

Inspection of Elton Primary School

School Lane, Elton, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4LT

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2023

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff greet pupils warmly each morning at this welcoming and caring school. Leaders are building positive relationships with families across the school community. Pupils feel safe. They know that staff will listen to them and give them the support they need. Leaders deal with bullying effectively. They have high expectations for behaviour. Classrooms are calm. This allows pupils to do their best in lessons.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well in the majority of subjects.

Pupils understand fairness, equality and diversity. They recognise that 'being unique makes you special' in this inclusive school. Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. They are proud to take on leadership roles, such as librarians or as members of the school council.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of high-quality opportunities that enhance their learning and support their personal development. Many links have been made with industry, and this helps to support the school's vision to raise aspirations. Pupils participate in interesting trips and visits. There is also a wide range of clubs, including coding and numerous sports.

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

Leaders have secured important improvements to the quality of education. They have worked diligently, including with a range of education professionals and through reaching out to different sectors of the local community.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Teachers are well trained to deliver the curriculum. Although published data in 2022 suggested that standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 were below where they should have been, most of the pupils who attended school regularly reached the expected standards. Leaders are working more effectively with families where absence is a barrier to achievement.

Leaders have identified well-ordered steps in learning from the early years through to Year 6. Pupils identify and use links and connections between their prior learning and new learning. This is helping pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills in most subjects.

Teachers check how well pupils are remembering what they have learned in lessons. This highlights which pupils need more help or guidance. Where more help is needed, teachers typically act swiftly to arrange extra support for learning.

In most subjects, leaders check how well the curriculum helps pupils to increase their knowledge and improve their skills successfully over time. In a small number of subjects, the checks made on the curriculum and how well it is implemented are less well developed. This prevents subject leaders from fully understanding the impact of all aspects of the curriculum on how well pupils remember and practise their learning over time in these subjects.

Leaders have introduced a well-ordered phonics curriculum. Teachers in the early years and in key stage 1 build pupils' phonics knowledge skilfully. They make sure that pupils read books that are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Teachers are swift to spot any pupils who may be falling behind with their reading. Staff help these pupils to catch up quickly. Older pupils are developing effective reading habits. They speak enthusiastically about the books they have studied.

Children in the early years, including two-year-old children, settle into school life quickly. They have a well-developed understanding of the classroom routines. Pupils behave well. There is little disruption to the learning of other pupils. This helps pupils to develop confidence and independence. Across the school, teachers encourage pupils, including children in the early years, to extend their vocabulary.

Pupils understand the importance of developing respectful relationships with people who may be different from themselves. Leaders make sure that pupils understand a range of important topics, such as democracy. Pastoral support for pupils is effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs identified accurately. Detailed learning plans set out precisely the help that these pupils should receive in school. These plans are well implemented and this enables pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff work closely with outside agencies and specialist providers to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need.

Leaders have taken action to improve attendance. They have created effective partnerships with families and developed clear procedures. However, reducing the rate of persistent absence and its impact on pupils' achievement remains a priority.

Governors know the school and its community well. They are well informed about the quality of education that pupils receive. Governors worked effectively to monitor progress against the actions in the school's development plan.

Governors and leaders take staff workload and well-being into consideration when making decisions about the school. Staff feel respected and valued. They appreciate the opportunities that they have to participate in professional development and training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including for pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Staff know the school's safeguarding procedures well. Leaders ensure that staff complete appropriate training, and keep staff's knowledge of safeguarding up to date. This, along with their knowledge of the children and their families, helps them to quickly identify pupils who may be at risk from harm. Leaders' employment of a learning support mentor, well-trained staff and effective liaison with other agencies ensure that pupils and families are well supported.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about online safety and the impact of cyber-bullying. Pupils hear important advice and guidance from community police officers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers' assessment information is not always sufficient to highlight what pupils have remembered and can and cannot do in some areas of the curriculum. This means that teachers are sometimes not identifying where there could be gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers sharpen their assessment strategies in these subjects so that they can make certain that pupils' learning is secure in all elements of the curriculum.

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	111225
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10268354
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Canham
Headteacher	Kevin Manning
Website	www.elton.cheshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- More pupils join and leave the school at times other than those that are typically seen in primary schools.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders and members of staff. They also spoke with members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with representatives from the local authority and the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors looked at a range of documents and spoke with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education and geography. They talked with curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors also observed some pupils reading to staff.
- Inspectors also considered other subjects. They spoke with leaders about the curriculums in these subjects, their implementation and their assessment.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and as they moved around school. They also observed pupils in the dining hall and playing outside at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also met with parents before school to find out their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Vanessa MacDonald

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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