

Elm Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109117
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324903
Inspection date	18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	311
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Baldwin
Headteacher	Beth Alway
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nicholls Lane Winterbourne Bristol BS36 1NF
Telephone number	01454 866750
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following.

- The ability of the school to analyse and evaluate performance, especially in relation to pupils' writing and to take appropriate actions to bring about improvements.
- The impact of the school's policy and actions to help pupils deal with any bullying.
- The support given to looked after children and the quality of the plan to develop the provision and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work, school documentation and parental questionnaires, and from discussions with a governor, staff, parents and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Elm Park is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average but rising. Pupils are predominately of White British heritage although recently pupils from more diverse backgrounds have joined the school. Very few pupils are learning English as an additional language. There are a few looked after children. The number of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time of entry is higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average although there is currently a higher than average percentage of those who have a statement of educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Elm Park is a good school that maintains good standards. Pupils achieve standards that are well above the national average throughout the school in all subjects. The curriculum and lessons are lively and carefully planned, with staff using a good range of methods to engage learners of all abilities. Recently, for example, pupils planted a vegetable garden and they are now recording the rate of growth and eagerly awaiting the harvest! Parents strongly supported this project. Overall, the vast majority of parents are pleased with the education and support their children receive. Most pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school and their learning.

Teaching is good. Staff have successfully addressed the minor weakness they had identified in the quality of pupils' writing. The deputy head, as subject leader, analysed the issues well and this year's work shows significant improvement due to the high-quality teaching, assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in writing. The pupils are rightly proud of their writing assessment books and their faster progress this year is clearly evident. In lessons, pupils are responsive, well motivated and are keen to edit each other's work and to make sensible suggestions for how improvements can be made. They use alliteration well, for example, and spelling is more accurate. Work is well presented and there is good writing from a wide variety of genres, including poetry. A very good learning atmosphere and a high standard of behaviour are evident in all classes. However, a small number of pupils do not continue this goodwill outside of lessons. Despite the enhanced activities at lunchtime and the new golden rules, a small amount of unkindness still occurs. Lunchtime staff have had extra training to deal with these issues and pupils who are kind and thoughtful are now rewarded. Any incidents are carefully logged and the school has introduced a stronger programme for personal and social education and revised the behaviour and bullying policy to closely follow the local authority guidelines. These policies are scheduled to go to the parents' forum, all parents/carers and governors shortly. It is too early to judge the impact but the policies have been carefully devised to address the issues. Personal advice and support are offered and pupils say they have confidence that adults will help should problems arise.

The school ensures that individual learning needs are met. The support given to pupils who are looked after, as a parent remarked, 'goes the extra mile'. The staff ensure that pupils are comfortable and make rapid progress in their new surroundings. Links with other agencies to support pupils are excellent. There are also nurture groups to support any pupil in the school experiencing personal difficulties. The in-class support given by teaching assistants to those with particular needs, including medical issues, is also excellent. The plan to develop further the provision for those with learning difficulties is well designed. Academic guidance for all pupils is exceptionally strong. As a result, pupils are clear what they need to do next to improve their work and to meet their challenging targets. The safeguarding and child protection procedures are securely in place. The school audits safety regularly, including the perimeter fencing. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. The level of individual care, guidance and support is outstanding. In some ways, the promotion of community cohesion works well. Pupils benefit from a well-run breakfast club and lots of school and local activities. The school council take their duties to contribute to the school community seriously and are working well on improving the outdoor area and play opportunities. Pupils know about the global community but are less sure of diversity within modern multi-ethnic society in Britain. As a result, the overall grade for the school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory.

The school is ably led by a new headteacher and a dynamic leadership team with a shared vision and drive. Senior leaders are actively working to further engage parents. A minority of parents have found the initial changes made by the team and the timescales associated with the changes unsettling. The team have learned from this experience and have involved parents more in subsequent developments. The well-considered school development plan, recent improvements in pupils' standards in writing and effective monitoring by governors all clearly demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes because they are extremely well cared for and teaching is of high quality. The curriculum is exceptionally well adapted to children's interests and includes numerous opportunities for them to learn through play activities, often in the well designed garden area. The outdoor library is a delight to see and is successful in encouraging children's interest in books. There is a good range of activities in all areas of learning. Progress is carefully monitored through high quality individual learning journey books. Children generally start school with the skills and experiences expected for four-year-olds, but recently the school identified some children at a lower level in terms of language and pre-writing skills. Children's achievement is good and, by the time they leave Reception, standards for the majority are average or above in all areas of learning. Children are keen to be at school. They enter the classroom confidently and take part in the registration routines, with many answering the register in French. They use the time at the start of the morning well to draw and write in their personal books and are proud of what they do. Most are independent and self-assured learners. Children play well together and are taught to think about the feelings of others. Relationships are excellent with adults listening well and children are encouraged 'to have a go'. Outstanding leadership and management ensure children are ready for their next stage of education and enjoy their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve communication with parents to ensure new developments are fully shared including the time-line for the completion of new initiatives and how they can help.
- Ensure pupils learn to show more consideration for each other at break and lunchtimes and follow the golden rules.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of modern multi-ethnic society.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	1

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	3
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**

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elm Park Primary School, Bristol, BS36 1NF

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, and particularly those of you who took time to talk to us. We very much enjoyed seeing your work, attending your literacy lessons and watching the younger children playing and learning outdoors.

Yours is a good school and you make good progress in your work.

- These are some of the best things about the school.
- The youngest children make a great start to their learning and are especially enjoying their outdoor area.
- Older pupils do well in the national assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Your writing has improved this year and is of high quality.
- You are given a good amount of individual attention and support in your lessons
- Teachers teach you well and use many exciting methods to make lessons interesting.
- You are good at helping each other to see how to improve your work.
- All pupils including those of you with extra learning needs get very good care and do well at school.
- Your school is led well. Your headteacher, the senior team, the governors and staff understand how to make the school even better. We have asked them to improve the following.
- Communication with your parents about any changes to the school so your parents know earlier what will be happening and how they can help.
- Continue to develop the use of your golden rules, and to make sure the small number of you who can be unkind to others stop it.
- Help you to learn more about the many different backgrounds of people living in England today.
- Please will you think 'am I being kind
- ' before you do something to someone else; if the answer is 'yes' then everyone will have a good time at school and no one will be sad.

With best wishes Mo Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector