

Elmbridge Primary School

Elmbridge Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 0PE

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders place pupils' personal growth and academic development at the heart of everything they do. Their high emphasis on pupils' physical and emotional well-being ensures pupils' readiness to learn.
- The headteacher leads with determination and has inspired the school team. Consequently, all staff share his drive to ensure that pupils are highly motivated and engaged in their learning.
- The senior team have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are effective in checking their actions to secure improvement.
- Talented middle leaders carry out their work exceptionally well. They have strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how to enable support colleagues to improve.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects.
- Leaders make sure pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils' conduct is good. They treat each with respect and interact together well.
- Leaders' recent actions have been successful in pupils developing a love of reading, particularly in key stage 2. However, weaker readers in key stage 1 do not receive effective enough help to make rapid progress.
- Teachers make effective use of their assessments to plan children's next steps. As a result, children make good progress in the early years.
- Not enough teachers set high expectations for how pupils present their work. Consequently, pupils do not consistently present their work with enough care and attention.
- Planned activities designed to extend pupils' cultural development and understanding are effective.
- Teaching provides effective challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics. Consequently, they are well equipped to achieve at the higher standards of the national curriculum by the end of key stage 2. However, overall too few pupils reach the higher standards.
- Too few pupils achieve the higher standards in writing. The quality of writing that pupils produce in their science, history and geography work is not as high as in their English lessons.
- Overall attendance has improved to be in line with the national average. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is still too low.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that:
 - more of the middle prior-attaining pupils receive the challenge they need to achieve the higher standards in mathematics
 - pupils write to an equally high standard across all subjects, including English
 - weaker readers who receive support for SEN in key stage 1 make strong progress.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - continuing to reduce the proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, who are regularly absent from school
 - ensuring that all teachers have the same consistently high expectations about pupils presenting their work neatly across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is relentless in his pursuit to make the school the best it can be. His strong leadership has created a team committed to his vision. The headteacher has forged an effective and united staff team from two previously separate schools. He is ably assisted by a knowledgeable senior leadership team and governing body. Staff are a formidable force in driving improvement.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas that require further work. Their determination to tackle weaknesses is steadfast. They have welcomed the effective support and challenge the local authority has provided in bringing the infant school and junior school together as one.
- Leaders have successfully defined staff's roles and responsibilities. The school improvement plan continues to evolve and is increasingly more precise. It has provided a concerted push for school improvement.
- Staff morale is high. Staff are proud to work at the school and say it is well led and managed. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire during the inspection agreed.
- Leaders closely track the progress of different groups of pupils throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics. This has had a positive impact on raising pupils' achievement. Leaders continue to refine their approach to tracking pupils' progress and setting them targets. This is helping to increase the pace of improvement.
- Leaders' promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Middle leaders make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Their support and teamwork ensure that teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. In addition, middle leaders make regular checks to gauge the effectiveness of actions to improve standards. Their swift action ensures that any weaknesses are soon ironed out.
- The school's curriculum sparks pupils' interest so that they are excited and want to learn. Subject leaders make sure that the school covers all aspects of the national curriculum. As a result, what pupils receive is rich and varied. Pupils value the broad range of additional activities available which include a rock school, a choir, reading and yoga.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for sport. Currently, over three quarters of the school takes part in at least one relevant club. Leaders carefully monitor how active pupils are. In addition, leaders are effective in providing activities such as dance that reflect pupils' interests. This includes activities for those who can excel in competitive sport.
- Leaders have made effective use of the pupil premium funding. Differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing rapidly. In some cases, such as in the early years and key stage 1, differences no longer exist.

- Leaders have improved pupils' attendance. However, some groups of pupils, for example disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not attend as well as other pupils. Although numbers are reducing, too many pupils are still persistently absent from school.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is mostly effective. Leaders are particularly successful in supporting pupils who have social and emotional needs to increase their readiness to learn. Qualified and experienced leaders work closely with teachers to ensure that activities match pupils' needs. However, plans to enable pupils to improve their reading skills at key stage 1 are not effective enough.
- When the schools amalgamated, leaders prioritised the teaching of mathematics. This was successful. However, leaders have recognised that pupils' reading and writing skills are not as strong. Their review of curriculum planning and subsequent introduction of intensive training for staff are redressing the balance. This can be seen in the rapid improvement in pupils' achievements at the end of key stage 1 and 2 between 2016 and 2017.

