



# Elmswell Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124534  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281743  
**Inspection dates** 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Robert McKeown LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Oxer Close
<b>School category</b>	Community		IP30 9UE
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01359240261
<b>Number on roll</b>	202	<b>Fax number</b>	01359 242364
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Brian Aket
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Angela Hunter

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281743
----------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Elmswell is an average sized community primary school situated in a village near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. It has 90 boys and 87 girls on roll, aged from 4 to 9 years and 25 children who attend a part time nursery. A small playgroup shares the same site. Almost all children are from white British backgrounds. The number of children entitled to free school meals is low. The percentage of children who have special educational needs is below the national average. Two children are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Most children start school with standards which are in line with those expected for their age. At the time of the inspection the school had an acting headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed for January 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Elmswell Primary School provides its children with a satisfactory education. This matches the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation. Most parents are pleased with the education given to their children and the school encourages their involvement. The school achieves satisfactory value for money. Overall, standards are broadly average. Children make at least satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, where progress in reading is good. In Years 3 and 4 the achievement of some children could be better in writing and mathematics. All children with additional needs are making satisfactory progress. Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They have good attitudes and behave well. Children receive good care and support from all adults but the systems for assessing and tracking children's academic progress require improvement. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in the Foundation Stage it is always good. There are many strengths in the curriculum, with opportunities for children to participate in a wide range of activities. Teachers and children do not make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher provides effective leadership and is supported well by all staff. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, although these were affected by a long period of headteacher illness. The work of curriculum subject leaders is not focussed enough on school improvement priorities. Recently, governors have become more involved in the work of the school and it now has the capacity to improve further.

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

- Track children's progress more closely from year to year and during the year to ensure that those children who do not make expected progress are identified and supported quickly.
- Analyse children's assessments, particularly in mathematics, to spot those areas where children have weaknesses, and adapt the teaching programme to tackle them.
- Improve the contribution made by subject leaders to overall leadership and management by focusing their monitoring and evaluation activities on the school's priorities for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, standards are broadly average. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, results were in line with national levels in reading, writing and mathematics; although a lower proportion of children achieved the higher Level 3. Boys did markedly less well than girls. Results in reading and writing improved in 2005; they were similar in mathematics. At the end of Year 4, in 2005, standards were broadly average but better in reading than in writing and mathematics. When children enter the Reception classes the school's data indicate that standards are at expected levels. Children make

at least satisfactory progress in Reception and by the time they enter Year 1 most are achieving at the level expected for their age; although the latest assessments indicate that boys and girls do less well in linking sounds and letters and in early writing. In Years 1 and 2, progress is satisfactory overall and good in reading. In Years 3 and 4 children continue to make at least satisfactory progress in reading but a significant number make less than expected progress in writing and mathematics. Children with additional needs are making satisfactory progress. The two children who do not speak English as their first language are making good progress. Good progress has been made recently in raising standards in Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and writing. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Standards in Years 3 and 4 are not as high as they were and the school has correctly identified the need to raise the achievement of older children, particularly in writing and mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school judges this to be satisfactory but inspectors believe it is good. Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. However, children's knowledge of other cultures is not as strong and the school agrees that children would benefit from a wider experience. Children enjoy school and say that they feel safe and secure. They have good attitudes and behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are positive, reflecting the children's good social development. Any isolated reports of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff. Children make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. They participate well in lessons and do their best to succeed. The school council is relatively new but meets regularly to make suggestions about developments such as purchasing play equipment and establishing a 'friendship bench' on the playground. There is a suggestion box for new ideas. Children help to raise funds for local and national charities. They are involved in community projects such as Operation Christmas Child. Older children are given responsibilities around the school. Children understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, which they learn about in science and other lessons. Fresh fruit is available each day for younger children and all children are encouraged to drink water regularly. The school participates in an annual walk to school week. Attendance is good and children arrive at school on time. Parents and children have had the opportunity to express their views about the school and responses are acted upon.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although inspectors saw good teaching in some classes. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is always good. In the best lessons, teachers take care to explain the learning objectives and capture children's interest with well-chosen and challenging activities. They also provide regular opportunities for children to

