

Elm Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105791
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	355840
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Rowland

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Connorton
Headteacher	Mr David Willis
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons and observed the work of 15 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They evaluated the school's work, and looked at relevant policies, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. The 82 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well does the school ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, reach their full potential?
- How well does the school's system for tracking pupils' progress support good learning?
- How effectively does the school share good practice in teaching and assessment to ensure consistently good learning?
- Are leaders and managers at all levels taking an active role in planning for the school's development?
- How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in ensuring the development of language and social skills?

Information about the school

This is a large primary school with its own nursery provision from which all the pupils move into one of the school's Reception classes. An out-of-school club, which is not managed by the governing body, operates on the school site. This is subject to a separate inspection and has its own report which can be found on the Ofsted web site. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has the Green Flag Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

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. The hard work of the last few years to improve the quality of teaching and assessment has been successful and attainment is rising steadily. Pupils make good progress and their attainment is broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The staff and governors are united in their commitment to ensuring further improvement. This is a very safe school where the care and welfare of pupils is managed well. Pupils are considerate and respectful of each other. They have a good sense of their place in the wider community and of the diversity of the United Kingdom.

Self-evaluation is honest and helpful. The school is aware of what it needs to do to move on. Its work to ensure that more-able pupils achieve their full potential is having a clear impact. The school has successfully tackled the issues raised at the time of the last inspection. This, along with the good outcomes it is achieving shows that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Teaching is good and teachers share good practice so that it is continually improving. At times, however, lesson introductions can be over long so that the pace of learning can flag and pupils' interest can wane. Occasionally, not enough time is given for pupils to reflect on their learning or for teachers to correct any misconceptions that pupils may have. Questioning is usually good but opportunities are missed to challenge pupils further. The curriculum has a number of strengths but planning to ensure the systematic development of skills is not sufficiently sharp.

The school has an Eco award and pupils have a good awareness of the need to protect the environment. They are keen to point out how they work to keep the school site clean and tidy and how they contribute to local projects. Pupils are very proud of their school and are very welcoming. When asked what they would do to make the school even better one pupil said, 'Nothing really. It's just about as good as it can get.' Parents and carers think highly of the school. Many positive comments were received during the inspection. Typical comments include, 'Elm Wood has a strong ethos and all pupils are expected to respect each other and the teachers - which is excellent.' One parent whose children moved to the school at the end of Year 4 wrote, 'They have come on in leaps and bounds with their education thanks to the excellent teachers they have had.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and for teachers to correct any misconceptions pupils may have
 - ensuring that the pace of learning is consistently brisk and businesslike

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- ensuring that questions consistently challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning.
- Sharpen the planning of the curriculum to ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically and thoroughly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. They are happy to take advantage of the learning activities they are offered. They respond well to interesting and lively teaching and, as a result, they enjoy and achieve well and make good progress.

Most children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are below those expected for their age. The most recent test results from 2010 show that they reached the national average for attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has worked very hard to strengthen teaching and assessment and, as a result, attainment is rising. Pupils are making good progress and this is clear from lesson observations, from scrutiny of pupils' work and from the school's own thorough and helpful tracking system. Pupils are set clear targets and are given good support in order to reach them. Support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised so that they are able to learn and make good progress.

The school is a safe place and pupils say they know who to turn to if they have any problems or concerns. Pupils respect each other and treat other in a polite and considerate way. Behaviour is good. Pupils say that they value the clear framework of expectations which the school has laid down. There is an impressive range of sporting activities and participation rates are high. Pupils are proud of the work they have carried out in the local area to improve the environment, for example, by helping to restore local waste land. The school council in particular has been very successful in reducing the number of pupils who are driven to school. Attendance has improved steadily and is now above average. Pupils have many responsibilities in school such as acting as playground buddies and managing the healthy tuck shop. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. It is well supported by their work with local charities and through their understanding and care for the environment. They have a rich understanding of other cultures and religions. The partnership the school has developed with another Rochdale school which has a different ethnic mix is particularly successful.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. The most successful teaching is lively and engaging. The pace is brisk and pupils are kept involved through a carefully planned sequence of activities. In these lessons, questioning is both flexible and challenging and any possible misconceptions are dealt with promptly. Pupils are frequently asked to share their ideas with their peers. In an excellent Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils were asked to pick out the key features of two advertisements. They were given opportunities to pause and to share their understanding with others. Learning was carefully broken into small steps so that learning was secure and thorough. Occasionally, in some lessons, the pace of learning was not as strong. Teachers spent too long introducing the topic so that interest waned. At times not enough opportunity was given to pause and reflect so that any misconceptions could be addressed. Questioning did not challenge pupils sufficiently so that their learning was not pushed on as rapidly as it could be. A detailed and helpful system for tracking pupils' progress is providing good information to assist in the planning of lessons. Marking is consistently supportive and points out how pupils can improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory and developing. It has a number of strengths. There is a wide range of enrichment activities and these help greatly with pupils' personal development and well-being. It is increasingly matched to pupils' individual needs and modifications to address areas of concern are effective. For example, strategies to support the more-able pupils are clearly enabling this group to make better progress. Overall

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planning of the curriculum to ensure that attainment is developed systematically over time is not sufficiently sharp. This means that there are still some variations and inconsistencies in pupils' rate of learning.