Governance of the school

- The governing board is well established. Members have a broad range of skills and expertise. They are ambitious for the school. Governors understand their roles well. Consequently, they provide leaders with good challenge and support to ensure the school's effectiveness.
- Governors know the school's strengths and areas needing improvement very well. They visit the school regularly to gain an independent view of its performance. The local authority has provided them with useful assistance recently which has increased their effectiveness further.
- Governors understand, and appreciate their responsibility for, the oversight of safeguarding procedures. For example, since the amalgamation of the two schools, governors have rightly and successfully prioritised ensuring that the site is safe and well maintained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. The school's team of safeguarding leaders work closely with staff and governors. They ensure that everyone is alert to any signs that suggest a pupil is experiencing abuse. Leaders follow clear procedures for transferring and receiving pupils' safeguarding records.
- Leaders respond promptly to concerns. They ensure that there is early support in place, both from within the school and external agencies. Consequently, vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support they need in a timely manner.
- Checks when recruiting staff and volunteers to work in the school are thorough. They are effective in ensuring that all adults are suitable to work with children.
- Pupils report feeling safe in school and feel confident to share concerns with staff if they have any worries. Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' welfare. The

curriculum provides help to pupils in understanding how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Almost all parents agree that their child is safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good. Teachers collaborate well in their teams and value the support they receive from middle and senior leaders. Teachers use their enthusiasm and detailed subject knowledge to make lessons interesting.
- Teachers make good use of what they know pupils can do and understand to plan activities to match pupils' needs. Current pupils make good progress across all subjects.
- Teachers and other staff create a positive climate for learning in classes. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are consistently high. Classrooms are a hive of discussion and thinking.
- Teachers use well-crafted questions to deepen and reinforce pupils' learning and to spot pupils' misconceptions. They tackle these quickly so that learning moves on swiftly. Teachers create an expectation that everyone can learn from their mistakes. Consequently, pupils are confident and willing to 'have a go'. Pupils told inspectors that 'making mistakes is a way of learning'.
- Teachers help pupils to make meaningful links between subjects. For example, when learning about climate change and global warming, pupils apply their mathematical skills to interpret and construct tables and line graphs. They apply what they have learned in English when deciding how to present their information so it will influence their audience.
- Teachers provide suitably challenging work for the most able pupils. This enables pupils to apply their skills and demonstrate their potential. This has been particularly effective in mathematics. However, on occasions other pupils are ready for further challenge sooner. They repeat concepts they have already mastered, which slows their progress.
- Teachers have engendered a love of writing. Pupils enjoy writing and feel that they have the 'tools' to be better writers. They told inspectors that they would like even more time to write concerning their own interests. For example, one said, 'When I write about things I am interested in, the ideas and the words just come.'
- Teachers develop pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills effectively. More recently, teachers have raised their expectations further. Pupils now edit and improve the content and organisation of their writing, for example changing words to increase impact. This is leading to writing of a higher quality in English. However, teachers do not articulate high enough expectations when pupils are writing independently across different subjects.
- The teaching of reading has been a priority for the school recently. Teachers now use a range of high-quality books to engage pupils' interest. Pupils say that they enjoy reading. Teachers encourage them to enjoy books for pleasure as well as ensuring they learn how to find information from the text.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school. After a dip in standards to below

the national average last year, leaders invested in additional staff training. This has paid dividends.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school and in classrooms. Teachers help pupils to recognise their strengths and talents and encourage pupils to aim high.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms are havens of learning. Warm relationships between staff and pupils create a climate of endeavour. Pupils listen to and readily follow instructions. Consequently, lessons flow without interruption.
- Leaders are proactive in helping pupils to develop healthy minds. Pupils are able to explain the importance of self-belief. They work hard and do not give up easily.
- Leaders seek and act on pupils' views. They consult pupils, for example, when making decisions about breaktime equipment, clubs or when purchasing books. Consequently, pupils understand the implications of decision-making.
- Leaders ensure that pupils hold positions of responsibility within the school. For example, sports leaders, house captains and school councillors all play their part in the smooth running of the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. For example, pupils have compared prayer in different religions. Pupils respond sensitively to each other when working together and show respect and interest in others' views.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare and that teachers resolve fall-outs quickly if they occur. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. All staff, and the majority of parents who responded to surveys, feel that staff deal with bullying effectively. Pupils know who they can talk to in school if they have any worries. They spoke confidently about how to keep safe online and how to keep themselves healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is particularly good. They concentrate well and complete their work with enthusiasm and demonstrate a determination to succeed. At breaktimes, pupils play well together and enjoy each other's company.
- The number of pupils excluded from school is low and continues to decline. Pupils who have had exclusions in the past receive effective support to manage their feelings and engage with their learning.
- Pupils enjoy school. Leaders have taken effective steps to increase overall attendance. Consequently, it is now in line with the national average. The overall proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has also decreased. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not attend school as regularly as they

should. Leaders carefully track the attendance of individual pupils. They work assiduously with families to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly. However, the attendance of pupils in these groups is still too low.

