

Elmwood Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101721
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	335777
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs G Douglas
Headteacher	Mrs J Harris
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and 9 part lessons, and scrutinised a sample of work, observing lessons taught by 13 teachers and several teaching assistants. They spent the majority of the school days observing learning and holding meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. They analysed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including policies, the school improvement plan and records of pupils' progress. They considered the 55 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- rates of progress for all groups of pupils, particularly boys, Asian pupils, pupils with special educational needs and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of provision in those aspects judged outstanding by the school, particularly care, guidance and support and Every Child Matters outcomes
- the impact of all leaders in securing improvements and the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Elmwood is a larger than average infant school. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises Nursery and Reception age children. Most of the Nursery children go on to the Reception classes within the school. There are a high number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. Thirty four different languages are spoken within the school. There are a small number of refugees and asylum seekers. A slightly above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mainly speech and language difficulties.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides outstanding care and support for all and works exceptionally well in partnership with parents and other institutions to support pupils' learning and personal development. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, as is the leadership and support given by the ethnic minority coordinator for pupils at an early stage of learning English. The vision and strong leadership of the headteacher have ensured good improvement since the last inspection when the school was judged to be satisfactory. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the many opportunities for involvement, such as attendance at assemblies and reading to pupils in different languages.

Children get off to a sound start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Classrooms are bright and welcoming and good relationships ensure children settle well. However, although a range of relevant activities are provided, current planning and adult support for activities undertaken by the children independently are insufficient to ensure children make good progress in their learning. Additionally, assessments are not undertaken regularly enough to ensure a good match of work to children's needs. Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 as a result of effective teaching. Attainment has risen since the last inspection and is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers organise and manage lessons well so that pupils enjoy them, behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. Thorough planning and challenging work that motivates pupils are typical features of the good teaching. Although some helpful marking and use of targets support pupils' learning, particularly in Year 2, these are not consistent enough to ensure all pupils are fully involved in making their work better. Additionally, pupils are not always challenged enough through effective questioning and this occasionally slows their progress.

The broad and balanced curriculum is planned effectively to reflect the varied cultures represented within the school. It is enriched by activities such as 'Black History' month. Pupils work harmoniously together as a multicultural community. High levels of support for all groups, particularly those with special educational needs, including vulnerable pupils, and those at an early stage of learning English, enable all groups to make good progress. Senior leaders have a strong commitment to raising attainment further through careful tracking of pupils' progress, and accelerating learning. They have carefully evaluated provision and used the school improvement plan as a vehicle for monitoring the success of initiatives. The impact of good leadership can be seen in better teaching, faster progress and higher attendance rates, all of which demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage through:
 - more effective planning and greater attention to ensuring that adults interact effectively in child-initiated activities to extend learning
 - more regular assessments of children's progress to inform planning and ensure greater challenge in learning.
- Raise attainment further by ensuring greater challenge in lessons through:
 - more effective questioning that demands a greater contribution from pupils themselves
 - greater consistency in the use of marking and target setting to help pupils improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils work hard and collaborate effectively in lessons. They enjoy discussing what they are doing and were particularly animated when talking about natural and man-made substances in an art lesson. This also extended pupils' vocabulary as the pupils talked about pigment and the use of turmeric. Good progress in writing and reading is ensured through daily guided reading and regular writing assessments to monitor progress and plan the next steps in learning. There is very little difference in the progress of pupils from different groups, including those at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs. The school works extremely hard to address any differences where and when they appear. For example, the school has provided targeted intervention for Asian pupils in Year 2, which has raised their attainment. Additionally, the school is using themes such as dinosaurs and pirates to engage boys more in their learning, with positive results.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are welcoming and work and play harmoniously together. They say that they feel very safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. For two successive years, the school has won the national competition 'show racism the red card' and pupils say 'there is no racism in this school'. Pupils contribute well to the school community through, for example, their work as councillors and are pleased with their efforts to improve the school playground. Pupils are kind and thoughtful towards each other and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They have an excellent understanding and respect for their different cultures. One pupil said, 'We are all different, but we play well together.' Pupils make good progress in developing basic skills and have well-honed social skills. These qualities, coupled with the regular attendance of most pupils, ensure they are well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers deploy support staff well and make good use of resources. For example, in one lesson, where the focus was to write riddles, the teacher made good use of the whiteboard, a riddle checklist and a list of opening sentences to help pupils with their learning. Good relationships and positive interactions ensure pupils are attentive, even when occasionally teachers talk for too long and there is not enough effective questioning to involve pupils in whole-class sessions. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs through effective interactions and careful monitoring of their small groups. Pupils with English as an additional language get effective support. One pupil seen was thoroughly enjoying the support given to help develop her vocabulary and phonic skills. The bilingual reading group is an effective strategy that involves small groups of pupils and parents. For example, during the inspection, Tamil-speaking parents and children enjoyed a story in English, which was then translated into Tamil. This enabled excellent vocabulary development and a celebration of both languages.

