

Elm Grove Primary School, Worthing

Elm Grove, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 5LQ

Inspection dates

19–20 June 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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led by the headteacher. She has successfully reversed the school's declining standards. As a result, teaching and outcomes for pupils have improved, and are now good.
- Leaders have managed the school's transition from a first to a primary school effectively.
- Governance is strong. Governors provide effective challenge and support to the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and interesting and enables pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects, particularly in religious education, science and history.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding, including in the early years. There is a strong culture to keep children safe.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school because it is a happy place to be.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are overwhelming in their support for and praise of the school.
- Pupils achieve very well in phonics and reading. The most able pupils attain particularly well in reading.
- Newly appointed phase leaders are beginning to impact positively on pupils' outcomes.
- The local authority has provided good support and guidance to the school during a period of change and transition.
- A higher-than-average proportion of children in the early years achieve the expected 'good level of development'.
- The school's improvement and pupil premium plans are not precise enough.
- Sometimes teachers plan activities which lack clarity or challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as their peers, and few attain the higher standards.
- Too few of the most able pupils in key stages 1 and 2 attain the higher standards in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' punctuation and handwriting are not developed well enough.
- Children in the early years do not have enough opportunities to write independently, and few exceed the expected standards in writing.
- The curriculum does not include enough opportunities for children to learn about geography.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the quality of teaching and learning more consistent so that pupils' outcomes improve by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan learning tasks with greater precision, purpose and clarity, so that they fully engage and challenge all pupils
 - teachers have consistently high expectations and challenge the most able pupils so that more exceed the expected standards in writing and mathematics
 - disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress so that a greater proportion of them achieve the expected standards, and more attain the higher standards
 - standards of writing continue to improve, including pupils' punctuation and handwriting skills
 - children in the early years have more opportunities to write, and a higher proportion exceed the expected standard in writing by the end of Reception.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of the phase leaders so that they can contribute more fully to driving improvement
 - refining improvement plans, including the pupil premium spending plan, and ensure that these plans include clear, succinct success criteria
 - refining the school's curriculum to include more opportunities for pupils to learn about geography.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection in 2011, and prior to the current headteacher's appointment in September 2015, there had been a decline in the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. Since her appointment in September 2015, the headteacher has brought about many improvements. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Leaders have focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 and the early years have improved year-on-year.
- Leaders have effectively managed the change from a first school to an all-through primary. They have used this opportunity to reshape the school's vision, taking on board the views of everyone in the school community. Leaders have successfully harnessed the support of the staff, who work together as an effective team.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where further improvement is needed. They visit classrooms regularly and give good-quality feedback to help teachers to improve their skills. Leaders have identified the right priorities in the school improvement plan. However, as leaders acknowledge, this plan is currently rather unwieldy and does not have clear enough success criteria.
- Subject leaders contribute well to school improvement through their regular monitoring and evaluation. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and have well-considered action plans, which set out how they are strengthening provision and outcomes for pupils. They have played a key role in re-designing the curriculum to reflect the changes to the national curriculum, as well as additional year groups in key stage 2.
- Newly established phase leaders, guided by the headteacher, are beginning to play a more strategic role in leading improvement. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their work.
- Leaders make good use of the extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils. A wide range of additional support to meet pupils' emotional and social needs is having a positive impact on these pupils' personal development. However, while disadvantaged pupils are now making similar progress to other pupils, they do not attain as well as other pupils because of lower starting points. Although leaders' plans to support these pupils include appropriate priorities, attainment and progress targets are not precise enough to help them catch up.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity very well. They have ensured that the school is a welcoming, inclusive community where everyone is valued and respected. Leaders use the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively. The inclusion leader has a good understanding of pupils' needs and their vulnerabilities, and leads the work to support these pupils well.
- Focused, timely training has helped staff to adapt their teaching and manage the school's transition to a primary school. The local authority's school improvement partner has provided valuable support to leaders during this period of transition. Her regular visits have helped leaders to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders have also, wisely, drawn on support from other external partners, such as the local teaching

school alliance, to help them to develop and strengthen the role of phase leaders.