- On occasions, pupils' work is marred by poor presentation. This is more prevalent in pupils' topic books in key stage 2 than in their English and mathematics books.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the attainment of pupils leaving Year 6 was in line with the national average. This represented an improvement from the previous year when the school was newly amalgamated.
- Differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are diminishing. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 reached a similar standard in writing and mathematics to pupils nationally.
- Pupils make good progress. In the key stage 2 assessment tasks, progress was strongest in mathematics and weakest in reading. Leaders have dealt with this inequality effectively. More pupils reach the expected and higher standards in reading now, particularly at key stage 2. Current assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly.
- Pupils apply their phonic skills well when reading. In the past, too few pupils have achieved the higher standards in reading at key stages 1 and 2. However, leaders' investment in books and staff training has led to much-improved outcomes. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading. Reading records show that most read widely and often. As one pupil explained, 'Reading makes me smile.'
- The most able pupils typically make good progress across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in mathematics. However, a small minority of the most able pupils do not demonstrate their full potential in writing.
- Following a drop to below the national average in the Year 1 phonics screening check last year, staff have received additional training in teaching phonics. The vast majority of those pupils who did not reach the expected standard have caught up. Pupils' phonic progress in the early years and key stage 1 is strong. Pupils apply their knowledge of phonics well when reading and apply their knowledge of sounds in their writing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities generally achieve well from their starting points because of the carefully planned help they receive. However, on occasions help with reading does not lead to pupils catching up quickly enough.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years are well prepared for Year 1. They join the school with reading and writing skills lower than in other areas of development. By the time they leave the early years, their reading and writing are at least in line with others nationally.
- Leaders' effective arrangements for children starting at the school enable children to integrate well and settle into school routines quickly. Leaders make visits to pre-school settings and organise events to support a smooth start to school. Parents use the school's online assessment and communication tool well. They told inspectors that they valued the opportunity to follow up at home what their children are learning in school.
- The leader of the early years has an accurate view of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, for example, teachers have recently focused on improving children's phonic skills. Consequently, more pupils have already reached the expected standards in the phonic screening activities this year.
- Teachers ensure that both indoor and outdoor areas are enticing and are very well planned. They make good use of children's interests to plan activities to help them to develop. Consequently, children are inspired and excited to learn and explore.
- Warm relationships exist between staff and children. Children's behaviour is good. They wait to take their turn and happily share their ideas and equipment with other children.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers ask children questions to develop their language skills and give them time to think and respond. As a result, children, regardless of ability, are able to process their thoughts and succeed. Teachers plan lessons and activities well to engage and motivate children.
- All staff share a strong knowledge of the early years curriculum. Their close work and sharing of information ensures that children are challenged and supported in achieving their next steps. Staff's assessment of children is accurate, both when they join the school and as they make progress through the year. This accurate assessment means that planning is based on a secure understanding of what children can and cannot do. As a result, activities are well planned to move children on to the next stage of their learning.
- Records of children's learning demonstrate the good progress they make from their individual starting points. In some cases this progress is very rapid, with many children moving quickly from being hardly able to make marks to writing simple words and sentences in six months.
- Teachers provide effective support for disadvantaged children. Consequently, disadvantaged children make good progress and leave the early years well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and meets all statutory requirements. Adults keep children safe and care for them well. Teachers establish effective routines so that children behave well and move safely in both indoor and outdoor areas.

School details

Unique reference number	115487
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10049021

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	608
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Gough
Headteacher	Glen Tharia
Telephone number	01452 523632
Website	www.elmbridgeprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@elmbridgeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was formed in April 2016 as a result of the merger of a junior and an infant school. The infant school had been judged to be inadequate in an inspection in 2014. The junior school had been judged to be a good school in its inspection in 2013.
- The school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A low, although increasing, proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is also above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across all year groups, including the early years. Most of these visits were with the headteacher or other senior leaders. During observations in lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, other senior staff, teachers and support staff throughout the two days of inspection. In addition, the lead inspector spoke to members of the local governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors talked to groups of key stage 1 and key stage 2 pupils.
- Inspectors looked at documents provided by the school, including via the website. These documents included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, records of pupils' achievement, safeguarding records and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took into account 79 responses to Parent View, including 82 free-text comments, and 52 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school on both days of the inspection.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Johns	Ofsted Inspector
Marcia Northeast	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector

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