

Elson Junior School

Exmouth Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 4EX

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In recent years, pupils' progress has not been good enough and attainment has been below average.
- Although leaders have been successful in improving attainment and progress this year, particularly in Year 6, pupils' progress across the school is still not consistently good. Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs do not always make as much progress as they should.
- Teaching requires improvement because the standard is variable. Not enough teaching is good or outstanding. In some lessons, the work is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities or previous knowledge and understanding.
- In many classes, handwriting and the presentation of work are not good, and high standards are not being insisted upon by teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- The governing body and senior leadership team have a clear picture of where the school is now, and what steps they need to take to consolidate and build on improvements.
- The standard of teaching is already improving and this is evident in pupils' improving progress and the high quality of teachers' marking of work.
- Reading is well taught throughout the school, and pupils who are having difficulty learning to read are well supported.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, of which eight were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors analysed data relating to pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils' work was examined and inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read and discussed reading and books with pupils.
- They scrutinised the school's own documentation, including its self-evaluation and records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- The views of 42 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account.
- The views of staff were ascertained from discussions and from the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior staff and members of the governing body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Janet Maul, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Good

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elson Junior School is a larger than average-sized school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is low.
- The proportion of pupils eligible to be supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding provided by the government for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who have a parent in the armed forces.
- A lower than average number of pupils join and leave the school during the year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of teaching so that all teaching is good or outstanding by ensuring:
 - that teachers know what outstanding teaching looks like, with the strongest teachers sharing and developing excellent practice with colleagues
 - that tasks are adapted to closely meet the needs of all pupils in all lessons
 - that high quality presentation of pupils' writing and mathematics work is insisted upon
 - pupils' independent learning skills are developed even when they have they additional support of teaching assistants.
- Raise academic standards by:
 - maintaining the recent improvement of pupils' standards in English and mathematics by closely tracking pupils' progress and intervening quickly if the rate of progress slows
 - using data effectively to target provision for specific groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, and carefully monitor the impact of additional interventions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start at Elson Junior School with lower than average levels of attainment.
- In recent years, pupils have not caught up, but have made slow progress though the school, resulting in low attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- This year, progress has shown an improving picture, with pupils from all groups in Year 6 on course to have made at least expected progress in writing and mathematics, and to have done well in reading.
- Attainment for the current Year 6, as shown by the school's data, is much better than in past years. This much improved picture is confirmed by the work in pupils' books.
- Across the other year groups, pupils are making broadly expected progress in mathematics and writing, and faster progress in reading, from a low starting point.
- For the last two years, pupils in Year 6 who are eligible for the pupil premium have attained lower results in reading, writing and mathematics than comparable pupils nationally.
- The current Year 6 pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are working at a similar level to the other pupils in the year group in reading and mathematics, and are about two terms behind in writing. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making faster progress than their classmates for reading and are closing the gap in attainment with them; however, progress in mathematics and writing is at a similar rate.
- Across the other year groups, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making faster progress in reading, thus closing the gap in their attainment in reading when compared with the non-eligible pupils. In writing and mathematics, the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is slightly slower than that of other pupils.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are achieving at a lower level than the other pupils in school and in comparison with other similar pupils nationally. Current rates of progress are improving but progress is a mixed picture, with examples of good and outstanding progress but also some slow progress.
- A significant number of pupils are entering school with low levels of reading attainment. The school has focused support and resources on these pupils well, resulting in good progress being made by this group.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. Not enough teaching is good or outstanding.
- In weaker lessons, work is not matched closely to pupils' stages of learning, with insufficient challenge for the most able. In these lessons, teachers do not sufficiently reshape tasks during lessons in response to feedback from pupils.
- Pupils who have difficulty with their learning are usually supported by teaching assistants. Too much help is often given too quickly, preventing these pupils from becoming independent learners. Opportunities are missed to question pupils to help them to come up with their own answers or ideas.
- In stronger lessons, there is a good pace and level of challenge, resulting in pupils being very enthusiastic and engaged with their work.
- Marking is a strength of the school, with pupils given advice on how to improve. Teachers assess their pupils' work regularly and accurately when marking their books. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, as a result of teachers' written comments.
- Handwriting and presentation are not of a high standard. A number of pupils are still printing rather than joining handwriting, even in Years 5 and 6. Mathematics work is frequently not set out correctly in books, resulting in pupils making unnecessary errors. High standards of presentation are not insisted upon by all teachers.
- Behaviour is managed positively. Teachers expect pupils to work hard, with the result that pupils

have a good attitude to work, and most are actively engaged in their learning.

