

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Elm Park Primary School

Nicholls Lane, Winterbourne, Bristol BS36 1NF

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Elm Park Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Elm Park Primary School is all about kindness. Pupils experience kindness and respect from staff and each other each day. Pupils appreciate how safe and secure they feel at school, and how much they enjoy their learning. A tangible family ethos ripples through the life of the school. Each day starts with a warm welcome and kind words.

Pupils recall happy experiences and activities that inspire their learning. This is a deliberate approach adopted by the school, to ensure that learning is interesting and relevant. 'Bang' days provide a stimulus and a kick-start to learning. At the end of each project, pupils know that they will demonstrate their learning at a 'wow' day. Parents and carers play an important part in celebrating and participating in these experiences.

Leaders at all levels ensure that everyone is valued and included. Consequently, pupils behave well. They work hard and are polite and caring of each other.

Most pupils achieve well. However, the school leaves no stone unturned as staff continue to drive forward standards. They are driven by the vision of 'inspiring, enriching and achieving'.

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

The school has an accurate understanding of strengths and areas to improve. Staff are determined that every pupil will achieve the very best.

Since the previous inspection, the school has set about improving engagement with parents. Parents now have frequent opportunities to engage in the life of the school and

in their child's learning and increasing numbers of parents take advantage of this. The school sits firmly and proudly at the heart of the local community.

The school has redesigned its curriculum. Drawing from available local expertise, the school now has a solid curriculum, which develops pupils' understanding from the Reception class upwards. Staff are confident in their knowledge of the curriculum and provide clear explanations and models for pupils to follow.

Staff are determined that every pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will learn to read. To ensure that more pupils gain early phonics skills the school set about changing the approaches to teaching phonics. Training and development for staff as well as investment in high-quality materials have secured a consistent approach. Well-organised catch up sessions provide the extra help that pupils need. The school carefully checks how successfully pupils are improving early reading skills. Fewer and fewer pupils need extra catch up due to the successful programmes now in place. Staff are particularly skilled at supporting learning for pupils with SEND in reading and across the curriculum.

The school has developed assessment systems to check how well pupils actually remember important key knowledge in the subjects they learn. Pupils are excited about their learning. They successfully recall key facts and vocabulary from previous learning themes, such as the Mayans or the water cycle.

The school is currently working on improvements to writing. The quality of handwriting is inconsistent across the school. Some pupils develop a clear, fluent style, but at times, weak letter formation is not picked up and addressed. Most pupils build knowledge that enables them to write in a range of genres for different audiences. However, the checks that are made on how well some pupils have understood this knowledge are not accurate enough. This means that gaps in knowledge or misconceptions in how to apply this information are not addressed. Consequently, some pupils do not develop the depth and quality of writing that the school intends.

The school ensures that pupils benefit from a wide, rich range of extra activities, trips and experiences. These supplement pupils' learning well, developing their characters, and supporting pupils to be well prepared for their next steps.

Ensuring that all pupils attend well is a key priority for the school. There is unwavering consistency of key messages to families about ensuring that children attend school. The school carefully analyses attendance patterns over time and uses this information to support families. This is paying off as, over time, attendance is steadily improving.

Staff appreciate the supportive approach to managing their workload. They feel valued and are proud to work at Elm Park Primary.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the checks on pupils' writing do not precisely identify gaps in their knowledge. This means that some pupils continue to make errors, and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers have the expertise to routinely identify gaps in writing knowledge and to adapt their teaching, so that more pupils become confident writers.
- At times, weak letter formation is not corrected. As a result, some pupils do not develop a legible script that enables them to write comfortably and at length. The school needs to ensure that more pupils have the support they need to develop a fluent and legible handwriting style.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2016.

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	109117
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344441
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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sandra Allen
Headteacher	Carol Bond
Website	www.elmparkprimary.com
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed as substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector had meetings with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspector also had a discussion with a representative from the local authority and the school's improvement adviser. The inspector met with several members of the governing body.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils. The inspector took responses to a staff survey into account.
- The inspector met with parents to gather their views as well as considering responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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