

# Elm Grove Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114477
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	311618
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Forbes

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Abigail Mallett
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Lynch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Elm Grove Brighton BN2 3ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 708004
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 708300

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Elm Grove is a larger than average primary school with 420 pupils on roll. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals or who have English as an additional language are below the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. There is a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with the proportion of pupils with special needs increasing in recent years. The school provides a range of extended services which caters for both the pupils and the wider community.

## 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. The headteacher has created a very caring ethos, enabling most pupils to become confident learners who much enjoy their education. Most parents express positive views of the school and, as one typically said, 'Elm Grove is a happy, caring school where children are helped to achieve their personal best.'

Attainment on entry is wide but is below the level expected for the age of the pupils. Pupils achieve well overall during their time at Elm Grove and attain above average standards by Year 6. However, standards in writing, particularly for younger pupils, are below the national average. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for, and generally settle well into school routines. Children make at least satisfactory progress across the areas of learning so that most achieve the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory and improving progress through to the end of Year 2; many of them, especially the most able, make more progress than expected for their age. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and standards in science are particularly good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good provision that helps them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

The provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school because of the excellent relationships and values shared by both pupils and adults. An outstanding range of initiatives to support its development ensures that it is an inclusive school where every child really matters. Pupils really enjoy school and are keen to learn and behave well. There are good procedures for their welfare, health and safety which help them feel really safe and confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience. There are very good links with local community groups and the town's international arts festival. The school has the Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards.

The quality of most teaching is good, and particularly strong in Years 3 – 6. Curriculum planning is good and helps to ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils benefit from a wealth of enrichment opportunities, as well as an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

The monitoring of pupils' progress, and the use of marking, the process of setting targets and assessment information to raise achievement are developing well and are now good. These improvements have had a positive impact on standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, the marking of work and the use of assessment data are not consistently good, and pupils do not always know clearly enough what they need to do to improve.

The headteacher provides strong leadership, with a clear focus on raising achievement. He is well supported by his staff, who have a strong team ethos. The governors support the school well. The school's good capacity to improve still further is demonstrated by the good improvements since the last inspection in the curriculum, the standards reached in religious education, geography and history, and the use of assessment information.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good teaching and a good curriculum enable the majority of children to make at least satisfactory progress relative to their starting points across the areas of learning. With the exception of writing, where there are still some further improvements needed, most pupils reach the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1. There is a good balance between adult- and child-initiated

activities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide children with well structured sessions, which arise from well planned opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Children are well cared for, and generally settle well into school routines. Children work and play well together, enjoying their learning. Consequently, their behaviour is good for their age. The outside areas, the liveliness of the teaching and support, as well as good resources, all help to make learning fun.

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

- Raise the achievement and standards in writing, particularly for younger pupils.
- Improve the consistency of marking and the use of assessment information to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

There has been considerable variation in attainment since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1, but current standards are now significantly above the national average by the end of Year 6. Standards in Year 2 have been broadly average; despite a dip in results in 2007, they have recovered and are once again average overall, with particular strengths in reading and mathematics. However, standards of pupils' writing in Key Stage 1 are below those expected nationally. A number of strategies have been established to raise achievement in writing and this is beginning to show through in pupils' work.

Pupils make good progress overall from the time they join the school and when they leave, with the strongest progress in Key Stage 2, in science and by the most able pupils.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school a lot. They are polite and well behaved in and around the school and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They demonstrate good, positive attitudes to their work which are successfully encouraged through such initiatives as 'Learning to Learn Week' and circle time promoting an 'I can do it' culture. The school considers itself to be fully inclusive and is set to achieve its Inclusion Award which it is currently working towards. Pupils say they feel really safe and are confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience. Pupils are well aware of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and of the need to take regular exercise and drink water. The school has the Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The values shared by both pupils and adults contribute to the excellent relationships enjoyed throughout the school. Pupils talk with great passion about the school's zero tolerance towards bullying and the strong focus on positive behaviour which has brought about a culture change in the school since the last inspection. The school's anti-bullying charter and its many class-based initiatives ensure pupils feel safe and well cared for within the school community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the wider community beyond the school gates. Initiatives such as Black History Month and the Global School Project ensure that pupils have a good understanding of Britain as a diverse society and a real understanding and appreciation of the rights and responsibilities which have all helped to establish a strong, cohesive community where every child really matters. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously and are actively involved in school life through the school's recycling and anti-bullying schemes. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the impact of the council