- Pupils are used to collaborating, and paired and group work is a strong feature in many lessons. Good discussions take place, with pupils asking each other questions and listening to the answers.
- The teaching of reading, particularly for pupils who are having difficulty, is a strong feature of the school, with effective individual support and phonics sessions in which pupils learn about the sounds letters make. Guided reading activities are well led, helping pupils to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Polite, respectful behaviours are modelled by all staff. As result, pupils are nearly always polite and respectful themselves. Behaviour in lessons is good and is supportive of learning.
- A good level of supervision at lunchtime results in good behaviour and pupils being happy and familiar with routines. Pupils say they like having the Year 6 buddies who undertake their responsibilities conscientiously and effectively during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and that they know who they should go to if they were worried. Pupils spoken with said that teachers deal well with any bullying incidents, which they believe take place 'now and again'. Pupils understand what racism is, and why it is wrong.
- Pupils know about internet bullying and e-safety and how to keep safe. They benefit from educational visits from the local police which help them, for example, to know how to stay safe in a variety of situations out of school.
- The school gives excellent support to pupils with behavioural difficulties. The Nurture Group undertakes high quality work that is effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and fostering positive attitudes to education.
- Attendance is above national figures and encouraged effectively with certificates and prizes. Unexplained absences are followed up diligently.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and deputy work well together to provide a clear educational direction for the school. They have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know what they need to do to move the school forward.
- Attainment and progress have been at a low level for some time, but changes made by the leadership team are beginning to have a measurable impact this year. This indicates that the leadership team has the capacity to further improve the school.
- The school's leadership team identified issues with reading in part of the school, and put initiatives in place to improve this. As a result, the progress in reading in Years 3 and 4 is accelerated and reading is now a strong feature of the school's provision.
- The setting up of the Nurture Group has had a positive impact on behaviour throughout the school. Behaviour has improved as a result and is now a strong feature of the school. Pupils are safe at school because safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the security of the site is good.
- The school's curriculum has a good range of subjects and activities, which are reflected in exciting displays around the school. Music and performance are strong features. There are frequent trips and interesting visitors to the school that broaden pupils' experiences.
- The pupil premium is well targeted to improve achievement and attainment, and the leadership team are currently working on measuring the impact of specific interventions. There has been much good practice implemented, including running workshops for parents to help them to support their children.
- Further work is required to track the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Individual pupils are tracked, but the school does not use data sufficiently to measure the progress of groups of pupils, and to check the impact of interventions.

- English, mathematics and 'challenge' leaders have a good understanding of their areas of responsibility. They have organised effective training for colleagues, moderated work, and have used data to challenge teachers over pupils' progress.
- Performance management is carried out robustly, with evidence of good practice linking pay and performance. This has played a part in improving the standard of teaching across the school. Joint observations show that the leadership team's judgements of teaching are robust.
- Evidence from Parent View and the school's own questionnaire indicates that parents are generally happy with the school. The school fosters the involvement of parents in supporting their children's learning, such as through reading workshops at the start of the school year.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Good assemblies and philosophy for children sessions promote the spiritual dimension. Moral development is taught explicitly, resulting in pupils having a good understanding of right and wrong and making good choices. Values are displayed prominently in the classrooms and referred to by the staff. Social responsibility is evident in the enthusiastic support of eco-school activities and the support for charity days. Social skills are evident in the way pupils support each other with their learning.
- Pupils have opportunities to learn about their own culture through the curriculum, through visits to places of historic interest and through music and performance. Pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage is developed well but the school is relatively less effective in promoting awareness of life in a multicultural country. Senior leaders work hard to ensure there is no discrimination and that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in all of the school's activities.
- The local authority provides a medium level of support for this school, including advice on the teaching of mathematics and English, particularly for the lower school. The local authority is able to identify improvements in the school that have resulted from its support.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body is very knowledgeable, supportive and committed to the school. It ensures that pupils are well looked after and that statutory requirements are met. Governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation and monitoring of performance. They have an accurate picture of how the school is performing in relation to schools nationally and to schools in similar circumstances. They benefit, for example, from regular data presentations from the deputy headteacher.
 - Governors undertake regular training. They are aware of the quality of teaching and understand what needs to be done to improve it and the impact of measures taken so far. They support the headteacher, for example in ensuring that pay reflects performance, and do not hesitate to challenge and question when necessary. The headteacher's performance management review is conducted rigorously. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances, which are reported on regularly by the headteacher and school's finance officer. Governors check to ensure that the pupil premium is well used to support pupils and accelerate their progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116162
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	412017

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Gratton
Headteacher	Celia Rich
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
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