

# Elm Grove Primary School

Elm Grove, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 3ES

## Inspection dates

12–13 September 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This improving school is well led by the headteacher, who is positively supported by the senior leadership team. All the staff in the school share their leaders' high expectations and ambition.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. This knowledge enables them to support and challenge leaders effectively on all aspects of the school's performance.
- The headteacher has developed a strong team of subject leaders. Together, they work diligently to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is now good. They are clear about the school's development needs and have high aspirations for staff and pupils.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the work it does to ensure a 'whole child' approach to school life.
- Pupils are polite and well behaved. They are proud of their school and enjoy learning.
- Although progress is improving, further work is needed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with other pupils nationally.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to use reading skills with confidence and accuracy. Attainment in reading has been higher than the national average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 for the last two years.
- Teachers are extremely conscientious. They have embraced new initiatives to improve standards in writing and mathematics.
- Most teaching is highly effective. Leaders ensure that this good practice and expertise is shared with all staff, which is leading to the development of high-quality teaching across the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and nurtured. Leaders have introduced systems to track and monitor the progress of these pupils, which have supported raising achievement.
- Recent improvements to teaching have not yet secured good enough outcomes in mathematics or for the most able pupils in writing.

## Full report

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

Improve outcomes for pupils, by ensuring that:

- pupils are provided with more opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics
- the teaching of writing ensures that the most able pupils are appropriately challenged
- further strategies are developed to enable disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as other pupils nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Following a period of decline, the headteacher has successfully improved teaching and the quality of leadership and management. During the previous academic year, she dealt with a number of challenging staffing issues swiftly and appropriately. With support from the governing body and the local authority, quick and incisive action was taken to ensure that all pupils received the best education possible under these problematic circumstances. However, in spite of leaders' targeted and precise actions, some pupils were not able to catch up sufficiently after this period of instability. As a result, outcomes for these pupils have not been good enough.
- Senior leaders know their school well. Their self-evaluation of all areas of the school's work is highly accurate, and is successfully driving forward the priorities for improvement. Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is accurate and precise. The headteacher makes clear links between the school's improvement plan and staff appraisal. Consequently, all staff understand and support the current whole-school priorities, and morale is high.
- Leaders acknowledge that more work is needed to further improve pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics. Significant progress has already been made throughout the last academic year and is continuing. Leaders have been extremely proactive in addressing key areas for improvement, which are well supported by detailed action plans. As a result, the progress of pupils in mathematics, and achievement overall, is improving quickly. However, more work is required to ensure that achievement in mathematics is as strong as it is in English overall.
- Middle leaders are an enthusiastic and cohesive team, supported very well by senior leaders. They have a clear and accurate understanding of current strengths and areas for improvement. Detailed action plans enable focused training for all staff, ensuring consistency in approaches to teaching and learning. English and mathematics leaders have also received high-quality external training. This has enabled them to skilfully disseminate effective practice and high expectations.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well led. A new inclusion coordinator was appointed in June 2017 and much impact of this work can already be evidenced across the school. Systems and procedures to precisely target intervention and monitor impact have enabled this group of pupils to make good progress. The carefully planned transition and handover from the senior leadership team has ensured that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to be well met. Additional funding for these pupils is used appropriately.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils are well met. This is because leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is allocated accurately and effectively. Leaders target additional funding to support the academic, social and emotional needs of these pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make broadly similar progress from their starting points as other pupils in the school, and their attainment is improving. In 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard increased in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Sports funding is spent in a sustainable way by training teachers to become more skilled in teaching specific aspects of the sports curriculum. A total of 17 different sport clubs are offered to pupils, which take place before or after school. Leaders have taken a holistic approach to sports funding, working strategically to engage pupils and deliver excellent provision that offers good value for money.
- The curriculum is wide and varied. Trips and visitors to the school further enrich pupils' learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the learning opportunities provided for them in school. Pupils in Year 3 talked enthusiastically about their trip to the i360 tower, which was linked to their work in art, while pupils in Year 2 were excited to explain how they enjoyed weaving the front cover of a Torah after visiting the local synagogue.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a clear and accurate overview of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. This knowledge is used well to provide an effective balance of support and challenge for school leaders. Governors take an active part in school life and visit the school often. They attend regular training to ensure that they have the necessary expertise to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- There is a wide range of expertise in the current governing body, which enables governors to support leaders in making accurate decisions. For example, governors meet with the headteacher and school business manager regularly to monitor the impact of financial expenditure on the achievement of pupils.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a very strong nurturing ethos, which reflects the strong commitment to ensuring the safety of pupils at all times. Leaders and governors are vigilant in checking that all adults who work with pupils are suitably checked and place safeguarding as a high priority. As a result of regular and effective training, staff and governors are knowledgeable about child protection matters. Some governors are also trained in safer recruitment. Effective policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online. They know which adults they can trust when out in public. One hundred per cent of parents who completed the online survey, Parent View, reported that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Evidence gathered during the inspection, including observing in lessons and an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work, confirms that teaching and learning have improved. As a result, pupils are beginning to make faster progress and achieve more over time than was the case in the past. Consequently, the inspection team is in full agreement

