

Elmlea Junior School

The Dell, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS9 3UF

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management		Outstanding 1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding 1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is an outstanding school with many excellent features. Pupils achieve extremely well because consistently good and often outstanding teaching gives them a real thirst for knowledge.
- The school's emphasis on developing pupils as learners makes them exceptionally receptive to new ideas and means they cooperate together in an exemplary way.
- Due to excellent teaching, careful tracking of progress and a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy through Years 3 to 6, pupils attain standards that are exceptionally high.
- The school's meticulously rigorous tracking of pupils' progress shows that achievement is outstanding. Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff are ambitious for the pupils and fervent in their aim to get the best from each one, academically and personally. They make sure that work is exciting and challenging so that pupils of all abilities enjoy their learning and try their hardest.
- Teachers and support staff work very effectively together to meet pupils' specific needs. All pupils, at whatever level of ability or need, are extremely well cared for and carefully guided throughout the school.
- Leaders are relentless in their drive to make teaching even better. For instance, they realise that on a very few occasions, some teachers do not always make sure that all pupils make improvements to their work following teacher feedback and marking.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. By Year 6 pupils are mature, considerate, self-assured and responsible young people who are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have highly positive attitudes to learning and they are polite and respectful.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in different situations. Parents agree that children are looked after very well.
- Leadership and management are outstanding, driven by the skill and vision of the enthusiastic and principled headteacher. She is supported by a skilled group of school leaders and together they drive improvement resolutely and with the best interests of the pupils in mind.
- Governors are very supportive and effective. They ask leaders challenging questions to make sure that the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Governors visit regularly to check pupils' progress and talk to them about their views of the school.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved coupled with a total absence of complacency. The school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey of excellence.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in all the classes. In total, 28 observations across a range of subjects were conducted, 12 jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons with senior staff to look at pupils' progress in mathematics, English and a range of other subjects. Inspectors also visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the special educational needs leader, and teachers responsible for literacy and numeracy across the school. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, as well as information about the progress and attainment of individual pupils and specific groups. They looked at attendance records, safeguarding information, the primary school physical education and sport premium action plan, records of behaviour, the governing body minutes and the school's checks on how well it is doing. They considered the school's documents regarding the targets for teachers and other staff, and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school, and reviewed school displays.
- Pupils' work from a range of subjects, including homework, was scrutinised and inspectors spoke to pupils in their lessons and during their free time. Inspectors heard pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 read.
- The inspectors took into account the 173 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents' and pupils' responses to the school's own recent surveys were considered by inspectors. Inspectors also analysed the responses to inspection questionnaires returned by 38 staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Elmlea Junior School converted to become an academy school in July 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was previously inspected by Ofsted in May 2008, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding from the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further support pupils in the progress they make, all teachers should make sure that pupils regularly make amendments and improvements to their work following feedback from teachers and other adults.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Inspirational leadership and a relentless pursuit of excellence are the main reasons why pupils' achievement is outstanding. The headteacher is widely acclaimed by staff, parents, carers and governors as having been hugely instrumental in securing high standards and sustaining them where they are already outstanding. She communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team.
- The headteacher has developed a strong team of senior and subject leaders. They check learning, progress and the quality of teaching regularly. Their observations of teaching identify good practice which can be shared and also shortcomings that trigger support, when needed. They have correctly identified, for instance, that although teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is highly effective in most classes, it occasionally lacks consistency across the school.
- Procedures to manage teachers' performance are rigorous and contribute to the outstanding teaching. Teachers' performance is clearly linked to pay progression and the achievement of pupils is at the heart of this process.
- New staff are extremely pleased with the help they receive. Staff questionnaires are all positive about leaders' impact on improvement.
- Leaders responsible for subjects and areas of the school's work have a clear understanding of their role in raising achievement. They spoke positively about how the headteacher has helped them grow into credible leaders of teaching and learning within their subject areas. They monitor the quality of teaching regularly and effectively through lesson observation, work scrutiny and the use of progress information.
- Additional funding intended to improve physical education and sport is being used exceptionally well to promote pupils' well-being, physical fitness and enjoyment of sport. This strategy is very well led and monitored by the sports premium coordinator. The range of after-school sports clubs has been further extended and specialist sports coaches employed to improve pupils' expertise in a wide array of different sporting activities, especially outdoor pursuits. The participation in sporting activities across the school is very high.
- The pupil premium is spent particularly effectively to benefit disadvantaged pupils. Its impact on pupils' progress is carefully monitored and there is clear accountability to the governing body. Additional adults are employed in the classrooms to enable teachers to give extra attention to pupils who need it. The school's family liaison officer brings together the different agencies which support pupils so that they do as well as possible.
- A rich and stimulating curriculum excites and interests pupils, and contributes very effectively to their outstanding achievement and excellent personal development and well-being. Through its carefully and imaginatively planned themes and its focus on developing the arts and sport, the school has successfully motivated and enthused pupils and has done much to increase their confidence as learners.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils permeates all the school does. Through the wide and varied curriculum, they learn about other faiths and cultures. Displays of work reflect British values such as tolerance, understanding and fairness. The school's commitment to core values of respect and tolerance prepare pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- The school is reviewing its existing arrangements to monitor pupils' progress in the light of changes to the national curriculum. It aims to move to a system in which teachers check pupils' progress and attainment against what is expected for their age.
- Parents and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents say how much they value and appreciate all the school does; they say that their children feel extremely happy and completely safe.
- Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted. The school ensures that all pupils can participate fully in all activities regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Governors and leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. Leaders make sure that the school is safe and secure, that policies and procedures are used consistently and that all staff are well trained on safeguarding issues.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and are excited at the prospect of moving to their secondary schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. Governors fully support the school's vision that its pupils go on to play a constructive role in modern Britain through developing an understanding of democracy and an appreciation for the rule of law.
 - Governors are very supportive and appreciate the many strengths of the school. Nevertheless, they are

