

# Elmfield School for Deaf Children

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109385
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	337276
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Muir

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Gill Behenna
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Murray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 November 2006
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector observed 10 teachers in 10 lessons; meetings were held with two groups of pupils, two governors, a range of staff, including the senior leadership team, middle managers and the British Sign Language (BSL) and deaf studies tutor. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, other planning and assessment documents and scrutinised nine parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupils' progress in all areas of the school and how judgments are made as a result
- how the school's management ensures that expectations are consistently high across all areas of the school and that standards and expectations are raised
- whether the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, across all key stages, so that they are ready to transfer to the next stage of their lives, especially with regard to their deafness and special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the robustness and accuracy of the school's monitoring of teaching across the school and whether it contributes to the raising of standards.

## Information about the school

This is a small school which provides a regional resource for pupils who are severely and profoundly deaf and use BSL as their first language. The school is situated on two sites; the primary site in the north of Bristol and the secondary department which is co-located on the site of a high school in the east of the city. The secondary department also provides inclusion support for deaf pupils who are on the roll of the mainstream secondary school. Numbers on roll are evenly split between the two sites; however, numbers have declined recently due to two large Year 11 cohorts leaving in the last two years.

Nearly two thirds of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities in addition to their deafness, as compared to one third at the time of the previous inspection, and all pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The additional needs include visual impairment, autism, specific learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils are White British. The school serves nine local authorities and the socio-economic background of pupils is varied, although just over a third of them are eligible for free school meals. Members of the senior leadership team are currently acting up from their substantive roles, due to the recent departure of the previous headteacher, with the deputy headteacher acting as headteacher. The school is currently part of a local authority review of deaf and hearing impaired provision in the City of Bristol.

**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

Elmfield School for Deaf Children is a good school which promotes a cultural and linguistic view of deafness, focusing on the development of English and BSL. The school also recognises the contribution of both the Deaf community and the wider community to the personal well-being and academic achievement of its pupils.

Due to their additional special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of pupils enter the school with attainment which is well below that expected for their age and leave with below average attainment; during their time in school, they make good progress. Also, the minority of pupils who enter the school with attainment at or above expectations also leave school having made good progress, including several who gain high grades in GCSEs and other relevant qualifications. The good progress made by pupils reflects the generally good teaching.

Staff, in all key stages including the Early Years Foundation Stage, have high levels of commitment to the pupils and know their needs well, which enables them to set targets which are challenging for the pupils. Several partnerships which the school has developed with outside agencies contribute to personal development and well-being through a recognition and promotion of Deaf culture and identity. The school's deaf staff, including the Deaf studies and BSL tutors, are also good contributors to these aspects of pupils' development due to their exemplary work on developing identity and language, but also as role models for the young people in the school. Support staff provide effective support for pupils' learning and contribute well to the success and philosophy of the school. All staff work hard to develop their BSL skills and an understanding of how deaf children learn effectively within a sign bilingual setting. A good example of this was seen in mathematics where a new scheme has been introduced to allow pupils to gain a more concrete understanding of how numbers work and combine, to enable problem-solving skills to develop. Evidence shows that this has already had a positive impact on attainment in mathematics. Attendance is average in all key stages, but the school recognises that work needs to be done to reduce absenteeism due to such factors as pre-arranged hospital appointments which could take place in school holidays.

The senior leadership team provides a vision and a common sense of purpose, which involves all staff. The ethos of the school also permeates through to all members of the school community, including pupils, parents and carers, and governors. Staff work effectively in class teams, department teams and increasingly as a whole-school team, to develop good practice and moderate work to ensure that assessment is accurate and is contributing to raising standards. The school is aware of the need to refine further the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the tracking of pupils' progress to

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ensure that both continue to improve. Staff are encouraged to contribute ideas to the school development process and to be involved in working parties to develop aspects of the school's work. Pupils' views are taken seriously, and it is clear that they enjoy school and feel, especially in the secondary department, that the school has improved the quality of their education and care. The weaker aspects of the curriculum identified in the previous report have successfully been addressed and there are increasing opportunities available for pupils in both departments. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that pupils receive a good start to school and that children are well prepared to learn at the start of their school careers.

The accurate view that leaders have of the school and the improvements evident since the previous inspection demonstrate that there is good capacity to make sustained improvement. The work on community cohesion now needs to be further developed to evaluate the impact it is having across both departments. The governing body has a good understanding of its role and there is clear evidence of the impact of its work in supporting and challenging the school. The safeguarding systems, including procedures for ensuring the safe recruitment of all staff, are outstanding.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Evaluate the impact of community cohesion and use this information to improve the quality of this aspect of the school's work.
- Ensure that the systems for monitoring and tracking progress are effective and comprehensive by:
  - monitoring all cohorts and groups of pupils over time to identify trends or patterns in progress
  - developing external moderation systems which accurately reflect the school's pupils
  - evaluating the quality and effectiveness of all interventions used to promote learning.
- Raise levels of attendance by working closely with parents and carers to reduce the number of pre-arranged absences for events such as hospital appointments during school term time.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

All pupils leave school with externally accredited qualifications and go on to continue in full-time education. In 2009, some pupils gained higher grades in GCSEs including English and mathematics. Pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. The monitoring of groups shows that there is no difference in the progress of any groups in relation to their starting points and abilities.

Pupils in both departments said that they enjoy school. They say that bullying is not a concern and, in the secondary department, pupils feel more accepted by students in the mainstream school. Pupils in both departments say that they feel safe. Behaviour is

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good in the primary department and generally good in the secondary department. When challenging behaviour has occurred in the secondary department, the school has taken robust action, in partnership with external agencies, to ensure that it is addressed and that disruption to other pupils' learning is minimised.

