

Inspection of Elm Wood School

Carnac Street, West Norwood, London SE27 9RR

Inspection dates: 9–10 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are proud to be part of Elm Wood. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are safe, happy and behave well.

Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils try their best and achieve highly. Pupils know that there is always an adult available to help them with their learning.

Bullying is rare. Staff sort out any friendship issues quickly and effectively. Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and caring. Staff know each pupil by name and pupils feel valued. Pupils have many opportunities to help each other. For example, older pupils support younger children in the playground. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility as they progress through the school, for example as 'peer mediators'.

Pupils take part in lots of interesting activities outside of lessons, including clubs, sports competitions and musical events. Pupils really enjoy these activities. Pupils also go on visits that help them with their learning. For example, pupils recently visited The British Museum as part of a history topic. Leaders choose activities to introduce pupils to experiences they might not usually have. For instance, the Year 4 residential trip enables pupils to try new activities such as abseiling.

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

Leaders hold the highest ambitions for pupils' learning. They expect all pupils to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education. They have developed subject plans which support pupils to achieve well in all subjects. This includes in the early years. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high. Pupils have the knowledge and skills they need to get off to a strong start in Year 7.

Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. Teachers select books carefully to foster pupils' enthusiasm for reading. They also choose texts that enable pupils to deepen their knowledge of other topics they study. For instance, Year 6 pupils said that they had recently read 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' by John Boyne. They explained how this had helped them to understand how the Second World War changed people's lives.

The teaching of phonics is a clear priority. In the early years, children start learning phonics straight away. Teachers ensure that the youngest pupils practise their phonics knowledge regularly. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read fluently. A small number of pupils find it hard to learn to read. Staff identify these pupils promptly and provide them with extra support. Occasionally, this support is not sharply focused on plugging gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. This holds these pupils back from becoming accurate readers.

Mathematics lessons are carefully planned in order to deepen pupils' understanding of important concepts. For example, pupils in Year 6 solve division problems and give mathematical explanations for their answers. However, some pupils lack confidence in recalling number facts and times tables. This means that they find it difficult to multiply and divide efficiently when carrying out complex calculations.

Subjects such as writing, history, physical education (PE) and music are planned and taught effectively. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They plan sequences of lessons that build on what pupils already know. The many events and visits outside of lessons deepen pupils' learning.

The quality of art work is high. Subject plans introduce pupils to new techniques progressively. Pupils have well-planned opportunities to apply what they have studied. For instance, a recent project called 'Know me to teach me' enabled pupils to display their personal experiences, using collage. Pupils said how much they had enjoyed creating this art. Displays around the school celebrate pupils' achievements in this subject.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Teachers' planning ensures that these pupils acquire the same knowledge as their peers. Leaders review pupils' learning regularly and ensure that their needs are fully catered for.

The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is strong. It contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils reflect on a variety of topical and moral issues. They explain their feelings to each other and understand how being kind can help others.

Pupils behave well, including in the early years. At times, however, some pupils' behaviour prevents them from getting the most from their lessons. They need reminders from staff to complete tasks and listen to each other and adults.

Governors and leaders monitor the school effectively. The leadership team is well respected by staff, pupils and parents, and carers. Staff know that leaders are considerate of their workload. Staff appreciate the many opportunities they have to develop their teaching expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping pupils safe is the highest priority. Leaders and staff know pupils well. When families or pupils need it, leaders are quick to provide effective extra help.

All staff can recognise the warning signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They know how to report any concerns. Records are comprehensive.

Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including how to use electronic devices sensibly. Leaders are aware of risks in the local area. They invite visitors to school to help pupils learn how to keep safe. Teaching across different subjects helps pupils to think about their well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Most pupils acquire the phonics knowledge they need to read accurately and fluently. Leaders should maintain a sharp focus on supporting those pupils who find it particularly hard to learn to read. They should strengthen the quality of training that staff receive to ensure that they are experts in helping pupils to catch up quickly.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. However, a few pupils lack fluency in their times tables and number facts. Leaders know this and are taking actions to address it. However, those actions are not fully embedded. Therefore, this should be a continued focus for the school.
- Pupils behave well and want to succeed. However, some pupils' attitudes are not as strong as they could be. Occasionally, some pupils' behaviour gets in the way of their learning, and that of others. Leaders should ensure that all pupils learn to manage their own behaviour in classrooms so that teachers and pupils can focus on learning.

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're 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

Unique reference number	100597
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10110171
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community - Federation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Charles Asher and Alex Cambouris
Headteacher	Myrtle Charles
Website	www.gipsyhillfederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 January 2011

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Gipsy Hill Federation. The federation consists of six primary schools, which share one governing body.
- The school has two classes in each year group. The Nursery class provides part-time places for three- and four-year-old children. The school also offers full-time places in the Nursery class for eligible children.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the two executive headteachers, the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, class teachers and governors.
- We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their experience of school, both formally and informally.
- We visited lessons with senior leaders and listened to several pupils read.
- We focused deeply on reading, mathematics, history, PE, music and PSHE. We also looked at other subjects.
- We spoke to parents informally before school. We also considered the 69 responses on Parent View, including written comments.
- We considered a range of documentation provided by the school. We reviewed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement as well as subject plans. We also looked at records related to attendance, behaviour and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- We reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including the checks that leaders make on staff prior to starting their employment.
- We looked at information available on the school's website.

Inspection team

Frances Hawkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Pratt	Ofsted Inspector
Lucy Nutt	Ofsted Inspector

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