

# Inspection of Elm Wood School

Carnac Street, West Norwood, London SE27 9RR

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Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and learning here. They enjoy lessons and have good relationships with staff. This helps pupils feel safe. The Elm Wood promises of 'showing kindness and respect, developing resilience and perseverance and aiming for excellence and success' are lived out every day by the pupils.

The school has high expectations for the attainment of all pupils. Pupils generally achieve well here. The school has put measures in place to improve the writing curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who benefit from the support they receive.

Pupils and parents describe the school as being 'like a big family.' Pupils value the importance of kind behaviour. The youngest children settle quickly, learn to share, listen to others, and take turns. When a small number of pupils need help to manage their emotions, staff and other pupils support them very well. Pupils learn to resolve differences through open discussion. The strong relationships between staff and pupils promote these constructive conversations.

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

Since the new headteacher was appointed, there have been many changes to the curriculum. This continues to be a priority. There is now an ambitious curriculum in place. This begins in the early years, where children build knowledge across all areas of learning. Staff generally check pupils' understanding across the curriculum well. This helps them to quickly address any misconceptions in pupils' learning.

In most subjects, pupils build their knowledge well over time. For example, younger children secure their understanding of number composition, which enables older pupils to apply this knowledge when converting mixed fractions. The focus on mathematical fluency supports pupils well to tackle more complex concepts. However, in a few curriculum subjects the school has not precisely identified the important knowledge it wants pupils to learn. This means that this key knowledge is not routinely prioritised or checked in lessons and, as such, sometimes gaps emerge in what pupils know and remember.

From the moment children join the school in Reception, they benefit from structured approaches to the teaching of reading. Staff are well trained to deliver the school's phonics programme with accuracy. Regular checking of what pupils understand identifies any gaps in pupils' learning. The school uses this information to carry out targeted interventions that address these gaps effectively. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the books they borrow from the school library and the reading that they do at home.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils with SEND. It identifies their needs quickly and accurately. Pupils have effective plans that outline their targets, and the support pupils should receive. This enables teachers to give these pupils the help that they need. This

helps pupils with SEND to progress well through the curriculum. They participate fully in the same curriculum and opportunities as their peers.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their education. They are enthusiastic to learn and enjoy contributing their ideas and opinions to lessons. From the early years, children learn to follow well-established routines. As a result, classrooms are positive learning environments and social times are calm and orderly. The school makes attendance a high priority. Staff analyse the reasons some pupils do not attend as well as they could. The school knows pupils and their families extremely well. They offer effective support and challenge when necessary. They continue to focus on improving attendance further.

Pupils benefit from a very well-thought-out offer for personal development. They learn about different faiths and cultures and are highly respectful towards others. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and maintain healthy relationships. Their curriculum learning is enhanced through trips and visitors. Pupils are encouraged to develop their leadership skills through taking on roles such as school councillors, prefects, play leaders and being members of the eco committee. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school acts in the best interests of pupils. The school is led and managed by a very capable group of senior leaders. They are passionate about what they do. Leaders manage any changes in school very well. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel leaders consider their well-being and workload. Parents are very positive about the support their children receive from school staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Revisions and refinements to the curriculum have not embedded fully in some subject areas. In these subjects, the school has not identified, as precisely, the important knowledge it wants pupils to learn. As a result, sometimes pupils are not able to build on what they already know. This means that this key knowledge is not routinely prioritised or checked in lessons and, as such, some gaps emerge in what pupils know and remember. The school should continue to embed its ambitious curriculum, identifying the most important knowledge to ensure that all pupils consistently achieve as well as they can.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100597
<b>Local authority</b>	Lambeth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345663
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community – Federation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Christopher Toye
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Leith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elmwoodprimary.co.uk">www.elmwoodprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Gipsy Hill Federation. The federation consists of five primary schools, which share one governing body. The school is in the process of defederating.
- The school has a nursery provision for three-year-old children.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school clubs for pupils in the school.
- The school currently makes use of one registered alternative provision.

## 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 routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders. They met with members of the federation governing body as well as the local advisory board. They also spoke with the director of education and learning from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils to understand their views about the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. They observed pupils as they arrived at school in the morning.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding through discussions with leaders, teachers, and support staff. They looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their workload and well-being. They considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as the online staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included curriculum documentation and school policies.

### **Inspection team**

Sam Johnson, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Karen Wyatt

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Lufkin

Ofsted Inspector

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