

Elmswell Community Primary School

Oxer Close, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9UE

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership which has created a powerful culture of good teaching, learning and behaviour across the school. With good support from senior leaders and governors, and despite considerable staffing difficulties, the headteacher has successfully moved the school out of a condition requiring improvement and into one that is good and improving.
- Leaders are effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective use of questioning ensure pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills quickly.
- Pupils' behaviour across the school is good and they have good attitudes to learning. Pupils are keen to come to school and their attendance is above average.
- The school's caring atmosphere successfully promotes pupils' welfare. Safeguarding is effective and as a result pupils feel safe.
- Pupils make good progress during their time in school across different subjects, including English and mathematics. Older pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Strong leadership, good teaching and assessment enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning in the early years. Children stay safe and their behaviour is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not consistently make good progress because teachers do not always set high expectations for learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability sometimes make limited progress because they are occasionally given tasks which are either too easy or too difficult.
- Subject leaders do not ensure that all teachers are implementing the school's marking policy consistently. As a result, pupils sometimes do not know how to improve their work and presentation.
- Subject leaders have not yet developed accurate systems for assessing the progress pupils are making across the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils make outstanding progress by making sure:
 - teachers set consistently high expectations for the learning of all pupils
 - teachers provide pupils who have special educational needs or disability with tasks that are neither too hard nor too easy, to maximise their learning
 - subject leaders ensure teachers consistently implement the school’s marking policy to inform pupils how to improve their work and its presentation in their books
 - subject leaders develop accurate assessment systems in subjects other than English and mathematics to measure the progress pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, with good support from senior leaders and governors, has created an atmosphere of high expectations for pupils and staff which is seen both in lessons and in pupils' work. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection, despite the high turnover of staff. The school has managed staff changes well and taken effective action to raise the achievement of all pupils.
- Good systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating teaching as well as managing teachers' performance. These include reviews of pupils' progress each half term, an examination of pupils' books and regular visits to lessons. Staff value the support they receive which helps them to improve their practice and raise achievement.
- The early years leader is providing good leadership to ensure consistently good teaching and good outcomes for children in the early years. Subject leaders are developing their roles well. They regularly review the progress pupils are making in mathematics and English and use this information to support further improvement in teaching and learning. However, they are not rigorous enough in ensuring that teachers are implementing the school's marking policy consistently. As a result, pupils do not always know how to improve their work or how well to present it. Subject leaders have not yet developed systems to assess the progress of pupils across a range of different subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders make good use of funding for disadvantaged pupils which provides additional group and one-to-one support so that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They are catching up with their classmates as well as with other pupils nationally. The funding is also used effectively to provide additional activities to enrich learning, such as school trips. This enables disadvantaged pupils to re-engage successfully with their learning.
- Primary sports funding is used well; it enables sports coaching, trips, the purchase of physical education equipment and the establishment of extra sports clubs and events. There has been a notable increase in the number of sports clubs since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' participation in sport has increased significantly.
- Leaders have implemented a good curriculum, which is suitably broad and balanced and which captivates pupils' imagination, promoting good enjoyment of learning. The wide range of visits includes a residential trip in Year 4, which was taking place during this inspection. Strong partnerships with other schools and with the local community enhance pupils' learning and progress. A growing number of lunchtime and after-school clubs, such as choir, art and football, enrich pupils' learning experiences and enjoyment. Pupils and their parents also benefit from a wide range of 'Sharing Together' activities, such as an e-safety activity day across the school and the early years physical education morning held during the inspection.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted, particularly through connection with the school's values. These include British values of tolerance, democracy and the rule of law as seen in the high-quality display of pupils' work on topics such as the history of British democracy and tolerance and respect for the beliefs and traditions of others. The curriculum enables pupils to develop and appreciate diversity through religious education, art, music, history, French and well-chosen topics in personal, social and health education. The curriculum also provides good additional support and strong links with outside agencies to support learning and well-being and promote pupils' safety.
- Leaders support staff effectively in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling any form of discrimination effectively through good relationships.
- The local authority is providing appropriate levels of support and challenge for the school through regular reviews.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are providing good support and challenge for the school's work through regular focused visits to evaluate the progress the school is making in its priorities for improvement. They regularly review data and visit lessons to look at pupils' responses to learning. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of the quality and impact of teaching and learning.
 - They are managing the headteacher's performance well and they are making sure good teaching is rewarded and weaknesses are dealt with effectively.

