



# Elmhurst Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123663  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 281530  
**Inspection dates** 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Christine Huard AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Elmhurst Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Street
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Somerset BA16 0HH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 442979
<b>Number on roll</b>	375	<b>Fax number</b>	01458 448496
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Nigel White
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Powell

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized junior school in the small Somerset town of Street. Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average. When pupils enter Year 3 their attainment is varied but they have broadly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting their results in national tests. The headteacher joined the school in September 2005.

## 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, which confirms the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has successfully addressed the issues raised. Although pupils enter Year 3 with broadly average skills, the school's own assessments have revealed some weaknesses that have been tackled quickly and successfully; pupils are now making good progress and are achieving well. There are still some weaknesses in spelling and the application of numeracy skills, and the school has already identified these for improvement in its development plan. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and have an excellent rapport with their teachers. They eagerly participate in the wide range of activities provided both in and out of school hours. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. The leadership and management are good. The new headteacher is dynamic and has a clear vision for the school. She and the senior leadership team are providing the drive which has already significantly improved levels of achievement across the school. There is a very good capacity for further improvement. Although many of the governors are fairly new, they know the school well and carefully monitor the action plans they have in place to bring about further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Use a wider range of strategies to teach and reinforce pupils' spelling skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Pupils left the school at the end of Year 6 in 2005 having achieved satisfactorily and reached the targets set for them. These results and evidence from optional tests show that the strategies put in place to raise standards were having a positive impact on achievement. With a more focused use of assessment information since September, this rate of improvement has accelerated and pupils are now achieving well. They are reaching the expected standards in English and mathematics and are sustaining above-average standards in science. Weaknesses found in the speaking and listening skills in Year 3 have led the school to introduce a new daily short-burst activity that is enabling the youngest pupils to develop these skills successfully. Standards in writing are improving rapidly and pupils are achieving well because opportunities for writing have been identified in the medium and short-term plans in every subject. Pupils are given every opportunity to write. However, they still demonstrate some weaknesses in spelling. Pupils in all year groups use dictionaries and thesauri confidently. However, the range of strategies used to reinforce their spelling skills is not wide enough. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because they receive good, well-focused support. Higher-attaining pupils are set

challenging and exciting tasks which extend their thinking so that they too make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. They really enjoy school and this is reflected in the above-average level of attendance. They take great delight in learning the interesting topics planned for them. Behaviour is excellent. 'Buddies' play a vital part in monitoring behaviour in the playground and, as a result, all pupils, especially those who are new, feel comfortable and safe. There is an effective school council, which is well organised and respected by everyone. It has been instrumental in making many important improvements to school life, such as changes to the toilet facilities and extending playtime to ensure pupils have sufficient time for exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils take on responsibilities readily and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They relish raising funds for charities such as Red Nose Day and the Macmillan Cancer Support charity. They have a well-developed appreciation of their own culture and a developing awareness of other cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy and keep safe. They know what is good to eat, although a few unhealthy snacks creep into lunch boxes occasionally, and they are aware of the benefits of regular exercise. Pupils' very good social skills, increasing competence in literacy and numeracy, and developing confidence are preparing them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning is comprehensive and ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes are well catered for. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and pupils are encouraged to show initiative in their learning. Pupils say they are set work that challenges them, but that support is always available if they find work difficult. 'My teacher will give me a hint,' said one pupil. The organisation of pupils into sets and groups for mathematics and literacy ensures that pupils learn well overall, although the teaching of spelling and the practical application of number skills are areas which require some improvement. Pupils learn effectively because teachers motivate them well. Lessons are made interesting and, as a result, pupils want to participate. They respond to questions enthusiastically and have established firm relationships with their teachers that are mature and respectful. Humour is injected into lessons without any fear that silliness will result. Teachers willingly embrace the use of new technology and use interactive whiteboards well to reinforce pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed and provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties. Marking is helpful to pupils and tells

them how they can improve their work. In addition, pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning and understanding.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has a good and varied curriculum. It is well monitored, which means that it remains exciting and meets the needs of all children. There is a clear focus on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school has made very good progress in developing writing opportunities across a range of subjects. It has not yet extended this level of planning to mathematics in order to further improve pupils' numeracy skills. Good programmes have been incorporated well to support pupils with learning difficulties and ensure they make good progress. Pupils learn to lead healthy lives and to stay safe through the programme of personal, social and health education, which incorporates use of drugs and sex education. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs. 'Activity afternoon' is an exciting development that contributes to the variety and sense of enjoyment that the school is nurturing in learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of its pupils and this contributes well to their good progress and their great enjoyment of school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and all staff are conversant with them. Pupils are confident that adults look after them and support them well. The school monitors pupils' academic and personal development well. Pupils know and understand their targets and appreciate the support they receive from teachers' marking of their work. This tells them how they can improve and make progress, although it does not always pick up sufficiently on spelling mistakes. The school provides good personal support and guidance for pupils who have learning difficulties. The school works closely with parents to provide the most effective help for their children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a clear vision and strong direction and the consultative and inclusive style of leadership has been warmly embraced by all members of the school community. The leadership team has played a major role in the improvements that have been seen over the past year and there is a very good capacity for further improvement. All staff with management responsibilities monitor well the effectiveness of their subjects and areas. Governors are knowledgeable and fully involved in the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and challenge the school effectively, showing a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Pupils achieve well because there are robust monitoring

systems in place, which quickly identify weaknesses. For example, the development of numeracy skills and writing across the school was identified as a concern and the success of actions taken is evident in the pupils' enthusiasm and the progress they have made, although there is still more to be done. There are regular and rigorous lesson observation procedures to assess the quality of teaching and learning. These provide comprehensive feedback to teachers on both their strengths and weaknesses. The staff and governors know how well the school is performing. This is evident from the high quality school development plan, which is analytical and evaluative. The school uses a broad range of procedures to assess how effective it is. Regular questionnaires to parents and pupils and improving links with the local community all help the school keep abreast of how well it is performing.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	NA	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 Pupils, Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and would like to thank you for all the help that you gave us. We thought you would want to know what we thought about your school. • You told us very clearly how much you enjoy school and that you learn a lot, and you also told us how much you relish the 'Activity' afternoons on a Friday. • You are making good progress with your learning and especially good progress with your writing. • Your teachers are good at teaching and make lessons interesting for you, which means that you pay attention, behave extremely well and really enjoy your learning. • The school takes good care of you and helps you become more confident. • Your headteacher and the governors lead and manage the school well. Two things could be even better: • You don't have enough opportunities to practise your numeracy skills in other subjects. • Your teachers need to help you to improve your spelling. We are glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard. With very best wishes, Mrs Christine Huard Lead Inspector