

# Elmwood Infant School

Lodge Road, Croydon, CR0 2PL

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Elmwood Infant School is a happy and welcoming school at the heart of the community. Staff have the highest expectations of every pupil.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds play and work together harmoniously. Pupils behave well and are keen to do their best.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and pupils feel extremely safe. Adults listen carefully to pupils and value what they have to say.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved steadily over the past three years. Standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported. As a result, they make the same good progress as their classmates, and sometimes do better.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers regularly reflect on their own practice and are keen to take on board advice about how they might improve.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has improved over the past year and is good.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children quickly grow in confidence and make good progress when they join the school.
- Staff and governors regularly review and improve aspects of the school's work. This has helped the school to raise standards.
- Governors have a good understanding of how pay is used to support and reward teaching.
- The attainment of pupils eligible for support from additional funding is higher than average.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Occasionally tasks set for pupils are not demanding enough. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in writing.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or part-lessons. They also observed small groups of pupils working with an adult other than their teacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, other members of staff, parents, pupils and a representative of the local authority. A meeting was also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor.
- Inspectors took account of responses to a recent school survey. In addition, they considered the views expressed by a number of parents who spoke with them informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 18 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documents and policies, including the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, and looked at pupils' work in lessons. They also listened to pupils read.

## Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Robert Eyre-Brook	Additional inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above that found in most schools. This is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- About one third of pupils at the school are disabled or have special educational needs. This is a higher proportion than in most schools.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure outstanding achievement for pupils by making sure that teachers:
  - give regular feedback to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in writing
  - plan activities that consistently build on what pupils already know and understand and that are suitably challenging.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's calm, determined and clear-thinking leadership has been instrumental in the school's success. She is very ably supported by a team of effective senior leaders who share her vision and ambition for the school. The senior team provides strong, professional role models for staff and pupils alike.
- Middle leaders with responsibility for particular subjects and aspects of the school are knowledgeable, experienced and effective.
- The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Senior leaders know that there is still work to do to bring pupils' progress in writing into line with that in other subjects and to ensure that all are suitably challenged. Developments in the teaching of different subjects are carefully considered and introduced at a sensible pace. This approach has enabled the school to sustain and build on improvements year on year.
- Good teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and pupils continue to achieve well. Staff training is planned carefully to meet the professional needs of teachers and to support school improvement. Teachers think carefully about their work and are keen to listen to advice. The school is understandably confident about the role it is playing in helping pupils to learn, and staff morale is high.
- The school is very successful in ensuring that parents are involved in their children's learning. Regular events, such as workshops for parents, keep parents up to date with what their children are learning and how they can help. The local authority describes the school as a 'beacon of the local community' because of these strong links.
- Pupils are taught a wide range of subjects and the school promotes British values, such as tolerance and democracy, very well. Teaching is brought to life through a range of school visits, such as to the local market, to a steam railway and to different places of worship. Workshops help to ignite pupils' interest in music and the arts, and instrumental lessons are provided for all pupils in Year 2. The school successfully teaches and celebrates different faiths so that pupils are respectful of the beliefs of others.
- Additional sports funding is used well to increase pupils' fitness. For example, the girls' football club and boys' dance club are very popular and have increased the number of pupils participating in sport. The school is part of the local authority's sports partnership. This is helping to develop the quality of sports teaching in the school by providing training for teachers.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this successful school, including an annual review of the school's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share senior leaders' determination to make Elmwood Infants an outstanding school. The governing body's role in holding leaders to account has improved since the last inspection. For example, governors have attended training which has helped them to understand and use information about how well the school is performing and to see how this compares with other schools nationally. This has helped them to ask leaders more searching questions. Governors have an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve further. They have a good day-to-day knowledge of developments in the school because they visit lessons regularly and meet with staff. Governors know how additional funds are spent and how extra help is improving pupils' achievement. They have scheduled meetings to check how well sports funding is being used to improve pupils' fitness. The headteacher provides regular updates about the quality of teaching and governors know how performance management arrangements work. For example, they know what steps are taken to reward and support the quality of teaching. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good, from the youngest children in Early Years Foundation Stage to the oldest pupils in Year 2. Pupils behave well during lessons, play harmoniously at playtimes and move between lessons quietly and sensibly. Pupils throughout the school wear their school uniform with pride, including the youngest children, and look very smart. Almost all parents who responded to a recent school survey feel that pupils are well behaved and safe in school.
- Leaders check pupils' attendance rigorously and any concerns are followed up promptly. As a result, attendance has steadily improved over the past three years to above-average levels. Pupils enjoy school.
- Pupils' behaviour is not yet outstanding because a few pupils lose concentration during some lessons.

