



Elm Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109117
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278130
Inspection dates 14 March 2006 to 15 March 2006
Reporting inspector Anna Sketchley AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Nicholls Lane
School category	Community		Winterbourne
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS36 1NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 866750
Number on roll	298	Fax number	01454 866751
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Jean-Luc Lorenzi
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Helean Hughes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Elm Park is an average-sized primary school. The area served by the school is favourable and almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are well below average. A very low percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. There is a small number of pupils from traveller families. A few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils who join or leave the school during the year is higher than in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It offers good value for money.

Standards and achievement are good throughout the school. Last year older, more able pupils did not make the progress they should have in writing and mathematics. However, these issues are a recognised priority for the school and plans to address them are now having a positive impact. Standards and achievement in reading and in science are especially high. Children in the Reception Year make good progress and almost all are reaching the expected standards by the start of Year 1.

Teaching is consistently good. An outstanding feature is the assessment and target-setting procedures that enable pupils to constantly improve on their previous best. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few for whom English is an additional language are given very good support both by teachers and highly trained assistants.

Because of good leadership and management overall, and the exceptional leadership of the headteacher in particular, the school has a real sense of purpose and direction. Successful monitoring and evaluation in all aspects of school life has ensured that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school's own evaluation that it is a good school is accurate and well founded.

Parents demonstrate overwhelming support for the school and their comments are summed up by one who wrote, 'the school really does nurture my son's learning'. Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support. They feel well cared for and safe and really enjoy coming to school to take part in interesting lessons and a wide range of extra activities. As a result their good behaviour and attitudes make a significant contribution to the high standards and good achievement. However, attendance dipped significantly last year and was below average. Although it is improving again, there is still some work to do in this area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics for more able pupils.
- Ensure that attendance continues to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well and many attain high standards. Reception-aged pupils join the school with knowledge and skills expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of consistently good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. By the end of the year, almost all are meeting, and some are exceeding, the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This good start is built upon in Years 1 and 2 by

further high quality teaching so that, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average.

The school sets challenging targets and pupils continue to make good progress throughout their junior years. By the end of Year 6, many reach standards well above those expected in science and reading. The achievement of more able pupils in particular dipped in writing and mathematics last year, mainly because of considerable staff changes which adversely affected the assessment of pupils' progress. However, the school's rapid response, with strategies for improvement, has had an immediate effect. All pupils, including the more able, are now achieving well in these areas and pupils are on course to exceed national averages this year.

Through very good tracking procedures, the school ensures that those pupils who join the school part-way through their primary years are not disadvantaged and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good. Moral and social development is particularly well promoted so that pupils behave well and have a sensitive awareness to school and community issues. Parents also see pupils' personal development as a strong feature of the school. As one commented, 'the school knows each child and makes them feel valued'.

Through the school council, pupils play their part in bringing about improvement, for example, in the playgrounds through peer mediation training and a 'Buddy' system. These work effectively and make a significant contribution towards the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school.

Activities such as 'Wake and Shake' help to improve concentration, give pupils a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and add to their obvious enjoyment in coming to school.

Attendance rates dropped to below average last year, partly because of holidays being taken in term time. However, the school has introduced rigorous procedures to track attendance on a weekly basis. Results are used as the basis for discussion with parents and this is beginning to have an impact.

Pupils' good social skills, together with increasing competence in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them well for the future.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the wider community through an extensive range of activities, including the new eco-committee. A recent competition to design a new pond has addressed environmental issues and helped pupils to effectively develop their life skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. The strengths in teaching include strong relationships between adults and pupils, good planning that is well matched to learners' needs, and consistently high expectations. Lessons are well paced and very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils and to explain things clearly. An initiative to make the teaching of writing more visual, particularly for boys, is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in this area. The quality of questioning is very good and teachers use this skill regularly and effectively to extend pupils' thinking and to check on their understanding. These strategies enable pupils to enjoy their learning, to work effectively in groups and independently, to tackle their work confidently and to achieve well. Many pupils have well-developed speaking and listening skills because of the ample opportunities they have to make a contribution. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils, including those with particular learning difficulties or disabilities.

There is a strong emphasis on assessment, and this is a strength of the school. Rigorous procedures are well established and have a beneficial impact on the standards pupils reach. Pupils' progress is tracked particularly well in English, mathematics and science and those who need extra help or additional challenge are identified and supported effectively. In Years 1 to 6, well-judged targets for improvement are set in English and mathematics and appropriately shared with parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curricular provision is good and meets statutory requirements. Children in the Reception Year benefit from well-planned and appropriate experiences based on national guidance. In Years 1 to 6, full account is taken of the mixed-age classes and the curriculum is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils. The school has recognised the value of encouraging pupils to use their skills in writing across the curriculum, and this is having an impact on standards. Good provision is made for the development of pupils' key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils have many opportunities to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. Provision for the arts is good and the school has received an Artsmark Silver award in recognition of this. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate independence and to organise things for themselves, for example, through membership of the school's eco-committee, and this prepares them well for their future economic well-being.

Opportunities for enrichment are exemplary. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of clubs and their learning is considerably enriched by many visitors to the school, educational visits and themed events such as a 'Creative Arts' week. These are greatly appreciated by parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. Robust procedures ensure statutory requirements regarding child protection, health and safety, drugs awareness and sex education are fully met. As a result, pupils feel secure, well cared for and confident. They know who to go to if they need help.

Relationships are excellent. Pupils say 'teachers make us feel at home and welcome and no-one is missed out'. Assessment procedures and target setting are strengths of the school. Pupils are very clear about what they need to do next to improve, enabling all to make good progress – as a result, self-esteem is high.

Parents are unanimous in their support of the school. Many wrote about its excellence. They are very pleased with the response to views, questions and concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Her clear vision makes a significant contribution to school improvement and, as a result, it has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Her commitment, enthusiasm and high expectations are infectious and she forms excellent relationships with all those around her, challenging and inspiring adults and pupils alike to do their best.

Management procedures are good. The school's plan for improvement is thorough, exact and involves the whole-school community, making it a very useful tool for improvement.

Monitoring and evaluation successfully permeate all aspects of school life through a variety of strategies, for example, the 'happiness' survey that pupils complete. There is also a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning through regular observation of lessons. The individual tracking of pupils' progress and the way in which this is used to set appropriate targets for future learning is outstanding. This is having a successful impact on standards in writing and mathematics.

The school has a team of well-qualified staff. Senior managers and subject co-ordinators fulfil their responsibilities well. They are particularly well informed about pupils' progress and skilful at introducing innovative strategies to support colleagues with their teaching.

Governors are committed and actively involved in the work of the school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are particularly effective in their financial management, enabling the school to have good quality resources.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children,

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and helpful. We thought you would like to know what we found out and what we have suggested the school does to make things even better.

What we liked about your school:

You are happy to come to school, enjoy your lessons and behave very well.

You know who to go to at school if you need help. Adults are kind and helpful and take very good care of you.

Teachers and their assistants make sure that you do well in your lessons. You know your targets and work hard to improve your work.

You do particularly well in your learning in science and reading.

Your headteacher works very hard, along with all your other teachers, to make sure that you have interesting things to do and learn as well as you can.

What we have asked your school to do now:

Improve standards in writing and mathematics in the junior part of the school, especially for those of you with particularly high abilities.

Make sure that you come to school every day and don't take too many holidays during school term time.

With kind regards,

Anna Sketchley Lead Inspector