

# Inspection of Elmhurst Junior School

Elmhurst Lane, Street, Somerset BA16 0HH

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Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

The quality of education is not good. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum builds well enough on what pupils know and understand already. As pupils move through the school, learning is not planned as well as it should be. This means that pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills they need in many subjects, including reading.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils. Leaders and staff have made Elmhurst a safe and nurturing place for pupils to learn. Pupils quickly learn to appreciate others by showing respect and kindness. These behaviours model the 'Elmhurst Etiquette'. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. Most pupils, staff, parents and carers agree that bullying is rare and staff deal with it quickly when it does happen. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. However, there are not always high expectations for what pupils can achieve in their lessons. This means that some pupils do not do as well as they could in their learning.

The high level of care, including the work of the parent and family support adviser and the emotional literacy support assistant, helps to support pupils well. Trained staff help pupils with their social, emotional and mental health needs.

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

The curriculum at Elmhurst is not developed well. Weaknesses remain in reading and writing. Leaders' actions are beginning to make a difference. Pupils do not learn new knowledge well enough.

Pupils' learning in English is particularly disjointed. Teachers do not use curriculum plans effectively. Leaders have not ensured that teachers are adapting their work to meet the abilities of the pupils they teach. This limits pupils' learning, especially for the most able. Nevertheless, leaders are keen to develop reading for pleasure. The library is well resourced and welcoming. Teachers choose class books carefully. The literacy leader has reviewed plans for reading to show what pupils should learn and when.

The writing curriculum does not build on what pupils already know and can do. Therefore, pupils' vocabulary and handwriting are often poor. Pupils try different styles of writing, such as reports and stories, but some teachers do not help pupils to write these effectively.

There is a similar picture in the wider curriculum. Leaders have not thought carefully about what pupils need to learn over time. Teachers are not guided well on what to teach and when. As a result, in some subjects, such as geography, the learning does not build on pupils' knowledge. Pupils repeat the same curriculum in several year groups without any new knowledge added.

Mathematics is a rapidly improving subject. Leaders have planned the curriculum well. Consequently, pupils tackle new learning with increasing success. Teachers adapt the mathematics curriculum to ensure that it is relevant for pupils.

Pupils are enthusiastic about some subjects in the curriculum. For example, they enjoy their learning in science as it helps them to develop a body of knowledge as they move through the school.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. The SEND coordinator puts the right support in place. Additional sessions, led by trained assistants, help pupils who are falling behind to catch up.

Pupils appreciate the many clubs that the school offers. They take their responsibilities as school councillors, sports ambassadors and 'Elmhurst buddies' seriously. They enjoy learning about different religions and cultures. Opportunities such as visits from authors and poets enrich pupils' experiences beyond the classroom.

Most pupils are keen to learn, and they come to school regularly. They behave well and concentrate in lessons. However, when some pupils are not able to learn effectively, they become distracted. Leaders make good use of teachers' records of poor behaviour to provide effective support so that there are fewer incidents.

There have been several changes to the governing body since the last inspection. Governors have a better understanding of their role. They know that they must hold leaders to account to ensure that pupils follow a well-planned curriculum and do well in their learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained and act quickly to deal with any concerns. They work effectively with external partners to secure the support that pupils need.

Leaders carry out all the required checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. The designated leaders for safeguarding work closely with organisations to help families, including those who would benefit from mental health support. Governors check safeguarding regularly when they visit the school.

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

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

- Leaders' work has led to improvements in the mathematics curriculum since the previous inspection. The order of what pupils need to know and remember is underway. However, in the foundation subjects, leaders have not planned a

curriculum that is demanding enough for pupils over time. Consequently, pupils are not learning at the depth they should. Leaders need to ensure that there is clear guidance for what teachers teach, when they teach it and how they teach it in every subject.

- The writing curriculum is not helping pupils improve sufficiently. Currently, there is an inconsistent approach to writing, including handwriting. Leaders need to ensure that a clear writing curriculum is in place so that pupils gain the knowledge they need to help them become successful writers.
- Teachers do not have a secure understanding of the school's reading curriculum. As a result, the curriculum is not providing the challenge that the most able pupils need. Leaders must check the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that teachers plan learning so that all pupils achieve well in reading.

## 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>	123663
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122334
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	329
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chairs of governing body</b>	Andrew Shepherd and Claire Axten
<b>Headteachers</b>	Tracy Edwards and Mike Lawrence
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elmhurstjuniorschool.org.uk">www.elmhurstjuniorschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the governing body since the previous inspection, with the appointment of two new co-chairs of governance.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Discussions took place with the co-headteachers, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, school curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- We did a scrutiny of the school's self-evaluation and safeguarding documents, curriculum plans, behaviour records and details of provision for pupils with SEND.
- We spoke to parents and considered the 69 responses to the online survey, Parent View, free-text responses and responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- We did deep dives in: reading, writing, mathematics, science and geography. This included discussions with school leaders about their intentions for these subjects, discussions with curriculum leaders and lesson visits to check how well the

subjects were being taught. We met with pupils and talked with them about their workbooks.

### **Inspection team**

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