While they are not disruptive to their classmates, their own learning slows.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school is strongly committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and discrimination is not tolerated. The school has very successfully created a culture which celebrates the depth and richness that diversity brings to the school. For example, the school has entered the 'Show Racism the Red Card' art competition every year for the past five years. It has won its category for each of these years and was overall national winner in 2013.
- Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are safe. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and there have been no racist incidents for many years. This is a testament to the commitment of the whole-school community. Adults listen to what pupils have to say and pupils know that they are valued individually. They play a confident role in the life of the school through, for example, serving on the school council.
- Pupils have a sensible view of everyday risks and know some of the steps they can take to help themselves to keep safe, including when using the internet. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries and told inspectors that teachers sort out concerns quickly.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching which is good and sometimes outstanding underpins pupils' good progress across the school. Consistent approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Teachers provide activities which are interesting and appealing so that pupils want to get on. However, occasionally activities do not provide sufficient challenge to engage pupils fully and to move their learning on strongly enough. This means that, while pupils engage quickly and get off to a good start, their progress slows because the task is not sufficiently demanding.
- The teaching of reading is well-established and effective. The school reviewed and updated the teaching of phonics last year so that phonics sessions are linked to story books. Teachers have developed attractive and inviting areas which have increased pupils' enjoyment of books.
- The school has taken steps to improve the teaching of writing and to accelerate pupils' progress in this subject. For example, teachers regularly teach specific aspects of grammar. The work in pupils' books shows that their progress is accelerating as a result.
- Teachers often plan mathematics lessons linked to pupils' everyday experiences. This helps them to understand when and how they can use their mathematical skills. Pupils regularly use practical equipment to solve mathematical problems so that their understanding of basic number and calculations is strengthened.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs. For example, during the inspection a teaching assistant in a Year 1 class skilfully balanced helping one child to play a game while knowing exactly the right time to let him have a go without help. This supported the development of his self-esteem and confidence well.
- Bilingual teaching assistants provide valuable help for those pupils who speak English as an additional language. They work closely with children from the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout the school. A bilingual reading group in Reception provides excellent opportunities for parents and children to share languages spoken at home and to develop spoken English skills more quickly.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work so that pupils know what they have done well. However, while teachers occasionally give pupils pointers about what they can do next to improve their learning, this does not happen often enough to help them to learn more quickly, particularly in their written work.
- Over the past year, the school has used additional funding to match support more closely to pupils' needs. For example, pupils making slower progress in writing are given help to improve particular aspects of their writing that they are finding more difficult to grasp.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They are well equipped with the skills and attitudes needed for the next stage in their education by the time they leave.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoy reading and often read at home. Pupils' attainment in reading has steadily risen over the past three years. Results in the 2014 Year 1 phonics check were above average. Pupils make slightly slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. However, improvements in the teaching of writing over the past year have

been successful and the rate of pupils' progress has increased. Pupils' attainment in mathematics has also risen over the last two years.

- Pupils from different ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language, make rapid progress because the school gives careful attention to their needs. The inclusion leader's specialist knowledge is used to good effect to support teachers in the classrooms.
- Pupils supported through additional funding achieve well and make similar progress to other pupils. In 2013, eligible pupils attained above other pupils nationally but slightly below their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. School leaders recognised that pupils were making slightly slower progress than their classmates, particularly in writing, and used funding to target individual needs more sharply. This approach is working, with pupils making more rapid progress over the past year. As a result, the gap in attainment between these pupils and others in the school has narrowed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Many have communication difficulties which impede their progress, particularly in writing. Leaders use funding to provide extra sessions for these pupils, including groups run by a speech and language therapist, to boost language skills. The school works very closely with parents, who support the school's work by regularly helping their children at home.
- A learning mentor provides good quality support in small-group sessions to pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. As a result, these pupils learn to get along with their classmates better, make friends more easily and learn well.
- The most able pupils in the school make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations. Adults use questions well during lessons to explore how much pupils know and understand. This year saw an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children's levels of knowledge and understanding vary widely when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage but are generally lower than expected for their age. Improvements in the quality of teaching mean that children now make good progress and are better prepared with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to learn successfully when they move into Year 1.
- Children behave well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because activities are interesting and fun, and children are busy. Classroom and outdoor areas are well organised, tidy and secure, so that children can play and learn safely.
- At this very early point in the school year, adults understandably focus on getting to know the newly arrived children and helping them to settle. This is clearly successful because children are happy and comfortable in their new school. Some children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are already able to concentrate and persevere for extended periods of time because they are enjoying themselves and feel secure.
- Caring adults explain routines and help children to know what is expected of them so that they feel safe. For example, during the inspection, adults explained to children why it is important that they wash their hands after using the toilet and about the need to sit down while eating fruit. Children listen very well and are keen to do things properly.
- Adults are attentive and involved in children's activities, both indoors and out. They use questions and discussions well to explore children's understanding and move their learning forward.
- Adults get on well with the children and provide sensitive help. For example, bilingual assistants work effectively with children who speak English as an additional language. This means that the children quickly begin to learn key words and statements and make new friends. By the end of Reception, children can converse confidently.
- The teacher responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage provides effective leadership. She has very successfully worked alongside her colleagues to secure improvements since the last inspection. For example, developments in planning mean that adults are more confident about using questions to explore and deepen children's understanding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101721
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	448226

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	409
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Douglas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8689 7681
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8665 1751
<b>Email address</b>	admin@elmwood-inf.croydon.sch.uk



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