

Inspection of a good school: Elm Park Primary School

South End Road, Elm Park, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 5UA

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

Elm Park Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. The large, modern, open spaces around the school have a calm and friendly feel. Pupils enjoy learning in these spaces as well as in their classrooms.

Staff at all levels have worked together to create a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject plans are sequenced carefully. This means that teachers know the purpose of each lesson and how to build on what pupils have already learned.

Pupils feel safe at school. They said that bullying is rare. If there are disagreements, pupils know that peer mentors and staff will help them to resolve these problems. Pupils behave well in and outside of lessons. Parents and carers shared this view of the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View agreed that pupils are happy, safe and behave well. The comment of one parent that, 'My children love going to school. They really enjoy learning,' was typical of the views of the majority of parents who submitted written comments.

Pupils work collaboratively during lessons. They discuss their learning and support others to understand. However, lessons are not disrupted by these discussions. Pupils focus carefully on their learning.

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

The teaching of early reading, including phonics, starts as soon as children join Reception. Leaders have established a well-structured approach to teaching reading. Some staff are new to teaching the school's reading programme. Leaders are providing training for these members of staff to improve their expertise in teaching pupils to read using phonics.

Leaders know that pupils must learn to read using books that contain only the phonics they have been taught. Most of the time, pupils' reading books match the sounds that

they know. Occasionally, however, pupils take home books which are not fully matched to their place in the phonics programme. While this does not happen often, it sometimes affects pupils' reading.

Pupils use their phonics knowledge accurately to read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are fluent readers. Pupils who need to catch up get lots of extra help. Older pupils discussed their love of reading and which authors they enjoy most. Well-organised classroom libraries provide pupils with high-quality books to read.

Leaders have given high priority to pupils' knowledge and use of technology. Pupils use devices with increasing confidence to support their learning in all subjects. Leaders have considered carefully what pupils learn in computing. Subject plans are well organised so that pupils develop their knowledge over time. Lessons about online safety are age appropriate and build on what pupils already know. For example, pupils shared with teachers their own experiences and knowledge of social media. Teachers used this as the starting point for a series of lessons.

Pupils' knowledge of mathematical concepts strengthens as they move through the school. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn and in what order. Pupils remember what they have been taught previously. They use resources with confidence to help them to visualise the problems they are solving. They are proud of their achievements, many of which are celebrated on the 'wow' displays around the school.

Leaders make sure that the different subjects support pupils' wider development. Pupils have a variety of opportunities, in lessons and at other times, to take responsibilities and help their friends. For example, in the playground, peer mentors take an active role in helping to sort out any disagreements. They lead a range of play activities for their peers. Digital leaders help to ensure that equipment is working. They enjoy testing new applications. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils spoke about the importance of being an 'upstander' rather than 'bystander' to support each other. Pupils behave well.

Leaders are committed to including all pupils in every aspect of school life. Pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders make sure that pupils with specific needs receive the support of highly skilled and well-trained staff. These pupils have the resources they need to achieve well.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. Leaders take staff well-being seriously. Staff are positive about how leaders at all levels support them. Staff particularly like the team approach to overseeing different subjects. They feel there is always someone to turn to for advice. Staff have a shared understanding of leaders' expectations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. They receive regular training and know the risks their pupils face. Staff work closely with families and

other agencies to ensure that the right support is provided. Record-keeping is well organised and reviewed regularly. Staff are vigilant. They are aware of the additional risks that may exist due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They discuss confidently issues around online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have adopted a well-structured system for teaching phonics. This means that pupils get off to a strong start in learning to read. However, occasionally, some pupils read from books that are not precisely matched to the sounds that they have been taught. Leaders need to ensure that these occasional discrepancies are alleviated. They need to ensure that all pupils learn to read using books that are matched precisely to the sounds they have been taught and know securely.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15 September 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 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

Unique reference number	102272
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10200038
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Earle
Headteacher	Victoria Morris
Website	www.elmparkprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	15–16 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

No relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and members of staff. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and met with members of the governing body.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and computing. For each of these subjects, the inspector held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. He considered safeguarding records, documentation and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks.

- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. He considered the 93 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 90 free-text responses.

Inspection team

Adam Vincent, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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