

Elmwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101720
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323512
Inspection date	9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	477
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Dancy
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Read
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
School address	Lodge Road Croydon CR0 2PL
Telephone number	020 8684 4007
Fax number	020 8665 6486

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement of the pupils and the standards that they reach, the quality of teaching and learning, the quality of academic guidance and the impact of the school's work on their personal development. Evidence was gathered from a range of documents, pupil progress data, school records, discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils, observations around the school and replies to the parents' questionnaire. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Elmwood Junior is a much larger than average school. Pupils come from a variety of different backgrounds. Asian Indian, Black Caribbean and Black African are the largest groups. The percentage who are learning English as an additional language is well above that found in most schools, although few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who receive additional support in lessons is average and many of these have moderate learning difficulties. Most pupils join the school from the infant school which shares the same site. The school has a number of nationally recognised awards including the Sportsmark for Physical Education and the International Schools Award. The headteacher has been in post since January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Elmwood Junior is a good school. Teaching is good so that pupils achieve well from Years 3 to 6. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been below average over recent years and by the end of Year 6, standards in national tests are broadly average. This represents good progress. Pupils of all backgrounds including pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their starting points. Pupils who find literacy and numeracy difficult are given individualised and targeted group support from skilled teachers and support staff which helps them to achieve as well as they can.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are polite, confident and very enthusiastic about school. One parent noted, 'My child is very happy at Elmwood.' Pupils make a very good contribution to the school and local communities. The school choir performs at local festivals and in the local concert hall. The school council is rightly proud of improvements to the school library made as a result of their suggestions. One pupil said, 'It's really good now with new lights, tables, shelves, loads of new books and a comfy corner!' Through opportunities to take part in performances and concerts, self-confidence and self esteem grow. For example, pupils in Year 5 enjoyed leading an assembly and explaining through drama what they had learned about electricity in science lessons. Pupils are generous of spirit and are keen to support charities and projects in the local area and abroad. For example, they raise money to purchase equipment for a school in Africa, contributing also to pupils' good understanding of the lives of others in global communities. Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons and is sometimes outstanding. Pupils have an outstanding knowledge of how to eat sensibly and keep themselves fit and healthy. They enjoy the adventure playground and the many extra-curricular sporting activities and clubs. Parents and pupils praise the recent improvements to the kitchen and the dining arrangements. One pupil said, 'I like the freshly baked bread and the new salad bar.' Progress in basic skills, positive attitudes to work and strengths in teamwork prepare them well for their future lives.

Relationships in lessons are warm and friendly and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils enjoy the interesting work teachers plan for them to do. One pupil said, 'The teachers make lessons fun.' Speaking and listening skills are very well promoted, which supports all learners, particularly those who speak languages other than English at home. For example, in Year 6 mathematics pupils used very precise geometrical language to describe three-dimensional shapes and in Year 3 pupils compared short films of staff giving instructions to learn how to give very clear directions. Skilled teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' progress, particularly those who struggle with literacy and numeracy. Pupils work very well together in pairs and groups to share their ideas and discuss their learning. In some lessons the needs of the pupils are not consistently well met because tasks are not always matched closely enough to the range of pupils' abilities. Sometimes the pace of learning in lessons slows because the balance between opportunities for pupils to work independently and time spent listening to the teacher is not always achieved. Although marking gives feedback on strengths, it does not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to move up to the next level in their work.

The good curriculum is broad and balanced and rightly prioritises literacy and numeracy so that pupils make good progress. There are some links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 5 literacy were listening to an account of a hurricane and using line graphs to record the varying levels of tension in the text. However, the range of opportunities for pupils to develop their

literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects is not consistently well developed. Through partnership with a number of outside agencies, pupils' personal development is well promoted. For example, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed an exciting morning of activities organised at the school by the Red Cross, local police and fire service. This session helped promote pupils' very good attitudes to keeping themselves safe, fit and healthy. Themed days and weeks enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils recall with enthusiasm 'science week' experiments using hard boiled eggs, tooth paste, mouth wash and vinegar to investigate the importance of keeping their teeth clean. Other highlights include swimming in Years 3 to 6, good opportunities to learn languages including French and Zulu, all pupils enjoy learning to play a musical instrument in Year 4, and violin, keyboard and guitar lessons are popular with older pupils. Through good links with a school in Spain pupils learn about Spanish life and Year 6 pupils have written to pen friends to practise their Spanish language learning.

The quality of pastoral care is very good and contributes very well to pupils' self-confidence and security. Systems for safeguarding pupils' safety, health and well-being are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will take effective action should any problems occur. Arrangements to help pupils who have specific learning needs are very well managed and inclusive. The school works successfully with outside agencies to provide appropriate support, including help for those pupils who find it hard to settle to their work as well as those who are most vulnerable. Close relationships with the neighbouring infant school ensure that new pupils transfer confidently and settle quickly. Links with local secondary schools help pupils to prepare well for the next phase in the education. Some pupils are clear about their targets and what to do to move up to the next level, particularly in their writing as a result of recently introduced target sheets. However, this is not consistent across subjects. While improvement in the tracking of pupils' progress is helping the school to check more regularly how well the pupils are doing, teachers do not always use this information to plan tasks to meet all the pupils' needs.

Good leadership by the headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy and the senior leaders, has kept the school moving forward since her appointment, and there is a good capacity to sustain this. With a shared vision to raise standards further, the headteacher has successfully united staff. Recent initiatives to improve pupils' personal development have been particularly effective. For example, the school is working successfully to encourage regular attendance and good punctuality, and as a result attendance is now average. The new dining arrangements enabling all pupils to eat together promote their extremely good social skills. Senior staff and subject leaders are involved in monitoring the school's work. They are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified the right priorities for improvement. The school has successfully tackled inconsistency in performance. However, some leaders have only recently been appointed and some actions have not yet had time to bring about improvements to the school's provision and raise standards. The school has plans to develop further the school's good contribution to community cohesion by establishing links with a school in Malawi. The governing body is very supportive and keen to help the school to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use marking and target setting consistently to make clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning.
- Ensure all lessons maintain a brisk pace and that tasks are consistently well matched to pupils' needs.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elmwood Junior School, Croydon, CR0 2PL

Thank you for your very friendly welcome and for helping me when I visited your school recently and for telling me about your work and what you like about your school. I particularly enjoyed the Year 5 assembly explaining what they have been learning about electricity in their science lessons.

Elmwood Junior School is a good school. These things are particularly good:

- you are very happy at school and talk about it with pride. Your parents like the school very much too
- you have extremely good personal skills, get on very well with other pupils and adults and most of you behave very well
- you achieve well and reach the standards expected for your age
- those of you who find learning hard get lots of extra help and do well
- the curriculum is good and teachers plan exciting things for you to do
- you like the many extra activities and the after school clubs which the school offers
- all the staff make sure you are well cared for, helped and safe
- the headteacher and all the staff are working hard to make the school even better.

We have asked the school to make sure you know how to move up to the next level in all your work and that when teachers mark your work they always give you a clear idea of how to make it even better. We have also asked the school to make sure all of the teaching is as good as the very best by ensuring that you always have work that is just the right level of difficulty for you and lessons that help you to learn at a faster pace. You can help by continuing to work hard and by coming to school every day and on time. Finally I would like to thank you once again for your help. I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector