

# Inspection of a good school: Elmstead Primary School

Holly Way, Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex CO7 7YQ

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Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

## **Outcome**

Elmstead Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils told me that they enjoy their learning in lots of different subjects, most of which are planned and taught well. This means that pupils are ready to start secondary school when they leave the school.

Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of learning and behaviour. They follow teachers' directions quickly and work sensibly in lessons. Little learning time is lost. Pupils learn to respect others' opinions. They are confident to share their ideas in discussions. Lunchtimes are friendly occasions. Pupils said that what I saw is typical of any day at their school. Bullying and acts of unkindness are rare. Teachers sort out problems quickly, so pupils feel happy and safe.

Many pupils take part in after-school activities. However, they would like the school to offer more clubs. Pupils like the various trips and visits that take place. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the whole school going to see a pantomime. School leaders seek and act upon pupils' suggestions. For example, leaders bought more playground equipment when pupils asked for it.

Leaders know what still needs to improve. Spanish is not taught consistently well. Also, some parents would like more information about how well their child is learning.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills that pupils should learn in each subject. Curriculum plans lay out in a logical order what pupils should learn. This helps pupils build on what they know already. Pupils' work is of a good and improving quality.

Teachers break learning down into smaller steps. Pupils get the chance to revisit and build on what they have learned before. This helps them achieve well in a range of subjects. In Spanish, this helps pupils use phrases correctly when speaking and in written work.

However, teachers' lack of subject knowledge means that they do not correct pupils' pronunciation.

Over their time in school, pupils become more fluent, confident readers. They gain a good understanding of what they read. This leads to pupils achieving well by the end of Year 6. Staff know how to help weaker readers. Adults focus precisely on what pupils need to improve. Pupils say that the books teachers read to them in class are interesting and leave them wanting more. Pupils told me how teachers encourage them to read at home too.

Mathematics teaching is effective. Pupils learn and remember important mathematical knowledge. Teachers make good use of resources. This helps pupils understand important ideas like place value and fractions. Pupils' work is of a good quality.

Leaders make sure that teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) have the skills needed to teach effectively across the curriculum. Staff speak highly of the support they receive and how it improves their teaching. Except for Spanish, teachers' subject knowledge is strong.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons. They ensure that pupils move on to new learning at the right pace. Teachers find the school's chosen approach to assessment is manageable. Teachers' use of assessment in Spanish and computing is underdeveloped. Leaders and teachers cannot yet check on what pupils know and can do in these subjects as well as they can in others.

Teachers and LSAs know the barriers to pupils' learning. Adults adapt activities so that they remain appropriately challenging for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps most pupils with SEND to access the curriculum well.

Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to share and reflect on their views. Pupils regularly take part in class discussions, including discussing what is in the news. A range of clubs and trips provide opportunities for pupils to widen their interests, including pupils who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders are looking at how they can extend the range of activities offered. Leaders make sure that pupils who need support for their attendance, behaviour or social and emotional development get it.

Staff, leaders and governors work effectively as a team. They share high ambitions for the school and its pupils. They make good use of work with partner schools to improve the quality of education provided in the school.

Most parents say that they are well informed about the school's work. Some would like more information about their child's progress.

Children make a good start to learning in Reception. They develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for learning in Year 1. Mathematics and reading are taught very well. Adults plan activities thoughtfully to support children's learning and progress. Established routines help children quickly develop positive relationships and good behaviour.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give safeguarding the highest priority. Staff know how to spot when pupils may be at risk of harm and how to report concerns. Leaders act decisively when staff pass on concerns. Leaders involve outside agencies quickly when necessary. Leaders follow up referrals to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Governors are rigorous in checking that pupils are safe.

Pupils learn to keep safe in PSHE lessons, computing lessons and assemblies. Organisations like the fire brigade and NSPCC contribute to assemblies. Pupils know how to stay safe online. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date about e-safety.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that training and professional development opportunities secure a good quality of education overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects. Although teachers plan effectively to support pupils' learning of vocabulary and grammar in Spanish, they do not consistently model correct pronunciation. Leaders should provide further training so that all teachers can better support pupils in speaking Spanish correctly.
- Teachers use formative assessment well across the curriculum. In reading and mathematics, teachers use summative assessment effectively to periodically measure pupils' achievement. This is not overly demanding on teachers' time. In Spanish and computing, leaders have not ensured that teachers are using assessment as effectively. Leaders should ensure that assessment underpins the computing and Spanish curriculum more effectively and supports teachers' planning. It should not add to teachers' workload.
- Leaders should ensure that they review the information they provide to parents so that all parents feel well informed about their child's learning and progress.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Elmstead Primary School to be good

on 19 and 20 November 2014.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115260
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10046445
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Margaret Lewis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian MacDonald
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elmsteadprimary.com">www.elmsteadprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19–20 November 2014

## Information about this school

- Elmstead Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than in most primary schools. The proportion of pupils identified as SEN support is in the lowest 20% nationally.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2015. There have been significant changes in teaching staff and leadership responsibilities since the previous inspection in 2014.
- The school works in partnership with Great Bentley and Frinton-On-Sea Primary Schools as part of the 'Learning Connections Cluster.' The schools have consulted with parents with a view to forming a multi-academy trust.
- Elmstead Nursery is located in the school grounds. It is not managed by the school. It is registered with Ofsted as an early years provider and inspected separately to the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team and the special needs coordinator (SENCo). A meeting was held with members of the

governing body. The inspector also had telephone conversations with the executive headteacher of the other schools in the 'Learning Connections Cluster' and a local school effectiveness officer.

- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics, computing and Spanish. In each subject, the inspector visited lessons in different year groups, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher as the designated lead for safeguarding to review examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector also checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons and at lunchtime. He spoke to pupils informally when visiting lessons and in groups to gather their views on the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. A variety of documents and records relating to the school's work, including behaviour and attendance information, were analysed.
- The 47 responses and free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. The inspector spoke to parents to gather their views on the school before the start of school on both days of the inspection. The 112 responses to a survey of parents carried out by the school in November 2018 were also considered.
- The 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey were considered alongside the views of teachers gathered during meetings with the inspector.

## **Inspection team**

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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