

# Inspection of a good school: Elmswell Community Primary School

Oxer Close, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9UE

---

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

## **Outcome**

Elmswell Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils like this very friendly, welcoming and caring school. The strong community spirit encourages them to get on well with each other. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe because staff look after them.

Bullying is not an issue. Pupils, staff and parents all agree. As explained by one pupil, 'If other people are sometimes horrible to you, then you ignore it, walk away and tell a teacher.' Others added, 'This works.'

Pupils are happy, interested in and enjoy their lessons. They smile as they move around the school. Pupils behave well and work hard because they get on well with their teachers – they want to do well for them.

Staff are ambitious for their pupils. They work hard to find the right approach for each pupil. They provide support, reassurance and encouragement to help them to do as well as they can.

Pupils enjoy the varied assemblies. They give their opinions in front of their peers. They like sharing their dreams and goals and discussing how they will achieve them. The visits, sports activity days and performances give pupils a chance to develop other skills and to grow in confidence.

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

Leaders have changed their approach to, and content of, their curriculum. It suits pupils better, particularly those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum remains broad. Pupils cover many different subjects. This helps them to become well-rounded young people.

Teachers have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn in each subject. Teachers plan together. There are now better links between what pupils learn in different subjects

and across year groups. The order in which pupils learn new information and ideas helps them to remember more.

The new curriculum is starting to work well across subjects. Staff are becoming more familiar with the new approaches. The 'low-stakes' tests help teachers to check that pupils acquire the skills they need to be successful. The curriculum leaders, some of whom are relatively new in post, are beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more closely.

Leaders know why the progress figures for reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2019. They are bringing about improvements. They check children's language skills in early years more closely. This helps to provide help sooner where it is required. In the older year groups, staff use classic texts to develop pupils' vocabulary and to understand different forms of literature. In mathematics, teachers are helping pupils to move beyond addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, so that they can model their answers more clearly and tackle more complex problems. Some pupils do not yet have the language comprehension skills they need to answer a wide range of teachers' questions.

Teachers use their sound subject knowledge and wide range of resources to support pupils to become fluent readers. Pupils can use their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils like reading books from Harry Potter to Star Wars. Staff have forged closer links with the local library to encourage more pupils to read more widely. Teachers display their five favourite books. Staff publish articles in a local newsletter. Each class has 'adopted' an author, and regular readers receive raffle tickets to win prizes. All are effective ways in which leaders promote reading across the school.

In the early years, children get off to a good start by picking up early reading and numeracy skills. The work on display shows that children are starting to appreciate concepts such as small and big. Children are well supervised, play together nicely, and are confident to speak with each other and adults. They establish good routines and their online records monitor how they progress over time. The move to more formal learning is helped by their 'Year 1 here we come' books so that they are ready when the time comes.

Pupils behave very well. They are keen to learn and enjoy the opportunities to mix outside learning with their work in class, such as through the Forest School. They take on extra responsibilities, such as junior road safety officers or helpers in 'Calm Corner.'

Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities available in physical education. They also like the opportunities provided for them outside of school. The clubs, theatre trips, competitions against other schools, residential visits and time spent looking at local places of worship provide valuable experiences.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders oversee a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding checks on staff are

complete and up to date. Staff are trained well, including on issues like county lines. They understand and carry out their safeguarding responsibilities well. Posters, such as 'BE SMART online', alongside information covered in lessons, help pupils to stay safe.

Staff know the children and their parents well. They know who their more vulnerable children are and provide valuable support. Pupils trust staff and tell them about any worries they have. Staff follow these up quickly and effectively.

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

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

- In 2019, pupils' progress figures dipped in reading and mathematics. These results reflect the general finding that some pupils do not understand exactly what teachers are asking them to do or how to write down their thoughts clearly enough. Leaders need to build on their work to improve pupils' comprehension skills and vocabulary so that pupils can successfully answer questions about their work that are presented in different ways.
- Leaders' changes to their curriculum are relatively new in some areas. Staff need to become more familiar with the new ways of working so that good practice is embedded across all subjects. Curriculum leaders need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely and take effective action so that all groups of pupils make the progress they should.

## **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 Elmswell Community Primary School to be good on 15–16 June 2016.

## **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 the school and 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>             | 124534   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Suffolk  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10121500   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Maintained   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 309  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Wynn Rees  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jane Ash   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.elmswell.suffolk.sch.uk">www.elmswell.suffolk.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 15–16 June 2016  |

## Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average size primary school maintained by the local authority.
- There have been some recent changes to senior and middle leadership roles.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders, members of the governing body, teachers and teaching assistants to discuss aspects of the school's curriculum and provision.
- I spoke with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. This entailed meeting with leaders to discuss these areas of the curriculum, visiting lessons, talking to teachers to find out how they teach these subjects, looking at pupils' workbooks and speaking to pupils about their learning.
- I met with the designated safeguarding leader to check that safeguarding procedures and processes were effective. I also checked the single central record to ensure that recruitment checks on staff have taken place.

- I observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime, and as they moved around the school.
- I took account of the 80 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 79 comments on the free-text service. I also took account of the 27 responses to the staff survey and the 68 responses to the pupils' survey.
- I spoke to staff and pupils informally during the school day.

### **Inspection team**

John Randall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:  
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020