with leaders' evaluation that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.

- Leaders have rightly prioritised the teaching of writing and mathematics in order to accelerate progress and improve outcomes for pupils. The school now has strong systems in place for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics. A wide range of training for teachers has equipped them with the skills needed to improve pupils' achievement in these subjects. Improvements are already evident in all year groups across the school; however, leaders recognise that more work is required if these advances are to be sustained.
- Teachers place great importance on building strong relationships with pupils and have high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, pupils take their learning seriously and work hard to achieve their best. Lessons are planned thoroughly to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups, which mostly has a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, while teaching enables the majority of pupils to make faster progress, the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Often, these pupils are capable of achieving more, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Reading is well taught and pupils make good progress as a result. Pupils have access to a wide range of reading material, and classroom book corners encourage a love of reading. Pupils are capable of choosing books that challenge their own ability. When reading to inspectors, younger pupils confidently applied their phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) skills to sound out unfamiliar words. Older pupils applied a wide range of techniques in order to self-correct and add meaning to the text.
- Teachers set pupils challenging targets and carefully monitor their progress. This enables teachers to quickly identify the next steps in learning and also provide extra support for pupils where required. In order to ensure that more pupils exceed expectations in English and mathematics, leaders have identified that more accurate targets are needed for the most able pupils. Training has taken place to support teachers in this area and is beginning to have a positive impact.
- The school has developed an effective homework programme that supports pupils well in their learning. Homework is usually linked to current topics being taught. Pupils are encouraged to complete the tasks and participation is recognised by awarding certificates in assembly. Homework journals are provided for all pupils so that parents and teachers can keep a track of the homework that pupils complete. The weekly homework club provides good support for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils.
- Teachers deploy the school's highly skilled support staff effectively. Teaching assistants know their pupils well and offer a good level of support and challenge to groups or individual pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships, between staff and pupils and from peer to peer, are a real strength of the school. Pupils work sensibly in collaboration with each other during class time and interact happily and companionably at playtime.

- When speaking to inspectors, pupils reported that they 'love' school and enjoy learning. They feel safe and are confident to talk to 'the nearest adult' if they are concerned or worried about anything. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and the relationships they have built with them.
- Pupils that spoke to inspectors had a clear understanding of the definition of bullying and reported that incidents of bullying were rare. On the infrequent occasions when bullying occurred, all pupils agreed that they were able to tell an adult and the situation would be taken seriously and dealt with quickly.
- Leaders place great importance on attendance and punctuality. As a result, overall attendance has improved over time and was above the national average in July 2017. Leaders have been quick to work with families, and with external agencies where necessary, to support pupils and ensure that individual attendance improves.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes and arrive at school ready to learn. They respond positively to the high expectations of good behaviour modelled by leaders and staff. Pupils report that they have lots of friends in school who all 'look after each other'.
- Leaders recently implemented a new behaviour policy to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school. During the inspection, the vast majority of pupils displayed positive behaviour, both in class and while playing at morning break and lunchtime. However, leaders are not complacent and record all incidents of inappropriate behaviour in a timely manner, implementing additional support where it is needed.
- Pupils talk confidently about the positive behaviour systems that are in place in school. In the survey they completed for inspectors, the vast majority felt that pupils behaved well in class and almost all pupils felt that pupils' behaviour when moving around the school was good. Almost 90% of parents who completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, felt that the school made sure that pupils were well behaved.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- During the previous year, leaders were faced with challenges that had a negative impact on the progress made by some pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Swift and appropriately targeted actions were taken to address these challenges. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time to prevent 2017 outcomes at key stage 1 and key stage 2 falling below the national average in writing and mathematics. Leaders' actions have ensured that the progress made by current pupils in these areas has begun to accelerate rapidly.
- In 2016, fewer pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check than found nationally. As a result, the new leader for English has placed greater emphasis on the teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1, including providing more opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum. This is already having a positive impact; when reading with inspectors, pupils used their phonic knowledge proficiently, reading with fluency and precision. This is helping pupils to

catch up, and 95% of pupils met the required standard in Year 2.

