

Inspection of Elburton Primary School

Haye Road South, Elburton, Plymouth, Devon PL9 8HJ

Inspection dates:	19 to 20 November 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Keith Smithers. This school is part of Learning Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Spry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Butcher.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) flourish at Elburton Primary School. The expertly planned curriculum enables pupils to enjoy learning and achieve very well.

The school prioritises the development of pupils' character. Through the curriculum, pupils develop exceptionally strong citizenship skills. For instance, pupils articulate with knowledge the importance of free speech and the rule of law. They learn about democracy through voting for the school council. Pupils have a profound understanding of the importance of equality and mutual respect. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate empathy, kindness and respect in their interactions with each other.

Pupils enjoy a breadth of opportunities to develop their knowledge of the world beyond school. For example, pupils develop leadership skills through roles such as 'mini police officers'. Pupils develop their physical and mental health very well through swimming and a range of sports. They have opportunities to deepen their knowledge of science and technology through the STEM club. They develop their singing skills through the weekly singing assembly where they also practise their Makaton signing with expertise. Children in Reception Year develop their knowledge of the world through engaging with visitors such as lifeboat volunteers.

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

The school has extremely high aspirations and expectations for all pupils, including pupils with SEND, to achieve socially, emotionally and academically. Pupils achieve consistently above the national average published outcomes in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. The school has expertly designed the curriculum to enable and support pupils to continually build on their prior knowledge. Consequently, pupils are able to learn progressively more complex concepts as they move through the school. For instance, in English, pupils learn how to identify complex linguistic features and apply them in their own writing with impressive skill.

Pupils' oracy skills are developed enabling them to rehearse and share their ideas very well. From pre-school, children's language and communication development is prioritised. Activities are carefully planned to generate and extend children's talk so that they can communicate their thinking and needs. For instance, Reception children were observed discussing knowledgeably how to save shipwrecked people with their make-believe lifeboat.

Reading lies at the heart of the curriculum. From pre-school to key stage 1, children and pupils learn to read very well. The early reading curriculum is planned with expertise enabling all pupils, including those who struggle, to read with fluency and understanding. Leaders are meticulous in checking pupils' reading knowledge and ensuring that teaching is adapted to meet pupils' learning needs. Pupils across the school are effusive about reading. They relish the opportunities to read independently and listen to their teachers read novels. In the early years, children respond with excitement and enthusiasm to

stories. They develop their knowledge of early reading through the repetition of rhymes, poems and classic tales very well.

Pupils, including children in the early years, with SEND receive exceptional support enabling them to learn without barriers. The school's vision to enable all pupils with SEND to excel is realised through the curriculum. Through a forensic approach to identifying the strengths and needs of pupils, the school ensures that they study a meticulously planned curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND are fully engaged with learning and thrive in the school.

The early years curriculum enables children to develop socially and emotionally very well. Children learn to share, take turns and form strong friendships. Reception children regularly visit a local care home where they learn to interact with kindness and respect with older people. The breadth of well-planned activities enable children to develop their mobility and manual dexterity. They also stimulate children's imaginative interpretations of the world in a safe, play-based environment. For instance, children were observed 'cooking' cupcakes with seeds and leaves. Children are thus enthused by school.

Pupils' attendance is very strong. Similarly, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Through warm, nurturing relationships with staff, pupils learn to regulate their emotional responses to the world around them. The exceptional curriculum stimulates pupils' curiosity. They are eager learners. When behaviour issues arise, the school applies highly personalised approaches to managing pupils' behaviour which are highly effective.

Leadership, including governance, is exceptional. There is a shared vision of excellence. The board of trustees and the local governing body support and challenge the school with rigour. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. They value the support for their workload and well-being. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire were effusive about the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	138310
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10344633
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Butcher
CEO of the trust	Simon Spry
Headteacher	Keith Smithers
Website	www.elburtonschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a pre-school for children starting from the age of 2.
- The school uses one registered provider and one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- The school has a larger than average proportion of service pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first 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 and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, history and art and design. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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 considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Hannaford

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