- Governors promote safeguarding thoroughly by ensuring all legal requirements are met, that policies and training are up to date and that the school follows the procedures laid down by the local safeguarding board.
- They are ensuring that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, including British values.
- Governors hold the school to account effectively for its additional spending on both pupil premium and primary sports to ensure good value for money.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have strengthened their procedures considerably since the last inspection, thoroughly checking the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children. They are making sure that all policies, training and records for safeguarding are up to date. They are working closely with parents and outside agencies to establish a safe culture for pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The school's tracking information on pupils' progress, pupils' work and visits to lessons over time show that teaching, learning and assessment are good and have improved significantly from the last inspection when they required improvement.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and effective questioning skills across a range of subjects to ensure pupils in all year groups, including in the early years, make rapid gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. In mathematics, pupils are often encouraged to deepen their thinking by explaining how they solved a particular problem. In Years 5 and 6, teachers use questioning to enable older pupils to make rapid gains in their writing and in their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Teachers plan sequences of lessons well to enable pupils to learn effectively.
- Teachers usually provide good levels of support for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. Pupils' books and visits to lessons over time show that sometimes pupils who have special educational needs or disability are given the same tasks to do as other pupils and find these tasks too difficult. On other occasions, they are given tasks which are too easy.
- Teaching is good across a range of subjects including physical education, computing and music. Teachers make good use of well-chosen resources to improve learning, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers generally provide good feedback and marking in line with the school's marking policy. Pupils usually learn from their mistakes and are keen to find out new information to deepen their knowledge in lessons and after-school clubs. Pupils' books demonstrate that most are committed to improving their work, although some pupils are not, which is not consistently picked up by teachers.
- Teachers set homework appropriate to the ages and abilities of each pupil. Pupils say they find that homework helps them to improve their learning.
- The teaching of basic skills is good. Teachers are developing pupils' reading and writing appropriately across the curriculum, and many examples of good pieces of writing across a range of subjects are displayed around the school. Teachers are developing pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics so that they are able to master new mathematical ideas. Effective teaching of phonics helps children in the early years, as well as younger pupils and those struggling with reading, to learn the sounds that letters make in order to be able to read words and improve their spelling.
- Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and as a result pupils nearly always focus on their learning.
- Teachers are not using assessments for all curriculum subjects, as these have yet to be developed. This limits the opportunity to use information to extend learning across the curriculum subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents and pupils agree. Staff emphasise the importance of personal values at every opportunity. As a result, pupils understand the importance of listening carefully to others, concentrating in lessons and making every effort to succeed in learning.

- Staff provide pupils with clear messages about the impact on the well-being of others of bullying and prejudiced behaviour. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it does occur.
- The school's caring and welcoming ethos promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare and safeguarding well and is central to its work. Strong links with parents and outside agencies are developing pupils' emotional well-being effectively. This enables them to develop a much more positive attitude to school, good behaviour and attendance, which in turn contributes to the good progress of all pupils.
- Good procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and as a result pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils use technology safely and learn how to stay safe and healthy, and in discussion parents highlighted good safeguarding procedures in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, including their understanding of British values. Pupils reflect on the importance of good behaviour and take responsibility for the effect their actions have on each other, the whole school and the wider community. They have good relationships with one another and with staff and they are polite and courteous to visitors. They appreciate and respect those from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are mostly well behaved in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Classrooms are usually orderly, enabling learning to take place. Pupils behave sensibly when moving from one area of the school to another.
- Records of behaviour and discussion with pupils, staff and parents show that this good behaviour is typical of pupils' behaviour across the school. Disruption in lessons is rare because most pupils focus on their learning, showing respect for teachers, listening carefully and following instructions. Only on a few occasions did minor disruption occur in lessons where a few pupils were given work which was too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils' attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and is above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually and well prepared for lessons. Pupils want to be in school and very few pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The school's accurate system for tracking the progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' work and the school's records of the outcomes of lesson visits show good outcomes for pupils. Good leadership has ensured good improvement in pupils' outcomes since the last inspection when achievement required improvement. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in reading writing and mathematics. Current pupils in all year groups are developing secure knowledge, skills and understanding from their different starting points.
- Children get off to a good start in in the early years. They join the Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age in most areas of learning and make good progress so that most reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. As a result, they are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- In 2015, an above-average proportion of pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics reading check. This has steadily improved since the last inspection with most current pupils in Year 1 on track to reach the required standard. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls.
- Throughout key stage 1, pupils build on this progress so, by the end of Year 2 in 2015, pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's tracking information shows that a higher proportion of pupils are working within the expectations for their ages and making good progress from their starting points.
- In 2015, the published national test results show that attainment was broadly average at key stage 2 in English and mathematics but below average in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, the school's accurate data shows that these pupils made good progress in Year 6. There has been a legacy of underachievement for these pupils due to staff changes. Currently, most pupils at key stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, are working within the expectations for their ages and making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and a significant number are making more than expected progress relative to their different starting points as a result of good teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and doing as well as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2015 results showed that pupils in Year 2 achieved as well as their classmates and

