

Inspection of Elmhurst Junior School

Elmhurst Lane, Street, Somerset BA16 0HH

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The Elmhurst values of respect, trust, kindness and forgiveness are an important part of school life. Pupils develop strong, respectful relationships with adults. They are kind to each other and learn to forgive mistakes. The school has high expectations of pupils and provides a good quality of education. Pupils are ambitious for their futures.

Most pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy the range of subjects they follow. Pupils understand the expectations that the school has of their behaviour. They like the different ways the school rewards them for getting it right. A small number of pupils find managing their behaviour more difficult. Staff support these pupils well. They ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted.

Pupils benefit from a range of trips, often linked to their learning of the curriculum. For example, pupils visit historical sites or a local farm. Pupils in Year 6 develop independence through their experience of a residential. Pupils proudly take on the role of being on the school council. They raise money for charity by organising events, such as cake sales.

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

Pupils follow a broad and well-sequenced curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. In most subjects, teaching then breaks this down for pupils into small, manageable steps. Pupils make connections between new learning and what they already know. This means they build their knowledge successfully over time. For example, year 6 scientists show a deep understanding of how the circulatory system works.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They continually refine and improve the curriculum. They share their expertise with other staff. In most subjects, they check carefully what pupils remember. However, in some subjects, this is not precise enough to identify gaps in pupils' learning or misconceptions.

In subjects where published outcomes are not strong, such as mathematics, leaders have a confident understanding of the reasons why. In response, the mathematics curriculum has been strengthened. Therefore, current pupils develop their arithmetic skills well and are fluent mathematicians.

Through the English curriculum, pupils read a range of text types and genres. Many pupils say they read for pleasure in school and at home. The local festival of literature proved popular with pupils. They spoke enthusiastically about meeting an author and hearing excerpts from her book. The library is well resourced and pupils visit it often. Pupils also earn the privilege of reading in the library's tepee.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff use information about pupils with SEND to adapt their teaching appropriately.

The school identifies pupils who need additional support with reading. These pupils follow a phonics programme suitable for their age. However, the teaching and guidance provided for pupils is not precise enough to ensure their reading skills improve quickly.

Pupils follow a well-planned 'curriculum for life' programme. This covers age-appropriate learning on healthy lifestyles. Pupils are taught how to make good choices. For example, they learn about vaping and the dangers of smoking. Pupils understand how to keep safe when online and in the community. They learn about different cultures from around the world.

A significant number of the local governing body are new to role. They are led by an experienced chair, who understands the school's priorities. Together they challenge leaders effectively.

Staff are proud to work at Elmhurst school and feel well supported in their roles through the school's professional development programme. They feel empowered by the responsibility of leading a subject, for example. Leaders are mindful of staff well-being and help them to manage their workload effectively. The culture at the school is one of transparency, where staff work together as a team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not receive precise support to help them to improve. As a result, they continue to find reading difficult and do not catch up quickly with their peers. The school must ensure that there is high-quality teaching of phonics, so that pupils learn to read well.
- In some subjects, there is not a clear approach to checking what pupils know and remember. As a result, teachers do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or address misconceptions consistently. Leaders should ensure that the use of assessment is effective in all subjects, so that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	123663
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10288153
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hazel Callaghan
Headteacher	Fiona Airey
Website	www.elmhurstjuniorschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. She took up her post in September 2021.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, the chair and vice chair of the local governing body and the school improvement partner.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), mathematics, science, history, and physical education. 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Wigley	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Lucas	Ofsted Inspector

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