- The curriculum is comprehensively planned, meets pupils' needs and prepares them very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly well catered for. Through the very well planned religious education, pupils achieve well. They develop a secure knowledge of other cultures and reflect on common themes such as worship and pilgrimage. Pupils understand and respect that not everyone has the same beliefs. One pupil commented, 'It's good that we are all different.' Pupils also learn about democracy through the elections for the school councillors and the house captains.
- Curriculum plans ensure that pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in many different subjects. Provision for science and history is particularly strong and, as a result, pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, leaders are aware that geography is less well developed as, currently, not enough teaching time is given to this subject. Older pupils have opportunities to learn about enterprise and financial capability, for example by planning projects to raise money.
- Extra-curricular clubs contribute suitably to pupils' enjoyment and participation in school. Leaders make sure that all pupils are able to take part in wide-ranging and competitive sporting events. These support pupils' physical and social skills and their enjoyment of sport. The sports funding is used effectively for staff training and to extend and enrich the sports offer for pupils.
- The school's very good partnership with parents is a strength. There is a tangible community spirit reflected in parents' and pupils' highly positive views. As one pupil commented, 'The school is like my second family.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are knowledgeable and keep all aspects of the school under close review. They visit the school regularly to meet senior leaders to review the progress pupils are making and the impact of the school improvement plan. They also meet subject leaders to learn about the curriculum and the impact of their work on pupils' learning.
- Governors hold leaders to account very effectively and ask probing questions during their meetings. They receive detailed information about the school's performance and use this well to help them benchmark the school against other schools. Governors ably fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are kept safe through their rigorous checks on this aspect of the school's work.
- Governors continually seek to strengthen their work. For example, in September 2017, they commissioned an external review of governance. Governors used the findings of this review to form an action plan to strengthen their strategic role. They have also conducted a skills audit and shrewdly used this information to recruit new governors to complement the skills of other governors.
- Governors actively seek to develop their skills and keep their knowledge up to date. They attend regular training, attend the local authority's regular briefings and meet governors from other schools to learn about best practice.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and staff know pupils and their families very well and are alert to any concerns.
- The school has well-established systems to record and deal with any worries about pupils' well-being or safety. Records are of high quality. When appropriate, leaders refer their concerns promptly to outside agencies and take timely action to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders support pupils' families very well and work in partnership with them. The learning mentor and inclusion leader are often the first point of contact for families. They make sure that families can access and benefit from early help.
- Through the school's timely and comprehensive training, leaders have ensured that all staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. As a result, staff are confident in spotting and responding in a timely and appropriate way to any worries about pupils' safety.
- The school's curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep safe, including when online. The school also embraces the support of other organisations, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which contributes to pupils' secure understanding of how to keep safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good across the school. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils, and classrooms are purposeful, happy and relaxed. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and approach their learning with positive attitudes.
- Phonics and early reading skills are taught well. This helps younger pupils get off to a good start with their reading. As a result, standards in reading are strong and many pupils are working at the higher standards. Through the curriculum, pupils encounter many different texts, often linked to their topic work. Teachers plan effective opportunities for pupils to read and to share different texts, which helps to develop their understanding, fluency and enjoyment of reading.
- Teachers plan learning in meaningful contexts. In subjects such as history, they make good use of artefacts and different texts to help pupils draw and infer meaning about life in the past. Teachers capitalise on links between subjects to enable pupils to apply their skills in different contexts. For example, pupils apply their knowledge of history in English lessons to write diary entries.
- Across the curriculum, teachers make sure that pupils regularly apply their writing skills. They skilfully weave in opportunities for pupils to strengthen their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Nevertheless, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils' punctuation is sufficiently ambitious, or that their handwriting is of consistently good quality.
- The teaching of science is a strength. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate. New concepts and scientific content are introduced sequentially to enable pupils to build on prior learning. For example, in key stage 1,