as well as other pupils nationally. These results also show that disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as other pupils because of the legacy of underachievement. The school's tracking information shows that current disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2 are making equally good progress, and gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are narrowing.

- The majority of pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making good progress from their lower starting points. The few pupils with a statement or education, health and care plan are making outstanding progress because excellent support is provided for their needs. However, a small number of pupils without a statement are not making enough progress because learning tasks are not always matched to their needs. As a result, they sometimes find tasks too hard or too easy.
- The most able pupils are making good progress and achieving at least expected levels from their higher starting points. The 2015 published results show that the proportions of pupils who reached the higher levels in Year 6 compared favourably with other schools. The work of the current small number of most able pupils and the school's accurate data show they are achieving well in all subjects. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 said that they find their work sufficiently challenging.
- Current pupils are mostly making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. They use phonics well to read and write unfamiliar words. Pupils are making much better progress across the school than they were at the time of the last inspection because teaching and learning has improved considerably.
- Pupils make good progress in physical education and stay fit and healthy because the school makes good use of its primary sports funding. Pupils are successful in competitive games and have performed well in local sports competitions.
- Pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across a range of subjects including art, computing, history, religious education and music.

Early years provision

is good

- Strong leadership of the early years is ensuring that all children are making at least expected progress in all areas of learning. This includes disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs and the most able. Good progress was seen in children's work. In 2015 children entered the Nursery with broadly typical attainment for their ages though this was slightly lower in communication, language and literacy.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning as they move into the Reception Year because staff provide them with a range of interesting and stimulating activities to nurture children's curiosity. This helps them to learn effectively and settle into their routines quickly. As a result, by the end of Reception most children have achieved a good level of development and are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Teaching is good and teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is strong. High-quality adult support ensures that all children make good progress relative to their starting points.
- Children enjoy learning and enthusiastically engage in their activities. They learn to take turns, to share and to listen carefully to the staff. Children's behaviour is good and they learn to appreciate each other's differences. Leaders promote children's safety and well-being effectively.
- The early years leader is making sure that assessments on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes are accurate. Children who enter the Reception Year from other pre-school provisions are carefully assessed within the first few weeks of school. As a result, all children's needs are identified quickly and staff use this information well to provide the support children need. They are working closely with outside agencies and professionals as required. The use of assessment to track children's progress is accurate and used well to move their learning forward.
- Staff work closely with parents, many of whom contribute to the initial assessments of their children's starting points. They are fully engaged in working with their children in school, as seen in the very high turnout of parents in the 'Sharing Together' physical education session during the inspection. Parents rightly agree that they are well informed about their children's progress.

School details

Unique reference number	124534
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10009151

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Chilvers
Headteacher	Jane Ash
Telephone number	01359 240261
Website	www.elmswell.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	admin@elmswell.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The early years provision consists of 16 part-time children in the Nursery and 42 full-time children in the Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below that found in most schools. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident that occurred at the setting since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform the inspectors' judgements.
- Since the last inspection, the school received two monitoring visits by Ofsted to determine how much progress it was making in meeting its areas of improvement.
- There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection. The leadership team has been strengthened and a new governing body is in place.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited a range of lessons and activities, including some jointly with senior leaders.
- They heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work in different subjects across the school, including in the early years.
- Inspectors looked at data and the school's tracking information to determine the progress pupils are making across the school, including the progress children are making in the early years.
- They examined 72 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and they looked at the school's own recent survey of parents. They also held informal discussions with parents who accompanied their children to school and who took part in the early years 'Sharing Together' session.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, four members of the governing body, a local authority representative and two groups of pupils.
- They examined the school website and a range of documentation, including minutes of governing meetings; the school improvement plan and summary evaluation of its work; safeguarding policies and procedures; records of behaviour and attendance figures; and external reviews of the school's work.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Frost	Ofsted Inspector
Olive Millington	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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