

Inspection of Elaine Primary School

Elaine Avenue, Rochester ME2 2YN

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at Elaine Primary School. The relationships between pupils and teachers are respectful. Pupils described their teachers as being helpful and interested in them. Pupils benefit from a very ambitious curriculum. Leaders have made reading a high priority. As a result, most pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They say that incidents of bullying are incredibly rare. Inspectors agree. Pupils told inspectors that when they fall out, teachers listen carefully to them and help to resolve any problems.

All staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils who find managing their emotions more difficult get the support they need. Highly trained staff help pupils, including those within the Elaine Education Centre, to manage their anxieties and work towards self-regulation. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful places.

Pupils are given a range of responsibilities. Jobs such as the school's club, play and junior leaders mean that older pupils make a purposeful contribution to the life of the school.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. Supported by the trust, leaders have created a curriculum which raises pupils' aspirations and gives them interesting experiences across all subjects. The trust provides opportunities for teachers and leaders to share strong practice and ideas. Specialist staff support teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in class. All staff are proud to work at Elaine. They say that leaders consider their workload and help them to manage it.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. A curriculum that is planned around books means that children are introduced to new and exciting language. Staff use assessment to plan activities that help children develop their skills. Children present as confident individuals. Staff share helpful guidance with parents. It helps parents support their child's learning and wider development.

Leaders' chosen phonics programme has been carefully organised. Staff have the skills and knowledge they need to teach phonics accurately. Teachers assess pupils' phonics knowledge regularly. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds that they are taught. Pupils who need additional support benefit from small-group work and one-to-one reading with an adult. Older pupils see themselves as readers and value the support they have received to overcome difficulties. Reading corners in classrooms and Wednesdays' parent and child reading times encourage pupils to read regularly.

In subjects such as mathematics and art, leaders have carefully considered the order in which learning is introduced to pupils. Here, the learning is well sequenced. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present new ideas to pupils in a logical and considered way. As a result, pupils can talk in detail about their learning in these subjects.

Leaders have introduced very ambitious global themes across the curriculum. These provide challenging ideas for pupils to explore. In some subjects, such as geography, pupils do not have the prior knowledge they need to tackle some difficult concepts. The geography curriculum has not taken into account learning that some pupils have lost through the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that they are not building their learning securely.

Leaders are in the process of changing the way in which pupils' learning is checked. The ambitious changes that leaders have made to the curriculum are not yet reflected in the checks that teachers are making in subjects, such as computing. This means that teachers do not have the full picture of pupils' skills and knowledge in some subjects.

Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and respect. They enact these values in the way they treat one another. This is because leaders' personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is carefully planned. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They are encouraged to make healthy choices at lunchtime and stay active during the school day. A range of extra-curricular clubs encourage pupils to stay active.

The new headteacher and her team already show a shared determination to drive improvements in the school. They share their clear strategic plans with governors. Governors use these to inform their visits and challenge leaders. They check that the curriculum and other systems work well. This is a school where staff feel valued and most parents feel happy to send their children. Some families do not yet send their children to school every day. Where concerns have been raised, leaders have been responsive, always keeping the needs of the children at the heart of decision-making.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The trust cascades training to school level well. Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates so that the procedures for reporting concerns are well known. All staff know the risks their pupils face. Concerns are shared swiftly. Leaders have the skills to identify when a pupil needs additional help. They work with a range of agencies to put in place the support that pupils need.

Visitors, such as the police and charities, teach children important messages about how to stay safe outside of school. The computing curriculum ensures that pupils

have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils speak knowingly about how to stay safe on- and offline.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum takes enough account of the learning that some pupils lost during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some pupils are not building their learning securely. Leaders should refine the curriculum to address this and ensure that pupils have the prerequisite knowledge they need to tackle challenging concepts and curriculum content.
- Assessment processes in some foundation subjects are still being refined to reflect the school's new curriculum. As a result, teachers are not yet able to consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils know and understand and can address any knowledge gaps.
- Good relationships have developed between home and school, resulting in most parents and carers helping their children at home. Leaders need to build on this positive partnership work to ensure every family expects to send their child to school every day.

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.

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	145926
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10238344
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sinead O'Brien
Headteacher	Sarah Martin
Website	www.elaine.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Elaine Primary School became an academy school in May 2018. It is part of the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provisions.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, The Elaine Education Centre, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision supports up to 30 pupils with education, health and care plans for social, emotional and mental health needs.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinators and trust leaders. The lead inspector met the chief executive officer of the Inspire Partnership Academy Trust and the chair of the local governing body. She also spoke with a trustee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team explored the school's work to safeguard pupils and held discussions with governors, leaders, staff and pupils. They scrutinised a range of documents and records, including procedures for checking the suitability of staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day, including during lunchtimes. They met formally, and spoke informally, with staff and pupils. They also carefully considered responses to Ofsted's parent and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Jo Lakey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz McIntosh	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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