

# Inspection of Elm CofE Primary School

Main Road, Elm, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 0AG

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 February 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Elm CofE school is a place where pupils' emotional well-being is highly regarded. Pupils feel well looked after. They get on well with their peers, both in the classroom and on the playground. In early years, children share resources or wait patiently for their turn to use equipment.

Pupils learn about how others may be different from them. Differences do not matter to pupils. They are part of one community, working together. Pupils do not tolerate bullying or unkind behaviour. If it happens, it is quickly reported to an adult and sorted out.

Pupils, including children in early years, behave well around the school. Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. While there are high expectations of behaviour, sometimes a pupil may find behaving well to be tricky. Staff help them learn from their mistakes. As one pupil noted, 'Teachers don't put us down, they build us up.'

Every pupil, across the school, gets to experience a trip. Pupils talked excitedly about visits to places like the zoo and the space museum. They enjoy reading and sharing books in the 'reading cafe', or attending other clubs like 'dance club'.

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

Between the previous inspection and this one, there was a drop in academic standards, particularly in mathematics. Pupils were not making as much progress as they should have been. The trust swiftly addressed this, putting in place a new leadership team and governing body to make improvements. Leaders evaluated the previous curriculum plans and made rapid changes, so that pupils now access a high-quality curriculum.

Across a wide range of subjects, leaders have identified what they want pupils to know. This knowledge is laid out in a logical order from early years upwards. In geography, for example, younger pupils learn where countries are located, so that by Year 6 they can link this to their knowledge of different climates. Pupils build a range of complex vocabulary linked to their learning. Many subjects are now well established and support all pupils to achieve well.

In a very small number of subjects, the positive changes to curriculum plans are new. Where this is the case, pupils can remember some of what they have learned, but do not have the deep understanding they have in other subjects. Additionally, in these subjects, the links to the early years curriculum have not had time to become established, and so ensure children's seamless transition from early years to key stage 1.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. High-quality subject training from the trust enhances teachers' professional knowledge. Teachers select learning activities that

help pupils gain more knowledge. They regularly check pupils' understanding. Teachers make effective changes to their lessons to address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. There are clear opportunities across the school day to read or be read to. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. A well-sequenced reading curriculum starts promptly in early years. It supports pupils effectively to become confident readers, by building their reading knowledge step by step. A range of appropriate support and interventions help pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly.

Leaders want the best for all pupils. Staff use the detailed information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure they access a curriculum suited to their needs. In-class support helps pupils with their learning. Pupils with SEND are happy in school and achieve well.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is taken seriously by staff and pupils alike. It is an important part of the school. The PSHE programme covers many different topics in an age-appropriate way. Pupils have a secure understanding of a range of subjects like relationships, how their body changes and how to be a good citizen.

High standards of behaviour are expected from all pupils. Across the school, staff consistently and fairly celebrate positive behaviour. Strong pastoral and mental health support gives pupils, including those in early years, the tools they need to be successful in their learning. Pupils are focused on their learning. Classrooms are calm and orderly.

Governors and trustees ensure that the information they receive from leaders is accurate. They hold leaders to account effectively. Leaders and the trust work closely together to monitor and improve the quality of the curriculum for all pupils. Staff development is closely matched to the needs of the school. Staff told inspectors that they are well supported to do what is right for pupils. They value leaders' drive to make the school better for all.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff access a range of high-quality safeguarding training that is regularly updated. As a result, all staff have a secure knowledge of how to keep pupils safe, and how to quickly spot if a pupil is at risk of harm.

There is a clear procedure for reporting concerns to the safeguarding team. The processes and systems are known and used by all staff, including those in the pre-school. Safeguarding records have clear chronologies which show swift and appropriate responses to concerns raised about children. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that children get the help they need.

Pupils have a detailed understanding of the risks they face online. They know what to do to keep themselves safe, and who to go to if they have a worry.

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

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

- A small number of improved curriculum plans have recently been introduced by leaders. In these subjects, pupils do not remember as much of their learning as they do in the other well-established subjects. Leaders need ensure that their curriculum plans are strongly established and consistently implemented, with clear links to the early years setting.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143835
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10213308
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Peter Maxwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jade Betts
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elm.cambs.sch.uk">www.elm.cambs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Elm CofE Primary School converted to be an academy in November 2017. When its predecessor school, Elm CofE Primary School, was inspected in March 2014 it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The school, through the trust, manages a pre-school on site that caters for younger children, including two- to three-year-olds.

## 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 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work
- Inspectors also considered curriculum plans and a range of pupils' work from science, art, computer science and PSHE.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, and reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures, processes and systems. Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and trustees about safeguarding in schools.
- Inspectors checked that the early years provision meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff across both days of inspection.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's own pupil survey, and spoke to a range of pupils from different year groups.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 11 free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Isabel Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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