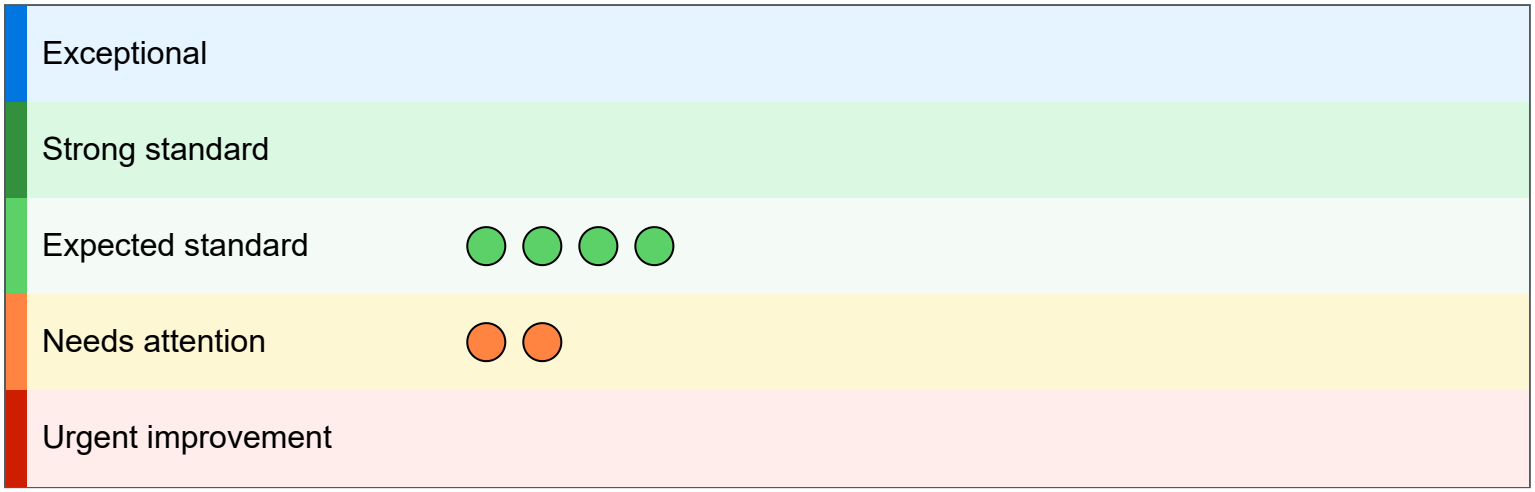
Elson Junior School

Address: Exmouth Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 4EX

Unique reference number (URN): 116162

Inspection report: 7 July 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders track attendance carefully. They work effectively with pupils and their families to reduce barriers to attendance. This approach has been successful in reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Overall attendance is close to the national average. Current attendance information shows that this positive trend is continuing and rates of absence are reducing.

The school's new approach to behaviour management is having a positive impact. It is well understood by staff and pupils alike. Pupils are keen to meet the school's high expectations. They know why this is important and that they play an important part in contributing to the community ethos. Routines are well established. This helps to create a safe and harmonious environment. In lessons, pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and engagement with learning. Bullying is rare. Pupils say that if it does occur, adults deal with it quickly and effectively. Prejudicial and derogatory language is never tolerated. Any incidents are addressed robustly. The school's high-quality pastoral care provides effective support for pupils who need additional help to manage their emotions and behaviour. The school uses suspensions appropriately and only in exceptional circumstances.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders place inclusion at the heart of the school's work. There is a firm focus on building collaborative relationships with pupils and their families. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to understand the barriers to learning and wellbeing that pupils may face. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known or previously known to social care. Staff value the advice from external agencies. This helps them to accurately identify where an alternative approach may be needed. Pupils with SEND receive well-targeted support that helps them to access learning successfully. While staff have a secure understanding of the individual needs of pupils, provision for disadvantaged pupils within classrooms is variable. As a result, the needs of some disadvantaged pupils are not met consistently well enough.

The school makes appropriate use of alternative provision and checks pupils' attendance, engagement and progress carefully. Pupil premium funding is used to improve pupils' access to wider opportunities and academic support. Leaders have strengthened their monitoring of this funding and are increasingly able to demonstrate its impact on disadvantaged pupils' achievement and wider development. They know that there is more work to be done to strengthen the tailored approach in lessons for this group of pupils.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Recent changes to school leadership have strengthened the school's focus on improvement. Leaders are focusing on the right priorities. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders act with urgency to improve the quality of provision. They know there is more work to be done to secure the improvements needed in all lessons. Decisions are made with pupils' best interests at the centre, particularly

vulnerable pupils. Staff know pupils and their families well and work closely with them to ensure that appropriate support is in place. They engage positively with parents and carers and external professionals.

Staff receive evidence-informed professional development opportunities. These help to build their expertise. Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding and ensure that staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Leaders consider staff workload and wellbeing when making decisions. Staff value the support they receive and speak positively about leaders' commitment to professional development and wellbeing. This contributes to a collaborative working environment that enables staff to understand the rationale for any changes.