discuss and assess their learning. Teaching assistants are used well. Where lessons are less effective, for example in guided reading, the children not working with the teacher are not as actively engaged and valuable time is wasted. Teachers plan together well. In the Foundation Stage, where teachers have a very good awareness of the needs of young children, imaginative and creative planning enables children to enthuse about their first steps in school. In some classes, teachers use marking constructively to show children how they can improve their work. The school has recently introduced individual targets for children to help them improve their writing but some targets have not kept pace with the progress they are making. Children with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English receive good support and have work well matched to their needs. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by helping with homework, with school trips and by attending regular consultation evenings.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage it is good. There are several strengths in the curriculum. Displays around the school illustrate learning activities which enrich the school's provision with, for example, a tree-planting project in Elmswell Community Wood and a trip to Ipswich Town Football Club to make computer-generated advertisements. Other displays illustrate the chances children have to develop different techniques in art and design and to explore the history of their local town. Teachers are beginning to develop effective cross-curricular links with literacy, so that children receive opportunities to write in other subjects. The school has recently invested in new interactive whiteboards and a trolley of laptops. However, these are not yet being used often enough to develop children's ICT skills. Although all children receive two sessions of physical education each week, this is below the recommended time of two hours. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, but parents and children would like to see more sporting opportunities. The school welcomes visitors, particularly into assemblies, to help enrich the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

There are good systems in place to ensure that children are cared for well. All staff have the very best interests of the children at heart and children know that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. Suitable child protection procedures are in place but some support staff have not received awareness training. There is good support for children's personal development and many opportunities for them to make a contribution to their local community. However, procedures for assessing and tracking children's academic achievement require improvement to ensure that teachers identify gaps in learning and intervene quickly when children's progress slows down. Children whose needs have already been identified receive good guidance and support. The school appreciates the importance of children making a smooth transition

from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 and is providing opportunities for teachers to prepare children for the next stage in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher provides effective leadership and has guided the school well through the prolonged period of absence of the former headteacher. She has been ably supported by the staff and parents. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is broadly accurate. The current school improvement plan requires updating however, to reflect the current priorities and the views of staff, governors, children and parents. The administrative staff support the school very well. The recent introduction of a leadership team has helped to distribute leadership and management responsibilities to key stage coordinators. The three coordinators meet with their teaching colleagues weekly to plan the programme for children and to evaluate what children have learned. Curriculum subject leaders have insufficient influence on the work of the school. They are not involved enough in tracking the progress that children make or in judging the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Too little emphasis is placed on analysing the end of year assessments, particularly in mathematics, to identify what children are unable to do. Subject leaders have had the opportunity to observe colleagues' teaching but the focus of this monitoring does not concentrate sufficiently on improvement priorities, such as writing. Accommodation and resources are good. The governing body is adopting a much higher profile and taking a greater interest in the work of the school. Recent training, the organisation of a committee structure and governor visits to school are ensuring governors discharge their responsibilities more effectively.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### 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>	3	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	3	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>	3	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	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. All the adults at school, care for you very well and want you to be successful. You are working hard to improve your reading, writing and numeracy. We think you do well in your reading and some of you are getting much better at writing. We have asked your teachers to look more closely at how well you are doing and check if you have any gaps in your learning, especially in numeracy. We like the idea of having targets to help you improve. We would like to see you have the chance to use your new laptop computers more often. We enjoyed talking to you about the things you do at Elmswell. There are lots of good things going on. We liked the Elmswell Wood project and enjoyed looking at the displays of the work you do in art and other subjects. We were impressed with your behaviour and the way you care for each other. We think you are polite and helpful and play well together. Your school council has some very good ideas which help to improve the school environment. We thought the idea of having a 'friendship bench' in the playground and having some games to play with at lunchtime were very good. The work you do to help others is very important. You have collected a lot of Christmas Child boxes. You have a lot to look forward to in the rest of this year, make sure you work really hard and do the best you can.