The school tracks pupils' progress carefully and intervenes quickly to support those not achieving well enough. The curriculum is well planned to ensure it takes account of pupils' varying needs and there is good attention to cross-curricular links, particularly in the use of information and communication technology. Pupils thoroughly enjoy clubs such as French and football. The school gives exemplary support to its most vulnerable

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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pupils and their families, which is enhanced through effective links with outside agencies. The school has taken robust action to improve attendance. It has received commendations from the local authority as attendance levels are higher than in similar schools in the borough.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a good working atmosphere in the school and all senior leaders are fully involved in driving the school's development. For example, they have been proactive in developing the new curriculum to ensure more interesting and relevant experiences for pupils. Careful self-evaluation and a rigorous focus on raising attainment have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is monitored well through a variety of initiatives, such as lesson observations by senior leaders and opportunities for teachers to observe each other's lessons. However, sometimes there is too much emphasis on the quality of teaching rather than learning. Regular analysis of data by senior staff and subject leaders ensures a good understanding of the next steps in pupils' learning. This, coupled with a strong respect for the diverse school community, the work done to improve the achievement of boys and Asian pupils, and work to prevent racism, ensure an outstanding commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.

The outstanding partnerships with parents and others contribute significantly to the strong, cohesive school community. For example, the school works with adult education services to provide family learning. During the inspection, parents were shown the school's approach to teaching mathematics, enabling them to be fully involved in supporting their children's learning. The school celebrates its cultural diversity and has completed a full audit of its context, involving all of its stakeholders. The school recognises the need to develop links with communities further afield. Systems for safeguarding pupils are good and policies are systematically reviewed by senior staff and governors. Governors are supportive of the school and work effectively through committees to ensure all statutory requirements are met. They are now developing their role as a critical friend to the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are lower than those expected for three-year-olds. They make sound progress due to good attention to their personal development and satisfactory provision for learning. In both Nursery and Reception, there are not enough assessments of children's learning to help staff provide accurately for their needs and this slows progress. Attainment on entry to the Reception classes is below, and sometimes well below, that expected for four-year-olds, as many have limited skills in speaking English. Good relationships and an appropriate range of activities across the areas of learning ensure children make satisfactory progress. However, they mainly remain below the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Children willingly take part in activities, behave well and are happy to share resources with each other. They enjoy using the outdoor area and it gives them plenty of opportunities for exercise and imaginative play. The emphasis on teaching sounds, letters and reading is helping to accelerate children's progress. However, planning for activities undertaken by the children independently is insufficiently detailed to ensure all staff are clear about what children are expected to learn. This hampers their ability to question and challenge children fully through their interactions with them. Leadership, although satisfactory, is not always rigorous enough in monitoring the quality of provision and driving improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The return was quite small, reflecting the views of only a minority of parents. However, the questionnaires show that most parents are happy with the school and what it provides. They consider that their children enjoy all that the school has to offer and are safe and well looked after, and the inspectors agree. The main concern was about information on the progress their children make. The school has termly interviews with parents to inform them of their children's progress. There are also the 'Pride of Elmwood' awards that celebrate pupils' achievements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elmwood Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	56	22	40	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	42	29	53	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	35	27	49	4	7	4	7
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	31	31	56	3	5	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	22	40	30	55	0	0	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	40	28	51	2	4	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	31	35	64	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	16	36	65	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	18	37	67	2	4	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	20	27	67	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	18	35	64	2	4	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	18	33	30	55	1	2	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	42	29	53	1	2	2	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elmwood Infant School, Croydon CR0 2PL

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We were pleased to learn that you enjoy school, especially being school councillors who are helping to make the school better.

We judged that you have an excellent headteacher who is ensuring that you have a good education and that you are very well looked after.

Here are some other things we particularly liked about your school.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are well behaved, friendly and keen to learn.
- You are very considerate and caring and are keen to help and support each other.
- You feel extremely safe.
- Staff take extremely good care of you especially those of you who are just beginning to learn English.

These are the things I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Help those of you who are in the Nursery and Reception classes to learn more quickly and make sure all of the adults join in activities with you.
- Help you all do even better by making sure you are always given work that makes you think hard and that all of the teachers show you how to improve your work.

You can help by carrying on working well together. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair

Lead inspector

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