

Elm Road Primary School

Elm Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 2TB

Inspection dates

10–11 July 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

- Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points across a range of subjects.
- The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust has ensured that there is enough capacity in the leadership team to drive improvements at the school.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the current position of the school, although development plans sometimes lack detail about how improvements will be achieved.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive.
- The principal enjoys the full support of the staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school.
- Teachers plan activities that interest pupils so that they are keen to learn and enjoy lessons. On occasions, these activities do not fully meet the needs of the most able pupils.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe are well managed and effective. Pupils feel safe and well cared for when they are in school.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in early years. Phonics outcomes have risen for the past three years.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very well developed. There is a strong culture of tolerance and respect for others and pupil leaders take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well so that they make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities receive support well tailored to meet their needs from both their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Children who join the school speaking little English develop language skills quickly because of effective support in early years and key stage 1.
- Results in the end-of-key-stage tests do not yet reflect the improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their understanding and knowledge.
- Pupils make progress in writing in line with other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2. However, attainment, especially of boys, is not as strong as in reading and mathematics. This is because of some weaknesses in pupils' vocabulary, spelling and grammar.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils make good or better progress by making sure that:
 - teachers increase opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary, improve their spelling and apply a full range of grammatical structures to their writing across a range of subjects
 - teachers raise their expectations of what pupils, especially boys, can write from early years through to the end of key stage 2
 - teachers make the most of opportunities in lessons to challenge the most able pupils.
- Increase the effectiveness of leaders by ensuring that their development plans state precisely what actions they will take and what impact these will have.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have improved teaching across the school by identifying where development is needed and providing training. This has been particularly effective in raising standards in mathematics. The school regularly joins with other trust schools to learn from, and increasingly to share, good practice.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in regular meetings with leaders. The impact of any strategies used to support the progress of individual pupils in class is evaluated and strategies adapted. The focus has been on pupils who need extra support to catch up, rather than on those who need extra challenge to reach their potential. This means that sometimes, the most able pupils do not do as well as they should.
- The school has very effective systems for monitoring and managing pupils' behaviour. Clear leadership has ensured that staff are consistent in their expectations and in the way they apply sanctions and rewards. However, not all initiatives are as well planned and monitored. At times, teachers leading strategies do not define carefully enough the detailed actions that need to be in place to ensure impact.
- The physical education and sport premium has been used effectively to increase opportunities for pupils to try new sports such as table tennis, as well as providing additional swimming. Pupils have benefited because teachers have improved their practice by working alongside sports coaches.
- The special educational needs coordinator effectively evaluates the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and provides teachers with strategies to support their learning in class. Extra support with social and emotional development is also given so that children who have SEN and/or disabilities do well from their individual starting points. Children who speak English as an additional language quickly become fluent because of the intensive support available when they arrive at the school.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils is effective. Many disadvantaged pupils also have SEN and/or disabilities and so leaders work together to identify the barriers that prevent pupils from learning. Their progress is carefully monitored and strategies to support them are regularly evaluated. Leaders also ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to wider opportunities, such as trips and residential visits.
- The school provides pupils with an interesting and varied curriculum both in lessons and through visitors, trips and its extra-curricular provision. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to explore topics in depth and so they build subject knowledge as well as developing skills over time. The curriculum also gives them a good understanding of different cultures and beliefs, as well as developing an understanding of values such as tolerance.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The school's own recent parent survey, Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and conversations with parents at the beginning and end of the school day show that they are confident that their children are well looked after, are well taught and are making progress. Leaders ensure that parents feel welcome, hosting, for example, an annual family picnic. Teachers create regular

opportunities for parents to come into school to share books with their children and view their work.