Those responsible for governance bring appropriate expertise and knowledge to their roles. Governors meet their statutory duties and manage resources effectively, including the use of the pupil premium grant. They support and challenge leaders appropriately while holding them to account for the school's performance. Governors review a wide range of information and use this to provide constructive challenge and support. This helps ensure that strategic decisions benefit all pupils and contribute to pupils' educational and wider development.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders have implemented a well-designed and coherent programme of personal development that is underpinned by the school's values. It equips pupils with the knowledge and experiences they need to learn about what makes everyone unique, develop their social skills and appreciate cultural diversity. Pupils understand the importance of treating others with respect and demonstrate empathy towards people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. This helps them to be well prepared for life beyond school.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well developed and embedded. It is carefully adapted to meet pupils' needs and reflects the local context. Pupils understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They know how to manage risks to their wellbeing, both online and in the community. They have a robust understanding of how to stay physically and mentally healthy and the difference between right and wrong. The focus on personal development helps pupils develop resilience, ambition and an appropriate understanding of British values. The programme is supplemented by the school's relationships education offer.

Highly effective pastoral support helps pupils to develop the strategies they need to support their emotional wellbeing. Staff provide additional help for pupils who need it, enabling them to manage challenges and engage positively with school life. Pupils know how to seek advice when worried.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, participate in a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including music, art and sport. These experiences broaden pupils' interests, develop their talents and contribute positively to their wider development. Pupils value these opportunities and appreciate the chance to discover and develop their strengths.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention

Pupils do not achieve consistently well enough. This is reflected in published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 as well as in the work that pupils produce. Although pupils' attainment is generally close to the national average in writing, attainment is too low in other subjects. There is variation in how well pupils secure the foundational knowledge they need for future learning. This is particularly the case for reading and mathematical skills. This means that pupils are not always sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education.

New leaders have recently strengthened the school's checks on pupils' learning to identify gaps in knowledge that have accumulated over time, including for pupils who join the school after Year 3. Efforts to address these gaps, including those in phonics, are not yet consistently effective.

Leaders have recently improved the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Adaptations typically help these pupils access learning successfully and work towards their individual targets. This helps them to make good progress from their starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention

Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils secure important knowledge in reading and mathematics. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and struggle to apply basic reading and mathematical skills. This limits their achievement.

Teaching is too variable. Staff do not consistently ensure that all pupils secure the key knowledge needed for future learning. Some staff identify errors and address misconceptions effectively, but this is not yet routine across the school. As a result, these errors persist for too many pupils.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that can be suitably adapted to the needs of different pupils. However, there is variation in how well this is done in lessons. The curriculum builds pupils' learning across subjects in a logical sequence and sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn over time. Generally, teachers check that pupils have understood this key information.

The teaching of writing is improving. The school's recent focus on language and communication is helping pupils develop a wider vocabulary. Typically, most teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum. Leaders have arranged specialist training for staff teaching personal, social and health education. As a result, this aspect of the curriculum is taught more effectively and has a positive impact on pupils.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy coming to Elson Junior School. They feel that they belong to the school community and are proud ambassadors of their school. They attend well overall and value all that is on offer. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive and respectful. Staff know pupils well and are highly visible at the start of each day, greeting pupils at classroom doors and helping to set the tone for the day ahead.

Behaviour is typically calm and orderly. Pupils understand the school's routines and expectations. They respond to these well. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, pupils know that adults will deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils speak knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe, including online and in the wider community. As a result, they feel confident to share any concerns they have. The school's inclusive culture is reflected through the way pupils treat one another. They understand that people have different needs and show respect for everyone's unique attributes.

Pupils find lessons enjoyable. They know that adults encourage them to do their best. Pupils demonstrate commitment to learning and engage well with the opportunities provided. Pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could. Expectations have not always been high enough, and there is too much variation in teaching across the school. Current improvements are helping to strengthen pupils' learning experiences and better prepare them for the next stage of their education.

Leadership responsibilities and wider opportunities help pupils develop confidence and resilience. Pupils broaden their interests, develop new skills and contribute positively to school life. These experiences support all pupils, including the most vulnerable, to thrive.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise they need for the subjects and phases they teach so that the curriculum is taught well across the school.
- Leaders should ensure that robust assessment systems are in place that enable teachers to identify and address gaps in learning so that pupils can achieve as well as possible.
- Leaders should ensure that all pupils secure the foundational knowledge they need in communication and language, reading, mathematics and spelling so that all pupils can confidently access the wider curriculum.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Joanne Rooke.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 7 and 8 July 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, school business manager, teachers and support staff, pupils and parents. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority and from the virtual school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The current headteacher took up their post after the last inspection.

The school currently makes use of 2 alternative provisions, both of which are unregistered.

Headteacher: Catherine Paradine

Lead inspector:
Ulric Neblett-Leigh, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Rebecca Mayman, Ofsted Inspector
Marcella Dobson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 7 July 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

313
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

360
Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

31.63%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.15%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.97%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	49%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	47%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	68%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	60%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	62%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	84%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	64%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	58%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	27%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	16%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	46%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	57%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	73%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	37%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	35%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	32%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	27%	68%	-41 pp
2024/25 (final)	27%	69%	-43 pp
2023/24 (final)	16%	67%	-52 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	66%	-23 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	46%	80%	-34 pp
2024/25 (final)	53%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	80%	-48 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	78%	-21 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	78%	-22 pp
2024/25 (final)	73%	78%	-5 pp
2023/24 (final)	37%	78%	-41 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	64%	77%	-13 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	35%	80%	-44 pp
2024/25 (final)	33%	81%	-47 pp
2023/24 (final)	32%	79%	-48 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	79%	-36 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.1%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.3%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	12.3%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	16.1%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.0%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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