

Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112694
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325665
Inspection date	13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	176
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	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Josie Hanbridge
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Bird
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Queen's Drive Swadlincote Derbyshire DE11 0EG

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	13 November 2008
Inspection number	325665

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Age group 3–7

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality and impact of teaching, the impact of leadership and management on children's achievement and the standards they reach. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of data, school based monitoring and evaluation information, discussions with children and staff, and observations of lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized infant school with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in Nursery and Reception classes. A larger than average proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is an Enhanced Resource School and caters for a number of children with autistic spectrum disorders and complex and diverse additional learning needs. Almost all children are of White British descent and an above average proportion are eligible for free school meals.

The school has gained a number of awards in recognition of its work. These include Investor in People, Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark 3, the Healthy School Award and the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

In this outstanding school, children achieve extremely well and thrive both personally and academically. The school has the overwhelming support of parents, many of whom wrote to convey their appreciation of the standards of care and education it provides. Comments such as '...a brilliant school' and '...a wonderful environment to learn in, and excellent teaching', were typical of those received. Parents recognise the high level of commitment amongst staff to ensuring all children are treated as individuals, and the excellent support they receive to achieve extremely well. Within this enabling environment, children feel safe, secure and valued and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of their time at school.

Children start school in the Nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding that are well below those typically found. They are often particularly low in the area of communication, language and literacy. Children make extremely good progress so that by the time they start Year 1 most are working broadly at the levels expected for their age. They continue to make excellent progress with the result that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Children who find learning more difficult than others, and those with specific and often complex special educational needs including autism, also make excellent progress and often achieve outstandingly well from their individual starting points. Assessment information, children's work and their responses in lessons indicate that the above average standards attained in 2008 are continuing this year.

High expectations of what children can achieve, and exceptionally consistent and effective teamwork are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher, senior staff and governors lead and manage the school extremely well. They are sharply focused on ensuring that the school meets both the pastoral and academic needs of every individual child. The school's systems for checking the quality and effectiveness of its work are robust and rigorously applied. Areas for improvement are identified and prompt action is taken. This very effective practice has secured extremely good improvement since the last inspection, including in children's attendance and standards in mathematics. Staff are reflective of their own practice and work together to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of their teaching. The school is a cohesive and successful learning community. Through sharing expertise, teachers have succeeded in raising the quality and consistency of teaching overall so children's individual needs are met. Improvements in teaching include an increased proportion of very practical hands on learning activities, greater use of ICT and better use of assessment information to guide planning. The school's excellent capacity to improve further is clearly demonstrated by the very positive impact these sort of changes have had on children's learning and the standards they reach as a result.

Children say they thoroughly enjoy being at school because their lessons, and other activities, are interesting and fun and they can work and play together with their friends. Adults act as extremely good role models and promote the qualities of care, consideration and harmony exceptionally well. Consequently, children learn to appreciate that they are all individuals and show high levels of respect, tolerance and understanding towards each other. Children's extremely well developed spirituality and their crystal clear understanding of right and wrong underpins their outstanding behaviour in lessons and around school. They are polite, courteous and demonstrate a very mature attitude towards their work and the responsibilities they are given. They are very enthusiastic about contributing to the school and wider community and carry out their roles with a good deal of maturity for children of their age. For example, following

improvements to the school's outdoor play areas the school council helped to draw up and explain to other children the revised behaviour code.

Children feel extremely safe in school and are very confident that if they have a problem an adult will help them to sort it out. They have a very well developed understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, when helping to mop up water from around a water-tray activity, children were quick to place a warning cone to alert other children to the possibility of slipping on the damp floor. Children have an extremely good understanding of how to keep healthy. This is demonstrated by the healthy food choices they make at lunchtime and the enthusiasm with which they take part in a wide range of physical exercise opportunities.

Children work extremely hard in lessons because teachers plan a wide variety of challenging activities that are exceptionally well matched to children's interests and abilities. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of how to motivate and enthuse children to learn is exceptionally good. Lesson planning is guided by very accurate assessment information and the expectations of what children can learn are high. A consequence of this approach is that children's learning moves forward at a rapid pace. They also have the opportunity to practise skills they already have, and to use their knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts. The learning of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT takes priority but planning through themes is extremely successful in bringing children's learning to life. By working together on tasks, children's academic learning and their ability to work cooperatively is supported exceptionally well. To this end, they are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning and the future world of work. The extensive range of enrichment and extension activities, including visits, visitors and after-school clubs provide children with a rich and diverse range of learning experiences. Children are very skilled at working with other children who have a wide range of personal or academic individual needs and do so very successfully. However, they have limited first hand experience of the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented in British society. Teachers manage children extremely effectively, give very clear instructions and explanations and model new skills very precisely. Consequently, children know what is expected of them and are able to tackle new learning with confidence. Teaching assistants work in very close partnership with teachers to provide children presenting with very different learning needs with the challenge, encouragement and support they need to achieve their individual targets.

The school is exceptionally vigilant in the care it provides for children. Procedures to keep children safe at school are extremely thorough and implemented rigorously. Children who find learning particularly challenging, or who attend the Enhanced Resource facility receive excellent support from teachers and additional well trained and highly motivated staff. This enables them to take a full part in school life. Very productive and extensive links with outside agencies and other schools ensure children's often very complex and individual needs are met. Children's personal and academic progress is monitored extremely closely and they are set challenging targets for improvement. They receive outstanding guidance as to how they can improve their work. The introduction of revised assessment procedures is enabling children to take more responsibility for their learning as adults help them to assess their own work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents are very appreciative of the productive partnership they have with the school and the exemplary care, support and education their children receive in the EYFS. Children get off to an excellent start because the provision made is extremely well led and managed and teamwork

is outstanding. They make exceptionally good progress to reach standards that are very close to those expected by the end of the EYFS. Extremely good assessment strategies ensure teachers know what children need to learn next. Using this information to guide their planning, teachers ensure that activities focus strongly on helping children to become confident, inquisitive and independent learners. They are provided with an extensive range of learning experiences both inside and outdoors. These are very well targeted at children's interests and abilities and capitalise on their enthusiasm and keenness to explore and investigate using all their senses. Staff concentrate on supporting children's personal development and their ability to communicate effectively. There is a good mix of direct teaching and opportunities for children to make choices and engage in purposeful play. Children and adults spend a lot of time talking about the activities they are engaged in. Adults seize every opportunity to extend and enrich children's vocabulary and their understanding and usage of the spoken word. This approach ensures children are able to relate to each other and to learn exceptionally well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's knowledge and understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British 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?	1
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	1

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?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

14 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School, Swadlincote, D11 0EG

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed our day because you made us feel very welcome. We particularly liked watching you work in lessons and being able to talk to you about your school. You told us there are many things about your school that you really like. These include your lessons, which you think are fun, and being able to work and play with your friends. We were very pleased to hear just how much you enjoy being at school.

Here are some of the things we liked best about your school:

- we were extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you look after, and take good care of each other
- you work very hard in lessons and your teachers and the other adults who help you are outstanding so you learn new things quickly
- you are given many interesting things to do so you have lots of fun while you are learning
- almost all your parents are very happy with the way you are helped to learn at school and with the support you get when you need it
- your headteacher and the other adults in school take extremely good care of you so you can be happy and feel safe at school.

We think you go to an outstanding school that helps you to learn really well. You understand that not everyone has the same needs and that some of you need more help than others. We think your school could help you to understand more about the people who live in Britain who do not have the same background as most of you, so we have asked your school to help you to learn about this.

Thank you again for making our visit such a pleasant experience. We hope that you keep on working hard and enjoying your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher

Lead inspector