Governance of the school

- The regional director of the trust visits the school regularly to provide both support and challenge to senior leaders. The local governing body is formed mainly of parents and community members who know the strengths and weaknesses of the school extremely well, and the challenges it faces at a local level.
- The local governing body is learning from the trust to hold school leaders more robustly to account for how pupils' outcomes compare with those of other schools nationally and how well different groups of pupils achieve. Pupils' outcomes are now at the heart of the evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
- The trust has ensured there is extra leadership capacity this year through the part-time deployment of a leader from another trust school. The leadership structure of the school has been reviewed for September 2018 to allow more time for senior leaders to continue to build on the improvements in teaching and learning begun this year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and fully aware of the school's procedures for raising any concerns they have about the welfare of pupils. The school works effectively with local agencies to support vulnerable children and their families. Parents had no concerns about the safety of their children.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that their teachers and other staff will support them if they need it. Pupils talked about how they are taught to keep themselves safe on the internet. They also explained how visitors and visits give them the opportunity to explore other areas of risk. For example, they visit the local fire station to learn about fire safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and still improving. In particular, leaders have focused on improving the teaching of mathematics to ensure that teaching prepares pupils effectively to meet the higher standards of the revised national curriculum. A more systematic approach, which allows time for pupils to master new skills and apply them in different situations, is deepening pupils' understanding of the mathematical concepts they are learning.
- Reading has a high profile and new, comfortable reading areas have been created to encourage pupils to relax and enjoy independent reading. Pupils have opportunities to read every day, often to an adult, and are regularly read to. Reading lessons focus clearly on developing skills such as inference and deduction, and reading outcomes at both key stage 1 and key stage 2 are rising as a result.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and, in every classroom,

routines are well established and respected by pupils. In lessons, pupils have many opportunities to talk about their learning, which helps pupils who speak English as an additional language to acquire new vocabulary and grammar.

- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Tasks in mathematics are particularly well adapted to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Teaching assistants give effective support in class to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities access the same learning as other pupils.
- Teachers plan activities that quickly engage the interest of pupils and allow them to make good progress. Teachers' planning has benefited from the opportunity to work and train jointly with colleagues from another local school that is also part of the trust. However, at times teachers do not plan activities that provide enough challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants do not make the most of unplanned learning opportunities that arise in lessons or react quickly enough to the chance to offer extra challenge to these pupils.
- The school has identified writing as a key priority and teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to write in different styles across the curriculum. However, teachers do not have consistently high expectations of written accuracy in order for pupils to develop their vocabulary, improve their spelling and apply a full range of grammatical structures to their writing. Some pupils repeat mistakes many times before they are put right. Pupils' books show that their writing skills are developing over time, but at a slower pace than skills in reading or mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of pupils is developed well. Pupils respect their variety of home languages and different ethnic backgrounds because, as one pupil explained to inspectors, 'We are all one school'. Different beliefs and cultures are celebrated around the school. Pupils in Year 1 confidently explained the symbolism of the Sikh religion they had recently studied.
- Pupils have worked with their teachers to create a blueprint of the type of learners they want to be. Regular opportunities for them to develop good learning habits and social skills form part of the curriculum. For example, during a debate linked to their history topic about evacuees in the Second World War, Year 5 pupils were also practising their listening skills and learning to respect the views of others. They demonstrated a good understanding of the conventions of debating and used well-thought-out arguments to persuade other group members to agree with their views.
- Pupils take their roles as school councillors very seriously. As one pupil said, 'It's not just a title – you have to do the job.' Members of the school council are proud of achievements such as the creation of a quiet zone during playtimes where pupils can sit and read outside. They also raise funds to pay for the upkeep of the school guinea pigs and organise and judge competitions, such as dressing up on World Book Day.

