

Inspection of a good school: Elm Grove Primary School

Elm Grove, Elm Grove Primary School, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 3ES

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Outcome

Elm Grove Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's curriculum is successfully designed to enable all pupils to be included in learning. This is underpinned by the school motto of 'Everyone Included, Everyone Valued. Learning and Thriving Together'. A kind and nurturing environment permeates throughout this school. This is recognised by parents, pupils and staff. Everyone is made to feel welcome. One pupil summarised the school's celebration of difference by saying, 'If all the colours were the same, there would be no rainbows.' This theme is reflected throughout the school.

Playtimes are purposeful occasions. Pupils play enthusiastically at the school oasis and build models using the vast array of items on offer. Bullying rarely occurs, but if it does, leaders take appropriate action. Pupils acknowledge this and can name adults to talk to if they have any worries. This helps them to feel safe.

Everyone is clear what the three school rules are. Pupils know how important it is to be 'ready, respectful and safe.' They demonstrate this through their positive behaviour. Leaders have high ambitions for pupils. These are generally realised. Where outcomes have been lower, leaders have taken swift action to provide effective support.

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

Leaders have successfully designed a well-planned curriculum which identifies the key content that pupils will learn. This curriculum begins in the early years and builds throughout the school. The school team are refining the most effective strategies to support pupils' learning. In some foundation subjects, leaders have not yet considered how information about what pupils have remembered will inform future teaching. This means that pupils sometimes have gaps in their learning.

Leaders' high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are realised through the effective implementation of the curriculum. Teachers use questioning, modelling and recaps to check that pupils understand key

concepts. As a result, pupils learn the intended content. Leaders have identified that outcomes in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 were not good enough. Consequently, staff provide targeted intervention and support for pupils. Teachers make appropriate adaptations so all pupils can access learning. An inclusive environment is evident throughout the school.

A love of reading has been developed through the school. Pupils talk animatedly about books they are reading and they share their understanding with enthusiasm. Leaders identified that pupils were not learning to read quickly enough. They have taken appropriate action. As a result, there is now a consistent approach towards the teaching of early reading. This is the first year that this has been fully in place. Pupils are now learning to read more quickly and children in the early years learn to read from the start of school. When pupils struggle with certain sounds, teachers provide additional support so they can keep up with their peers. There are some minor inconsistencies in staff's delivery of phonics sessions. Leaders know this and extra training is planned to address this.

High expectations for behaviour result in a calm and orderly environment. This means that learning is not disturbed. Pupils are courteous towards one another and model good manners. On the few occasions where behaviour falls short of expectations, staff address this promptly. Restorative conversations are used to quietly remind pupils of the school rules. This enables pupils to adapt their behaviour accordingly. Some pupils require additional support with managing their own behaviour. In order to meet these pupils' needs, the school offers space and effective support through the Nest and Canopy provision.

Pupils talk positively about the breadth of experiences on offer to them. There are a variety of clubs that pupils enjoy attending, ranging from dodgeball and cricket to disco and newspaper club. They also demonstrate their talents during events within the local community. Through the curriculum and assemblies, pupils develop their understanding of important themes such as tolerance and keeping healthy. Pupils are proud to take an active role in school life by being a play leader as well as being a representative on the school council or eco-council.

Leaders place great emphasis on collaborative working. They consider how evidence-based research is relevant to the school and work with staff to embed this within teaching. Leaders, including governors, are mindful of the impact that curriculum changes may have on workload. To mitigate this, they make sure there are frequent opportunities for this to be discussed. Leaders have created a caring culture where aspirations are high within the school. This is recognised by all stakeholders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that everyone in the school community understands there is a shared responsibility towards safeguarding. Staff and governors have completed safeguarding training. They have a common understanding of safeguarding and know the procedures

to follow if they have a concern. All staff follow these. Leaders provide support to families in many ways. This includes the Pantry, an outdoor shed equipped with food, toiletries and spare uniforms that families can freely access. This is supported by the parent teacher association.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in the real world. Older pupils talk confidently about their digital footprint and how it may impact them in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For some foundation subjects, leaders have not fully considered how to assess what pupils have learned. This means that there is not always an accurate picture of what pupils have remembered over time. Leaders need to continue to refine assessment systems and practice so that the precise knowledge pupils remember is understood.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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	114477
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10241980
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Diana Boyd
Headteacher	Louise Willard
Website	www.elmgrove.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteachers. She also met with other school leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with eight governors, including the chair of governing body. The inspector also spoke with a representative from Brighton and Hove local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also reviewed curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about science and music.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the 152 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 109 free-text responses. The inspector talked with some parents on the second morning of the inspection.
- The inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement development plan and school self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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