- In 2016, the proportions of pupils in key stage 1 who reached expected standards in reading and science were above the national average; writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. The proportions of pupils who exceeded the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were above the national average.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 2 pupils had made progress in reading and writing in line with national averages. However, progress in mathematics was below the national average. Leaders have rightly implemented a package of teacher training with a view to developing pupils' mastery of mathematics. This included providing more opportunities for pupils to apply problem-solving and reasoning skills. While standards have risen, inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books identified that there are still some inconsistencies in the application of problem-solving and reasoning between year groups.
- Leaders are addressing the previously disappointing outcomes in writing and mathematics. Leaders have received high-quality training which they have disseminated to all staff. However, while teaching is now good, it is too early for these changes to show an impact on pupils' achievement. Leaders are accurate in identifying writing and mathematics as priorities for school improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates. However, gaps remain between the achievement of this group of pupils and that of other pupils nationally. These gaps are showing positive signs of closing over time due to leaders' effective use of additional funding. However, further work is needed to eliminate these gaps. Leaders have rightly identified this as a priority within their action plans.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is not yet strong enough. Occasionally, teaching lacks sufficient challenge for this group. Leaders have already implemented plans to address the required improvements in writing and mathematics for this group. There has been insufficient time for these actions to have had a sufficient impact on outcomes.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Teaching, learning and outcomes for children are good. The early years leader has an accurate understanding of key priorities and ensures that teaching meets the needs of all children effectively. As a result, children make good progress in the Reception classes across all of the areas of learning.
- The warm and compassionate relationships between staff and children are a strength. Staff work extremely hard to ensure that the transition into school for new children is smooth. As a result, children make a confident start to school and engage well in learning.
- Staff plan for a wide range of activities. Children remain focused for sustained periods and there is very little flitting between activities. This is because planned learning opportunities meet the needs of all children. Staff ask complex questions as the children play, such as, 'How do you know?' and, 'Can you explain?' This provides regular opportunities for pupils to quickly develop skills in speech and language and

build the confidence to take risks. Training opportunities, which are carefully focused on the setting's priorities, provide good support and professional development for staff.

- The early years leader is focused on ensuring that appropriate provision is in place to support and accelerate the learning of all children, including disadvantaged pupils and those that enter the school with low starting points. For example, staff make good use of a resource room, where focused teaching supports children well with writing and number. As a result, the majority of children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Disadvantaged children make the same good progress as others. Targeted activities and systematic monitoring and evaluation are used to raise the achievement of this group. In 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged children that reached a good level of development was above the proportion of other children nationally.
- The indoor learning environment is bright and stimulating. Resources are of a high quality and are easily accessible for children. As a result, children are enthusiastic, confident and independent.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of learning journals and assessment books. In the vast majority of children's books, good progress was evident. However, progress was slower in writing, particularly for those children who need to catch up. This is because in previous years, there have been too few planned opportunities for children to write across the curriculum. Staff have recently revised their lesson planning to rectify this.
- Children enjoy themselves in the outdoor learning environment, choosing from a range of activities which promote all areas of learning. The outdoor classroom provides the same high-quality provision as the indoor classrooms. Effective opportunities for learning include role play, construction, reading, writing, number work, climbing apparatus and creative exploration with water and sand.
- Children behave well and are eager to join in with activities. Adults model positive relationships effectively. As a result, children share resources and are kind and caring towards each other.



## School details

Unique reference number	114477
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10036821

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Boyd
Headteacher	Louise Willard
Telephone number	01273 708004
Website	<a href="http://www.elmgrove.brighton-hove.sch.uk">www.elmgrove.brighton-hove.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@elmgrove.brighton-hove.sch.uk">admin@elmgrove.brighton-hove.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school also meets the government's current floor standards.
- Elm Grove Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class and attended a whole-school assembly. Some observations of learning were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and evaluated a wide range of pupils' workbooks in a range of subjects. They spoke to pupils on the playground and in lessons. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils more formally to gather their views.
- Pupils were heard reading and were asked questions about their enjoyment of reading and their reading habits.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the views expressed in 146 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the responses from the pupil questionnaire and staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, a variety of documentation was scrutinised, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour logs and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

## Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Small	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector
James Munt	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Cole	Her Majesty's Inspector

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