- Provision to support vulnerable pupils is strong. Pupils can post a request to speak privately to an adult through the 'worry box'. Most pupils, however, said that they are confident in finding an adult straight away if they have a problem.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between bullying and occasional unkindness. They report that bullying happens rarely in school but is taken seriously by teachers when it does. School records support this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their time at school and show positive attitudes towards their learning. Attendance has been consistently above average for three years. The rate of persistent absence is declining because the school has effective strategies to support families and encourage good attendance.
- Behaviour is managed consistently by staff and so learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils say that a reminder by the teacher is usually enough to make them correct their behaviour. For pupils who need more support, the 'room to improve' provides them with the chance to reflect on how their behaviour affects others.
- Playtimes are lively but safe, with plenty of well-supervised activities that allow pupils to run about and interact with others. Year groups mix well together.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and want to do well. On occasions, when teachers do not move pupils on quickly enough to the next task, or when tasks do not fully challenge pupils, they can become restless and distracted and lose focus on the purpose of the lesson.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress that pupils make is improving across all subject areas. Better teaching, and more accurate assessment that identifies when pupils need support, are effectively addressing the negative impact that weaker teaching in the past has had on how well pupils achieve. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection showed a rapidly improving picture, especially in reading and mathematics, across almost all year groups.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the required standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 has improved strongly since 2015. Key stage 1 disadvantaged pupils, who read to inspectors during the inspection, successfully used their phonics knowledge to decode and sound out new words. Pupils who speak English as an additional language develop fluency in reading quickly because of effective support.
- By the end of key stage 2, pupils have made progress in line with that of other pupils nationally. The arrival of pupils during the school year, especially into Year 6, can have a negative effect on the overall published attainment figures. Pupils on roll from Reception through to the end of Year 6 achieve outcomes in line with the national average.
- Year-on-year comparison of the progress made by groups of pupils is not helpful as the

numbers and the needs of these pupils vary considerably between year groups. At present, approximately half of disadvantaged pupils in the school also have SEN and/or disabilities. The school checks the progress of all groups of pupils closely and evidence in the work that they have produced across the year shows that they make good progress from their starting points.

- In reading and mathematics, the proportion of pupils who reach the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 is increasing. However, pupils, especially boys, are not achieving as well in writing as they are in mathematics and reading.

Early years provision

Good

- Procedures to assess children when they start school give leaders an accurate picture of their varying starting points. This allows leaders to identify and address any barriers to learning they may have so that children make good progress.
- Adults have high expectations of children. Relationships between adults and children and between the children are good. The positive behaviour and attitude of the children contribute well to their progress.
- Some children begin Reception speaking very little English. The recent focus on communication and language development has resulted in a large increase in the proportion of children who are happy and confident communicators. This also means that Reception children are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- The environment, both inside and outside, is stimulating and fosters children's interest in learning well. The calm and purposeful atmosphere enables children to concentrate on their activities and so make better progress.
- Adults plan imaginative activities to engage the interest of children. For example, children enjoyed using a space hopper to bounce over to words chalked on the paving, which they then sounded out. Other activities encourage children to learn more independently and work things out for themselves. Children talked confidently to inspectors about what they were doing.
- Children are well cared for and safe. Leaders ensure that parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and make themselves easily available to parents so that positive relationships are formed with families. Parents who spoke to inspectors were happy with the nurturing environment provided by the early years staff.
- Leaders are determined to improve outcomes even further. They have identified that there could be more outdoor learning that promotes language development and writing, for example.

School details

Unique reference number	142424
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10052615

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Caroline Whalley
Principal	Graham Lockwood
Telephone number	01945 584591
Website	www.elmroad.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@elmroad.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Elm Road Primary School joined The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust in November 2015. It has close links with the Nene and Ramnoth School in Wisbech, which is also a member of the trust.
- The trustees of the trust are responsible for the quality of education provided by the school. The trust also provides expertise in areas such as finance and premises that the school can draw on. The school has a local governing body.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, with one class in each year group apart from Year 5, which has two classes. Apart from the principal, all leaders have a full teaching responsibility.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. Over half of the pupils are White British and more than a third come from other White backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average, while an average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in every classroom across a range of subjects. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the trust, members of the local governing body, the principal and senior leaders, as well as other members of the teaching staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, looked at the work in their books and talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and school life.
- Information on how well pupils are doing, how behaviour is monitored and how pupils are kept safe was closely scrutinised. School self-evaluation documents and improvement plans were discussed with senior leaders.
- The views of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, as well as the 16 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the views of parents from a recent survey carried out by the school. The 16 responses to the staff survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Lesley Daniel, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kay Tims

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