

Inspection of Elm Grove Primary School, Worthing

Elm Grove Primary School, Elm Grove, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 5LQ

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a nurturing school where every child is known and nurtured. Many staff, parents and pupils say that the school is 'like one big family'. As one parent reported to inspectors, 'It's a happy place where staff really care about each individual.' Inspectors found this to be the case.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and given the help they need to succeed. Those who need it receive useful extra support. The school provides a range of different opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their talents and interests. This includes in the early years, where the youngest children flourish in a carefully considered setting. As a result, pupils achieve highly.

Pupils are polite and considerate. They all know and follow the school rules – 'be ready, be safe and be respectful'. Pupils meet the high expectations set by adults. They play well together and enjoy positive relationships with each other and staff. They are proud of the school's welcoming environment and demonstrate kind and understanding attitudes towards all their peers. As a result, learning is rarely interrupted, bullying is uncommon, and children feel safe and well cared for.

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

Since the previous inspection, the curriculum has been redeveloped. It is ambitious and well thought out across the early years, and key stages 1 and 2. In each subject, the school has considered carefully what it wants pupils to know and the order in which this content will be taught. This clarity of curriculum thinking means teachers know precisely what to teach and when. Staff skilfully identify pupils' additional needs and make suitable adaptations in response. They work successfully in partnership with outside agencies to make sure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help that they need. This ensures that they can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

In subjects where the curriculum is most established, such as English and mathematics, teaching is effective. Teachers present new learning with clarity, and check pupils' understanding skilfully. Teachers then use this information to adapt learning and ensure that the work given to pupils builds on what they know. As a result, pupils are able to confidently recall what they have been taught and achieve well.

In a minority of other subjects, the curriculum is in an earlier stage of development. As a result, teaching can lack precision and pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school is alert to this. In these subjects, investment in resources and training is helping teachers develop the subject knowledge they need to teach with confidence. Work to develop how adults check pupils' understanding in some subjects is ongoing. Consequently, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified quickly enough.

Pupils attend well. The school works positively to support families, and to help pupils who need help to further improve their attendance. A clear behaviour policy is commonly understood by all pupils, and staff consistently set high expectations. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful environments, where learning is rarely interrupted.

Children in early years learn to read as soon as they start school. The chosen phonics scheme is taught consistently well by suitably trained staff. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' progress in reading. When teachers identify gaps in pupils' reading knowledge, targeted support ensures that these pupils catch up. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. This helps them to develop fluency in reading.

Pupils benefit from a carefully structured personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They can confidently articulate how to keep themselves safe online. They understand the importance of learning about different faiths and religions in modern Britain, and they can explain democracy. Pupils benefit from a range of after-school clubs and engage positively with a growing range of trips and visits. As a result, pupils' curiosity is nurtured, helping pupils to develop personally and socially.

Leaders at all levels demonstrate a relentless commitment to improvement and to providing the best possible education for pupils. Governors know the school well. They offer well targeted support and challenge and discharge their statutory responsibilities efficiently. All stakeholders praise the school's community ethos. Notably, staff commend leaders' recent actions to address workload and support their well-being. As a result, there is a palpable sense of 'team' among the staff at this school, where everyone feels valued and proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have the subject expertise to teach the newer parts of the curriculum precisely and with confidence. Consequently, pupils do not always learn as well as they could in these subjects. The school should ensure that staff receive the training they need to deliver all parts of the curriculum consistently well.
- Assessment in some subjects is not as effective as it could be. This means teachers do not always identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or check their understanding of the intended curriculum well enough. The school needs to continue its work to develop and embed an approach to assessment that informs teaching, so that it routinely builds on what pupils already know.

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	125863
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10296320
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Hamilton
Headteacher	Lynsey Udell (Substantive Headteacher) Nick Choate (Interim Headteacher)
Website	www.elmgrove.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, no pupils attended any sort of alternative provision.
- The substantive headteacher was on maternity leave at the time of this inspection.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met and spoke with leaders, staff, pupils, parents, governors and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design technology and religious education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers, and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered 55 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with the school's special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENCo).

Inspection team

James Stuart, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Cottingham

Ofsted Inspector

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