as peaceful problem solvers in resolving any problems on the playground. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take their music and performance to the wider community through their good links with the town's international arts festival and local community groups. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Attendance remains only satisfactory, although there has been some improvement since the last inspection.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' great enjoyment of their learning stems from the excellent relationships they have with staff. Teaching is good overall and particularly strong in Years 3 to 6. The content of lessons is well matched to pupils' interests, abilities and needs. Such lessons are well structured and interesting, and teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn. In the best lessons, learning is fun, varied and interesting and pupils make good progress. Most older pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work and, as a result, make good progress and achieve above average standards by the end of Year 6. However the quality of marking and the use of assessment data are not consistent across the school. The result is that some learners, especially younger pupils in their writing, make less progress than they might. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good levels of support, both in and out of the classroom, helping to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Effective use of the classroom interactive whiteboards, and computers acquired since the last inspection, enhances teaching and learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a curriculum that has improved since the last inspection. Overall, it is now broad and balanced and meets the needs of most pupils, with the exception of a small proportion of activities in Years 3 – 6 which better serve the needs of girls rather than boys. Programmes of work are planned well. They provide clear information about what children are expected to learn and when. They indicate clearly how work can be modified to ensure that pupils' different needs can be met. Considerable cross-curricular development has taken place since the last inspection. This has helped to provide a wider range of learning opportunities and creative activities, which have already helped to raise standards, particularly in English in Years 3 to 6. The provision of a specialist art and music curriculum, as well as the priority given to personal, social and health education and the development of modern foreign languages, has helped to create a curriculum that is both fun and interesting. The range of curricular as well as extra-curricular activities is wide. It includes well planned and much enjoyed theme days such as Egyptian Day, 'Challenge Corners' and school visits by members of the local community to the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The majority of parents and children rightly hold the view that Elm Grove is a caring school. Most parents say their children greatly enjoy school and benefit from good home-school links. Pastoral care is good and a real strength of the school, with staff paying close attention to

pupils' health and safety. Robust procedures help to ensure that pupils are well protected. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties have good support, with pupils benefiting from work programmes that are well matched to their individual needs. The school works with a wide range of outside agencies to provide appropriate support for individual pupils. This tailored support, provided in class, individually or in small nurture groups, ensures that most of these pupils make good progress. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development have been strengthened recently by improvements to assessment procedures. These give teachers a clearer picture of the progress each pupil makes. In the best practice, teachers keep pupils well informed as to how well they are doing and, as a result, most pupils are beginning to understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, such guidance is not provided consistently across the whole school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides good leadership, setting a clear direction for development with an appropriate emphasis on raising standards, particularly for younger pupils and in writing. This has ensured that the school is valued in the neighbourhood and has become very popular. He demonstrates a clarity of vision that has enabled the school to continue the good progress it has made since the last inspection. The headteacher and his senior management team have successfully introduced a range of new procedures for monitoring teaching, setting academic targets and assessing pupils' progress. These are beginning to bring about considerable improvements in the overall quality of education and consequently raising standards. The impact of initiatives can already be seen in the improvements in achievement in Years 3 to 6. The headteacher is ably supported by the recently restructured senior leadership team, which has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Subject leaders and other middle managers have effective self-evaluation procedures that ensure they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their curriculum areas. They monitor provision and produce action plans to address appropriate areas for development. Staff work together effectively and have a shared commitment to improvement. Governors play an active, supporting role in school life, and are aware of the need to develop their role more widely so that they are fully effective in monitoring the school and holding it to account.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elm Grove Primary School, Brighton, BN2 3ES

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. We were so impressed with how hard you work to make your school a happy place.

You go to a good school. Standards are above average and most of you make good progress. Your headteacher and staff really care about you and provide many interesting extra activities for you, such as school visits, performances, enrichment days, art, music, French, sport and ICT to help make learning fun. Many of you are working hard at school and the oldest children are making particularly good progress.

You told us you really enjoy school and work hard to do your best. You get on well with each other and have good attitudes to both work and play. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and help others to have a happy time at school. We think the quality of teaching you get is good.

We feel that there are some things that your school could do better. This is because not all of the activities help you, particularly younger pupils, to achieve your personal best, especially in writing. We also think that not all of you fully understand what you need to do to improve your work to reach even higher standards. We have asked your school to make some improvements to help you in these areas.

I know all of you will do all you can to ensure that your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results. I hope that you will continue to work as hard as you can. Your good behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes Lead inspector