highly aspirational for the school to maintain the high standards of education and drive improvements even further.

- The governors' knowledge of the school is strengthened by the links individual governors have with each class. Each curriculum subject and aspects of provision, such as safeguarding and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are overseen by a governor.
- Governors bring a range of technical and professional skills to their roles on the governing body. They ask leaders challenging questions to make sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Governors have had appropriate training in the interpretation of pupil performance data. This helps them to check whether all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are doing equally well.
- Governors rigorously check that the pupil premium is being used to help disadvantaged pupils keep up with other pupils. They know that primary sports funding is helping pupils become more active at playtimes and develop stronger sporting skills.
- Governors carefully check that the appraisal system only rewards teachers with a pay increase when their pupils achieve well. They are confident that it has helped maintain the high quality of teaching because staff are very clear about what is expected of them. Governors know what the school would do to tackle any underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Excellent behaviour in lessons is a strong factor in the pupils' learning.
- Pride and respect are hallmarks of pupils' outstanding personal development. These are reflected in pupils' great enjoyment of learning, above average attendance, excellent punctuality and their keen involvement in a wide range of activities.
- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their learning. They say that lessons are interesting and they enjoy being challenged with increasingly demanding work. They are very proud of their school and this is reflected in their well-presented work, respect for their classroom and school grounds, and eagerness to talk about how much they enjoy different aspects of school life.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is impeccable. They are consistently polite and friendly to each other and to adults. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. All members of the school community treat one another with care and respect. Visitors receive a warm welcome from everyone and are quickly made to feel at home.
- All of the staff who returned the questionnaire said that behaviour is excellent. Virtually all parents who responded to Parent View also believe that behaviour is strong.
- Pupils talk about their school with pride and are able to describe the things they like, including the care and commitment of staff in helping them achieve well. They highlight the range of activities available to them and the expectation that they will all achieve at a high level.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and nearly all parents who completed Parent View agree that the school is a safe and happy place.
- Pupils understand that there are different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that while bullying is very rare they would not hesitate to report it to an adult and are rightly sure that it would be quickly sorted out. They say that name-calling of any kind is not tolerated and that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, get along well together. Pupils are able to distinguish between bullying and the ups and downs of normal friendship.
- Pupils are very clear about how to stay safe when using the internet. They know what precautions to take and understand why this is necessary.
- Pupils understand the need to be watchful for each other. They have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in the community and know how to identify when a situation is unsafe, especially in relation to feeling uncomfortable in someone's company.
- Pupils take part in a very wide range of sports and are extremely good at adopting healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Sustained challenge and high expectations enable

pupils to achieve very high standards and make exceptional progress.

