistency in mathematics teaching, there remain some inconsistencies in teaching across the school. This is a key reason why teaching requires improvement and is not yet consistently good.
- A comprehensive system of appraisal and performance management has been adopted, which is linked to the pay scales and is used to identify training for teachers.
- Safeguarding meets government requirements and discrimination in all its forms is rejected.
- The school works effectively with local agencies, the local network of schools, including the high school, and with parents to ensure that all pupils settle well to learning. The school promotes equality of opportunity but inconsistencies in teaching indicate that this still requires improvement.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils well. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise their writing and mathematical skills in their topic work. They also have regular and exciting opportunities to develop their skills as artists, historians, scientists and geographers. This has a positive impact on their appreciation of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in French, music and physical education. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of activities and visits, which promote pupils' physical well-being and their personal development.
- The new primary sport funding is being used effectively to provide coaching for teachers and for activities in the playground. This is not only promoting pupils' physical development and well-being effectively but also ensuring continuing good practice.
- Pupil premium funding is also used to good effect to ensure disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need and to ensure they can participate in all activities and trips. As a result, gaps between the performance of these pupils and other pupils are beginning to close.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has provided extensive support for this school. The school works effectively with the local network of schools to improve its practice and has benefited from support from the local authority and from consultants in order to improve provision in mathematics and English.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to be improved. This has helped it support the school during recent changes to staffing. Governors are fully involved in checking the school's performance, including data that show pupils' attainment and progress. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, including how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised, for instance the effectiveness of the use of primary sports funding. However, governors do not have a clear enough understanding of the impact of pupil premium funding to challenge the school effectively about this. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. They are actively involved in the life of the school and hold leaders to account effectively.

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	111163
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	442358

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Holmes
Headteacher	Margaret Blease-Bourne
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2012
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