Pupils' work in the local community is good. They are involved in a range of events such as the annual, high-profile St Paul's Carnival and join with other schools for residential visits. Plans are now underway for a trip to Nepal with the neighbouring primary school which is developing as an increasingly important partner providing inclusion and curriculum enhancement. Pupils have also been involved in enterprise opportunities to raise money for a proposed trip to Paris in the summer as well as fundraising for a range of charities. The school works actively to provide opportunities to meet people from other cultures and backgrounds and this has helped to promote an awareness of cultural issues. The school is also active in ensuring that pupils meet a range of deaf adults so that they can find out, at first hand, about their experiences and develop an awareness of what it means to be a deaf adult in the wider community. Pupils have an awareness of right and wrong and are given good opportunities to develop their identities as young deaf people.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Overall, the teaching seen during the inspection was good, which concurs with the school's judgement of teaching over time. In the better lessons, planning is well matched to the needs of the pupils and there is a good awareness of language skills and other abilities. In the lessons seen, support was well targeted allowing it to support learning very effectively. Planning shows effective linking of prior learning, knowledge of pupils' attainment levels and relevant activities so that all pupils are able to make good progress. Access to learning, either directly through the teacher using BSL or the teacher talking with signing support from a communication support worker, is a major factor in promoting good progress. Support staff's awareness of pupils' individual education and behaviour plans and teachers' lesson plans helps them to support learning effectively. The knowledge which staff have of the individual learning styles of deaf pupils, and the respect which they show them, contribute well to the overall progress which they make.

In all key stages, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It has improved since the previous inspection and now provides more opportunities for inclusion in the local primary school and for secondary pupils to participate in a variety of mainstream lessons if appropriate. Deaf studies and the learning of BSL are particularly positive aspects of the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, pupils have been given more opportunities to gain external qualifications by the introduction of a wider range of accreditation. Pupils in the secondary department now have opportunities to gain Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Entry Level Certificates and GCSEs.

Pupils know their targets and are aware of how they can improve their work. The good care, guidance and support are a strength of the school as pupils are made aware of future pathways when they leave school. There is a good range of partnerships with external agencies, the local community and the Connexions service which ensure that pupils are given access to a wide range of information, advice and guidance about their future options. Some of these partnerships are generic and some are specifically tailored to meet the needs of the pupils as deaf youngsters. Pupils in both departments are very clear that they feel well supported and encouraged and guided to improve their work.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Despite the temporary nature of the roles of the members of the senior leadership team, they have all taken on their present roles with an energy, enthusiasm and skill, which has already had an impact on other staff, who are enthusiastic about taking on new initiatives and contributing to the work of the school development plan. The school sets ambitious and challenging targets in all areas. Staff questionnaires show overwhelmingly that staff feel valued in the contribution that they make to the school and are proud to be members of staff there. They have an almost unanimous belief that the school is being led well, which is strong evidence that the leadership team has handled the potential disruption extremely effectively, minimising any possible negative impact on the life of the school.

Senior leaders and other staff have a good understanding of the strengths within the departments and have clear and appropriate action plans in place for further improvement. The representative school councils demonstrate the inclusive ethos of the school and its work to tackle discrimination, with equality of opportunity being at the heart of everything that it does. The school's safeguarding procedures and policies, including child protection, are outstanding in all aspects and show that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. The governing body offers good support and increasing challenge to the management of the school and has an accurate awareness of the context of the school and its strengths and areas for improvement. Work on the promotion of community cohesion is progressing soundly and the school recognises that it now needs to be evaluated.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Although some children have levels of attainment on entry which are close to those expected for their age, generally children's attainment on entry is low due to their delayed language and special educational needs and/or disabilities. For most, attainment remains low throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Despite this, the good quality of the provision and teaching in this stage, alongside an effective curriculum and good care, results in good progress being made.

Planning and assessment match the needs of the children effectively. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and the lead teacher has a good understanding of children of this age who are deaf and how they learn. Partnerships with parents and other professionals are well thought out, contributing well to the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the children. Relationships throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage are positive and deaf staff provide positive role models and are able to support good language development through BSL.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Nine parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the large majority of responses were positive. The responses and comments generally reflected the inspector's findings and the school's judgements. Two parents disagreed with the statement 'My child is making enough progress at this school' but the inspection did not find any evidence to support this. The findings of the inspection support the overall positive view of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elmfield School for Deaf Children 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. The inspector received 9 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	33	6	67	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	2	22	7	78	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	6	67	2	22	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	56	3	33	1	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	67	2	22	1	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	44	4	44	1	11	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)	3	33	4	44	1	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	56	4	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	44	5	56	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	33	4	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	67	2	22	1	11	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elmfield School for Deaf Children, Bristol, BS10 6AY

I am writing to you following my recent visit to your school to say thank you very much for making my visit so interesting and enjoyable. It was a genuine pleasure to meet you all.

I found that your school is a good school and it is improving.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work hard to make your time in school successful. You enjoy school and you make good progress while you are there. Your parents and carers are also happy with how well the school educates and looks after you all. Your personal development is a strength and I was particularly impressed by my meetings with you and the other conversations I had with you around the school. It was good to see your confidence as young deaf people. You work hard to improve your personal and academic skills and you enjoy your lessons. You have good attitudes to learning and you should all be very proud of yourselves. I know that the staff and your parents and carers are proud of you.

I have asked the school to do three things to make the school even better:

- make sure that the work the school does on community cohesion is monitored so that it has the most impact on your understanding of other communities
- develop systems for tracking your progress so that you and the staff always know how well you are doing and how you can improve
- make sure that you attend as often as you can and that you have hospital appointments outside school time when you can.

You can all help with this by using the school councils to tell the teachers what is good and what you think would make school better.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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