- Pupils achieve extremely well not just because teaching, learning and the curriculum are excellent but also because they are encouraged to see their potential, aim high, work hard and recognise their own and others' success.
- Praise is used extensively to motivate pupils. Teachers' use of questions to encourage pupils to think is masterly, encouraging them to explain their reasoning and asking other pupils to comment or develop their answers further.
- The school has set up very thorough systems to check on pupils' progress. These are used very well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and to enable teachers to set the next steps for each pupil's learning consistently.
- Teaching assistants are very effective in their work. They guide and question pupils effectively, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They help these pupils to make good and often outstanding progress alongside developing their self-confidence and self-reliance.
- All pupils, whatever their learning needs, are fully included in the activities and this has a positive effect on achievement and personal development.
- Classrooms and shared spaces are bright, colourful and attractive. In almost all classrooms, displays are of high quality. They exemplify high expectations in a range of subjects and celebrate pupils' achievements. Many displays double as additional learning resources which pupils use as a point of reference.
- Writing is taught very well across the school because teachers make purposeful links between different subjects and pupils' skills are developed extremely well in all areas of learning.
- Mathematics is taught especially well. Pupils have a plethora of opportunities to use their mathematical skills in practical activities and to solve problems.
- The teaching of reading is of equally high quality. Highly effective reading support starts in Year 3 for any who need it, which closes the gaps in attainment for pupils who join the school as weaker readers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped to make very good progress from their different starting points. Their needs are accurately identified at an early stage and appropriate support provided to help them achieve well.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to students is of high quality. This ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of the quality of their work and what they need to do next in order to move forward. In a few classes, teachers do not always make sure that pupils follow up this good advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. Consistently strong progress throughout Key Stage 2 results in exceptionally high attainment by the end of the key stage. In 2014, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. Progress since Key Stage 1 was significantly better than that of other pupils nationally, especially in reading and mathematics.
- All pupils, including the small numbers who speak English as an additional language, made the progress expected of them in reading and mathematics between the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. A half of all the pupils made more than expected progress in these subjects. This is well above that for pupils with similar starting points seen nationally and represents outstanding achievement.
- In recent years, the school's published data show that pupils' progress in writing, although strong, has been slower than in reading and mathematics. However, when pupils' writing gains are measured from just after they join the school in Year 3 to the end of Year 6, they show the same impressive gains as they make in their other subjects.
- Pupils currently are making exceptional gains in reading, writing and mathematics as they pass through the school. Their 'records of writing progress books' show that they make great gains in using a very wide range of vocabulary and grammatical techniques to write with passion, feeling and expression across a very wide range of topics.
- As they move through the school pupils read widely for pleasure, and to find information. Pupils read with expression and feeling and are confident, eager readers.
- Pupils make great gains in their mathematical skills. In this way, they develop a deep understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. Regular problem-solving activities help pupils reflect on different ways of tackling mathematical challenges. They develop a deep understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts. Regular problem-solving activities help pupils reflect on different ways of tackling mathematical challenges.

- The most-able pupils make even faster progress than other pupils. This means that a very high proportion of pupils are working well above the level expected for their age and achieving exceptionally high standards. Teachers' encouragement of pupils' love of learning means that the most-able pupils especially push themselves to achieve the best they can.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make equally good progress from their different starting points. High quality support and carefully planned learning in lessons mean that these pupils are helped to work successfully alongside their classmates. Programmes tailored specifically to their needs are regularly reviewed and checked, ensuring that pupils make as much progress as they can.
- There is a small minority of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for additional funding. They benefit from well-judged extra support and are making outstanding progress. The school has provided individual help, guidance and additional tuition as well as financial support to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses. This support has effectively eliminated the attainment gap between these pupils and others so that pupils known to be entitled to free school meals reach similar and often higher standards to others in the school. In the 2014 tests, Year 6 pupils in this group made better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than their classmates and other pupils nationally.

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	136830
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	453383

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne-Marie Boyle
Headteacher	Clare Galliers
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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