pupils learn about the basic parts of plants, such as the stem, leaf and flower. In key stage 2, teachers build on this, deepening pupils' understanding to include complex processes such as the capillary action in the stem of a plant.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from highly personalised timetables. In class, teaching assistants support these pupils appropriately, adapting activities to suit their needs and sensitively helping pupils to stay focused and be fully included in lessons.
- On the whole, teachers pitch levels of challenge at an appropriate level and engage pupils enthusiastically. However, teachers' expectations, particularly of the most able pupils, are sometimes not high enough and the purpose of some tasks lacks clarity. When this is the case, pupils lose attention and their focus wanes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's motto, 'Aim high, work hard, have fun', is evident in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and enjoyment of school. Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are not worried about making a mistake and are happy to explain how this helps them to learn. Pupils talk with pride about the school and their achievements. They value the way the school canvasses their opinions so that they 'have a voice'.
- Pupils' well-being is given the highest priority and a culture of care and concern for all pupils underpins the school's work. As a result, pupils feel entirely safe, and very well supported and cared for. Pupils say that there is no bullying and that pupils are kind to each other.
- The school's curriculum includes a very strong focus on pupils' safety and their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils explain how the school's golden rules and other safety advice help them to know how to keep safe. They know that, if they ever have a concern, they should speak to a trusted adult. The overwhelming majority of parents say that their children feel safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils relish taking on additional responsibilities, such as becoming school councillors and team captains. They enjoy supporting younger pupils during play times and have caring and respectful attitudes to each other. They value the differences between each other and say that everyone is welcomed to Elm Grove.
- Pupils generally behave well in class and around the school and play sensibly together during breaktimes. However, in some classes, not all pupils concentrate and focus as well as they could, particularly when teachers are explaining things to the class.
- The learning mentor and inclusion leader work in partnership with outside agencies to arrange wide-ranging therapies for pupils who have emotional and social needs. These