The school cares for its pupils well. It is a caring and welcoming environment. A good range of staff are in place to ensure that support is well targeted. Interventions are carefully monitored so that their impact is fully understood. For example, strategies to raise attendance have been effective. The needs of the pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable with social and emotional needs are well catered for. The school works with a broad range of external agencies to support this aspect of their work.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established a clear sense of purpose and direction. His determination and persistence are key factors in the school's improvement. He is ably supported by a perceptive deputy headteacher. All staff subscribe to the school's core values and work hard to continually improve the quality of teaching and progress. Teaching is monitored thoroughly and action taken to secure further improvement. Equality of opportunity is good. For example, strategies to improve the relative performance of girls to that of the boys have been very successful in closing this gap. Planning for development is clear and accessible. The school benefits from a very experienced and dedicated governing body who know the school and its community very well. They provide support and challenge and take an active role in monitoring teaching. Statutory requirements are met fully.

Relations with parents and carers are good and the school works with a variety of external partners to enhance the quality of provision. Discrimination has no place in Elm Wood and the school's work to promote community cohesion is strong. Strategies to promote this aspect of the school's work are well planned and carefully evaluated. Pupils have many opportunities to understand and value the various ethnic and religious groups of the United Kingdom. The school considers safety a very high priority and its work to ensure that pupils are safe is of high quality. Policies and procedures are detailed and meticulously followed by all staff. Appropriate checks on staff are in place.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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 enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below those expected for their age. As a result of the many curriculum initiatives, and the work of the learning mentor to support children and their families, progress is good and a large majority of children reach the level of skills expected for their age on entry into Year 1. Children learn to cooperate and to be independent learners. They understand how to stay safe and how important it is to be healthy.

Teaching is good with work in the Nursery being particularly strong. Children are offered a choice of activities to suit their needs. Arrangements are in place to ensure that there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Resources both indoors and out are stimulating and engaging. Activities give children opportunities to learn in all areas of learning. Planning for learning is collaborative although formal links between the Nursery and Reception classes are still developing. Behaviour is good and this supports good progress by creating a calm and secure environment. Parents and carers are kept involved through regular meetings and through the 'WOW' board, which publicises children's achievements.

The setting is well led and managed. Systems and procedures are in place and there is a clear focus on raising attainment. There is an effective system of observing children as they play and work so that planning for the progress of each child is thorough. Formal meetings are held regularly and plans to improve the setting are constantly under review. The staff are all appropriately qualified and, as in the main school, safeguarding is of a high standard.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

About 20% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all the responses were largely positive. All respondents felt that teaching in the school was good and that the school kept their child safe. A small minority expressed a concern over whether the school kept parents and carers informed about their child's progress. Inspectors followed this up over the two days of the inspection. Although the present system appears to work well the school is in the process of reviewing its way of reporting to parents and carers. Inspectors felt that the ways the school responds to parental concerns and suggestions is generally sound.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elm Wood Primary 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.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 418 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	68	23	28	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	66	27	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	39	39	48	10	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	45	38	46	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	54	37	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	37	43	52	6	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	54	37	45	1	1	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)	31	38	45	55	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	50	36	44	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	54	30	37	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	34	39	48	8	10	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	39	48	32	39	6	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	57	35	43	0	0	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Elm Wood Primary School, Manchester, M24 2EG

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome during our recent visit to Elm Wood Primary School. We were particularly grateful to those of you who agreed to meet with us during your lunch time; your comments were very helpful. Thank you also to those of you who completed the questionnaire.

Elm Wood is a good school. We were very impressed with your kindness and consideration and how well you treat newcomers and visitors to the school. You clearly enjoy school and were happy to talk to us about it. We were very impressed by your work to protect the environment. Your parents and carers expressed a very positive view of the school. You are held in high-esteem locally.

You make good progress in school and your teachers work very hard to ensure your lessons are good. However, we thought that there were a few things they could do to make them even better. We would like you to have regular times in all lessons to check on what you have understood and to think about anything which does not make sense to you. Also, we would like all lessons to move on quickly and that all teachers ask some really hard searching questions. We also thought that the plans about what you learn over the seven or so years you are in school should be more detailed to make sure you can make steady progress throughout your time in Elm Wood.

We know you are very proud of your school. Please help your teachers by always behaving as well as you did during our visit to you, by trying your very best and by helping each other. Once again, thank you for your kindness and help.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Rowland

Lead inspector

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