

# Inspection of Elms Farm Community Primary School

Dorncliffe Avenue, Sheldon, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 0PJ

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>          |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>          |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>          |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>          |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>          |
| Early years provision        | <b>Good</b>          |
| Previous inspection grade    | Requires improvement |

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

Pupils enjoy learning at this rapidly improving school. The values of ambition, equality and community are at the heart of this school's work. Leaders set high expectations. They are determined that every child will leave the school with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their futures.

Staff support pupils to become confident, resilient learners. Pupils are expected to 'have a go'. They know it is 'OK to make a mistake', because teachers help them to improve their learning.

Pupils enjoy reading and listening to their teachers read stories to them. Leaders provide a wide range of reading books throughout the school. Pupils are excited about opportunities to attend clubs and partake in school visits now that COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic restrictions have eased.

Pupils are happy and safe. They are extremely well behaved in school. There is a positive culture where everyone is encouraged to be kind and help one another. Incidents of bullying are very rare, and when they arise, leaders deal with them swiftly and effectively.

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

Leaders' high expectations mean that pupils take pride in their work and achieve well. Leaders think carefully about what pupils need to learn. Staff feel well supported by school leaders. They receive the training they need and manage their workload carefully. Curriculum plans for art and the early years have only recently been developed. These areas are current development priorities for leaders.

Good communication between home and school helps children settle quickly into school routines. Pupils learn to care for themselves and others. They develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong focus on early language and communication skills. Teachers model these extremely well. Reading is prioritised. Recent improvements to early reading are highly effective. Phonics teaching has a clear structure and staff use appropriate resources. Staff make sure that pupils' reading books match the sounds that they learn.

Leaders check what teachers are teaching. They have ensured that handwriting is taught well. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy using newly learned sounds when they write. They check their work and improve it. There is a consistent approach to teaching mathematics throughout the school. Year 6 pupils enjoy discussing mathematical knowledge with their friends.

Pupils build up their knowledge in logical ways and remember what they have learned. In Year 5, they recall historical knowledge about Ancient Egypt taught last term. Pupils in Year 6 talk about keyboard and trombone lessons and the new

musical skills that they have learned. Teachers plan work carefully and check learning to ensure that all pupils do well and do not fall behind.

Elms Farm is an inclusive school. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need. Teachers adapt curriculum plans when necessary. These pupils achieve well in school. Parents are positive about the support their children receive.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils to be able to make a positive contribution to society. The school has achieved the Health for Life Award. Pupils learn about healthy relationships. They enjoy attending art events, music lessons, gardening club and sports club. Pupils enjoyed baking and selling cakes in the recent Macmillan cake sale. Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They are polite and courteous and play well together during social times. Derogatory or racist language is not tolerated. Leaders work hard with parents and external agencies to ensure that more pupils attend school regularly. Despite these efforts, a minority of pupils still have poor attitudes to school.

Governors know the school well. They have identified the right priorities for improvement. School leaders keep governors up to date with the progress made by the school. Governors carefully check the performance of the school. They are proud of the school's work to support the local community during the recent pandemic. Governors talk passionately about the 'Elms Farm Pantry' and the school's pastoral support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' welfare is prioritised by leaders. They make sure staff understand their role in keeping children safe. Staff record and report any concerns swiftly to safeguarding leaders. Staff recently updated their knowledge on child sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

The school works well with other organisations to support pupils and their families to get the help they need.

Leaders and governors check that staff are suitable before appointing staff.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They learn about online safety and how to recognise potential dangers and seek help.

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

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

- Some curriculum plans are not fully embedded. Leaders are not yet in a position to say they are successful. Leaders should now support subject leaders to review

the implementation and evaluate the impact of recent curriculum developments, particularly in art and the early years.

- A small minority of pupils do not attend school regularly. They need to be supported to develop positive attitudes towards school and instil the importance of regular school attendance. Leaders should take further steps to monitor and evaluate the impact of pastoral work with parents and external agencies so that attendance improves for these pupils.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 103381   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Birmingham   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10201020   |
| <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> | 356  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Stuart Lomax   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Emma Baxter  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.elmsfarmschool.co.uk">www.elmsfarmschool.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 4 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                 |

## Information about this school

- Ofsted last inspected the school in July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. That inspection judged the school to require improvement.
- The current headteacher was appointed in April 2021. She was previously deputy headteacher at the school.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and geography. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are planned and taught. Inspectors also looked at

work from some other subjects in less detail and spoke with pupils, staff and parents about the school curriculum.

- Inspectors reviewed published information about the school and looked at the school's website.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, staff, leaders, parents and governors about safeguarding arrangements and routines at the school. They examined the record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors watched pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day. They spoke to parents, staff and pupils about behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, governors, teachers, learning support assistants and pupils. Inspectors also talked informally with pupils and parents to gather information about school life. An inspector had a short conversation with a local authority adviser.
- By the end of the inspection there were 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector considered these and also looked at 43 free-text responses to Ofsted's survey for parents.

### **Inspection team**

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Lorraine Lord, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Anne Potter                   | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Bates                    | Ofsted Inspector |

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