pupils are supported well in class to help them manage their emotions and behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has taken prompt and decisive action to address the decline in provision and the very low standards attained by pupils at the end of key stage 1. As a result, outcomes have improved and current pupils are making good progress. A much higher proportion of pupils are now working at the expected standards for their age.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils achieve very well in this subject and a very high proportion of them are working at the higher standards. Younger pupils apply their phonics skills well to read new words. In Year 1, the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Older pupils read fluently, with expression and for meaning, and many read for pleasure.
- Writing is continuing to improve and some aspects of pupils' writing are particularly effective. Many pupils write with maturity, showing an awareness of the reader and adapting their style to match the purpose of their writing. They make adventurous word choices, use varied sentences and accurate spelling. One pupil wrote, 'Lightning crashed against the ominous clouds; a screeching voice filled the heavens.' However, pupils' punctuation and the quality of their handwriting are not as strong. This sometimes limits the quality of some pupils' writing.
- Over time, pupils develop secure calculation skills and apply these well to solve problems. They also demonstrate good mathematical reasoning, typically explaining how they arrived at their answers and 'proving' that these are correct. Pupils are well practised at framing their answers with the phrase, 'I know this is the right answer because...'.
- Pupils make good progress in many subjects in the wider curriculum, particularly in religious education, science and history. These subjects also enable pupils to apply and develop their reading and writing skills, for example by writing reasoned arguments about a point of view in history. However, pupils' skills in geography are much less well developed, because pupils do not spend enough time on this aspect of the curriculum.
- Although there are some slight variations between year groups and subjects, all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making similarly good progress. However, a much lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils attain the expected standards for their age and very few attain the higher standards.
- The most able pupils achieve well in reading. In 2017, a higher-than-average proportion achieved the higher standards at the end of key stage 1. However, the most able pupils do not attain as well in writing and mathematics. Currently, too few of these pupils attain the higher standards in these subjects.
- Pupils' confidence, good social skills and achievement means that they are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a happy and successful start to school and make good progress from their varied starting points. Since 2015, there has been a significant and sustained rise in the proportion of children who achieve the expected 'good level of development'. In 2017, a higher-than-average proportion attained this standard.
- Teachers are positive and warm and have good relationships with children. This means that children feel secure, safe and confident in the setting. Safeguarding is effective and children's welfare needs are met well.
- Children behave sensibly and are considerate and thoughtful of each other, sharing equipment and taking turns. They are very articulate and speak with confidence, explaining what they are learning. During the inspection, some children explained very clearly how they knew which objects floated in the water. Another child confidently explained how they had worked out that 'five add five makes ten', demonstrating this by counting the fingers on their hands.
- The environment is well organised and interesting. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities, which capture and sustain children's attention. Curiosity is encouraged and children are encouraged to ask interesting questions, such as 'Do fish have memories?' Nevertheless, some activities do not challenge pupils sufficiently well by building on their previous learning and the focus and intended learning is not always clear enough.
- Teachers plan appropriately for all aspects of the early years curriculum. They organise plentiful opportunities for children to develop their early mathematical skills and explore number and shape. Some of the most able children can confidently explain how they can add and subtract larger numbers such as those with two digits.
- Phonics is taught well and reading is strongly promoted. This enables children to achieve particularly strongly in this aspect of their learning. However, writing is not developed as well as reading and children do not have enough opportunities to write independently. Currently, too few of the most able children exceed the expected standards in writing.
- Leaders make sure that the few disadvantaged children, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, receive appropriate support. These children make similar progress to their peers, although some do not attain the age-related-standards because of their lower starting points.
- The early years leader has put in place good transition arrangements to help children settle quickly and confidently when they start school. Staff visit the pre-school settings to get to know children so that they are well informed of children's particular needs. Appropriate baseline assessment and tracking are in place to help staff keep track of children's progress during Reception.
- The school's partnership with parents is strong. Parents are invited to contribute to the 'learning journals' by sharing their children's achievements at home. Parents are overwhelming in their praise of the early years, as one parent commented, 'I can't praise the school enough. My child is thriving.'
- Children's positive start to school means that they are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	125863
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10046536

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	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Dalziel
Headteacher	Lynsey Udell
Telephone number	01903 249 387
Website	www.elmgrove.org.uk
Email address	office@elmgrove.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 November 2011

Information about this school

- Until 2015, Elm Grove was a first school and pupils joined the school in Reception and left at the end of Year 3. Following the local authority's restructuring of education, the school became an all-through primary. The school now has pupils in all year groups from Reception to Year 6. There is one class in Reception and in each of Years 1, 2 and 6. There are two classes in each of Years 3, 4 and 5. The current Year 6 class of 14 pupils is the first cohort to reach the end of key stage 2.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2015 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. However, there are wide variations in the number of disadvantaged pupils in different year groups.

- There is a breakfast club which is run by school staff.
- A private nursery, which has separate Ofsted registration and is inspected separately, is located on the school site. The private nursery also runs an additional breakfast club and an after-school club at the school.
- The school receives support from the local authority's school improvement partner. The school has also brokered external support from the local teaching school alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also visited an assembly. During visits to classrooms, inspectors talked with pupils about their learning and evaluated the quality of pupils' work in books. Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with a representative group of pupils from Years 1 to 6.
- In addition to reviewing pupils' work in classrooms, separate meetings were held with leaders to review the quality of pupils' work in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with the school's local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with parents at the beginning of both days of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the 80 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents and policies, including those regarding attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. Inspectors reviewed other school documents, including minutes of meetings, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation and evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning. The lead inspector held meetings with leaders to review the school's safeguarding arrangements and the school's record of recruitment checks for new staff.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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