

Elworth Hall Primary School

Lawton Way, Elworth, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1TE

Inspection dates	14–15 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has ensured a continued drive for improvement. This has resulted in improvements in teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes, attitudes to learning and attendance.
- The staff have a united and shared drive and ambition to continue to drive improvements for the pupils. As a result, staff morale is high and staff work closely as a team.
- Governors know the school well and have ensured that they challenge the school's leaders effectively to address any areas for development.
- Teaching is good and teachers have increased expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Leaders have managed the disruption to staffing well and ensured that recent improvements are having a positive impact on the provision.
- Relationships are very positive and pupils are very well cared for because adults who work in the school know pupils very well.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils have a strong voice in the school and are able to discuss and debate pertinent issues with maturity, showing respect and tolerance for others' opinions.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary. They have excellent attitudes to learning, showing confidence and resilience in tackling challenging tasks; they work collaboratively together to explore solutions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high across all subjects.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- The guidance pupils receive to improve their work is not consistent and in line with school policy across all subjects.
- Subject leaders do not use assessment information sharply enough to identify areas of development in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Each area of learning in the early years does not consistently stimulate children and encourage them to develop their skills.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are consistently high across all subjects, including for the most able
 - ensuring teachers consistently provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their work across all subjects, in line with school policy
 - providing more opportunities in subjects other than mathematics for pupils to develop further their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Build on improvements in the early years by ensuring each area of the early years setting is consistently stimulating and helps children to develop the skills they need.
- Further develop the skills of subject leaders in using assessment information to provide a sharp analysis of the strengths and areas for development in subjects other than mathematics and English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school has improved greatly since the last inspection. It is well led and managed by a headteacher and senior leaders who are eager to take good advice and learn from other schools and specialists. The senior leadership team uses its complementary skills well to move the school forward and has a clear vision for the future direction and improvement of the school.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a clear message about increased expectations and the current staff of the school unequivocally share in this expectation. Staff morale is high and the leaders, teachers and teaching assistants work effectively as a team.
- Leaders have accurately evaluated what the school does well and what needs to improve. Effective action plans are in place. These have been particularly effective in improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, as a result of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.
- The system for checking on the quality of teaching is thorough and regular. Detailed tracking of individual pupils identifies where pupils may be in danger of falling behind and regular meetings with teachers check their progress. Focused observations and reviews of pupils' books, particularly in English and mathematics, ensure that progress is carefully monitored.
- Systems for checking on the performance of teachers are robust and targets are closely linked to school priorities. Teachers are supported to achieve their targets and training is appropriate so teachers can continually improve their practice. Teachers have increasingly been held to account for the performance in their classes and this has resulted in improved outcomes.
- Subject leaders in science and sports are involved in checking on the provision and developments in their areas of responsibility. As a result, there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of investigative science, with pupils enjoying a whole-school space topic and sharing learning with other schools, for example.
- Sports funding is used effectively to enhance pupils' engagement in a range of sports, including archery, chosen to link with the 'Robin Hood' project. Specialist coaches deliver sessions which provide teachers with good-quality training as well as developing pupils' skills. An increase in participation rates and success in tournaments indicates the successful use of this funding. During the inspection, pupils held their own 'Olympic opening ceremony' and excitedly took part in the football tournament that afternoon.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that any gaps between their attainment and that of their peers are closing. Leaders, including governors, consider carefully how the funding will be spent and look at pupils' specific needs. Funding provides interventions to help improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as ensuring equality of access to enrichment activities and promoting good attendance.
- Although assessment information is collected in subject areas in addition to English and mathematics, this is not used consistently well enough by subject leaders to analyse sharply the strengths and areas for development in these subjects.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of additional opportunities to extend their learning through visitors to school and trips. Pupils are involved in the design of the curriculum and leaders take account of their interests and views when planning topics. These are reviewed each year and themes altered in light of discussions with pupils and staff. Weeks which focus on specific subjects are built into the curriculum to engage pupils in their learning; recent maths and science weeks provided practical learning experiences.
- Pupils learn about different cultures, religions and beliefs. The school has a link with two schools in Africa, where pupils have learned about their different culture and ways of life. A workshop on Islam generated a mature debate where pupils were able to discuss differences with their own culture. These experiences contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have different responsibilities, which are often voted for, helping pupils understand the importance of democracy. A recent theatre production which highlighted the differences in relationships ensured pupils had a good and appropriate understanding of homophobia and same-sex relationships. These experiences help to promote pupils' understanding and prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support, including from external advisers. The school works well in partnership with local groups of schools, including the high school. This provides teachers with opportunities to share good practice and for pupils to share and learn with one another.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has been reconstituted and has a number of new

members. Governors have completed and acted on an audit of their work, which has resulted in their rethinking their structures and being more involved in the monitoring of the school's work.

- Governors have a good level of understanding about the strengths and areas of development of the school. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and external advisers which enable them to question and challenge leaders at monthly meetings. Governors visit the school and meet with subject leaders, with whom they are linked, to check on school performance; they share reports with the wider governing board.
- Governors are able to challenge leaders about the use of funding streams, particularly the additional pupil premium for disadvantaged pupils. There is a governor with specific responsibility for this area and detailed reports analyse the progress of this group of pupils.
- Governors undertake regular training to ensure they have the necessary skills to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. They are looking at the induction procedures for new governors to ensure that they have a clear understanding of their role and the context of the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of teachers' performance and how this relates to pay progression and have supported leaders in ensuring that teachers are held to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors create a safe culture by ensuring that policies and procedures are kept up to date. Leaders ensure that training, including the recent training on radicalisation and extremism, is up to date. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and appropriate support is provided to pupils and their families through links with external agencies. Parents are invited to the e-safety sessions and regular updates are given during class assemblies. The vast majority of parents are highly positive about the work of the school and any concerns are listened and responded to, as well as being shared, as appropriate, with the governing body.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of teachers new to the school. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has continued to improve and is now good. Teachers use what they know about pupils to plan work which is interesting, fun and challenging. Older pupils agree that they enjoy their lessons because they are 'fun' and they particularly like the 'challenges' in mathematics.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have addressed the areas which needed improvement. Staff have worked together to improve outcomes for pupils and provide a consistent approach to the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics.
- Pupils make good use of the time they spend each day reviewing previous learning and making corrections or improvements. Pupils' English books show that they make good progress in the development of their writing, correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Quality texts are used to promote a love of reading and an interest in writing. These are often linked to the wider topic, such as the rainforest. In one lesson, pupils were using their knowledge of the rainforest and a stimulus picture to describe a setting. Their work showed a good use of interesting adjectives to enhance their writing.
- Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to think for themselves. 'Prove it' is a phrase often heard in lessons, with pupils relishing the challenge of doing so. This is particularly evident in mathematics, where teachers are adept at encouraging pupils to reason. Activities are designed to promote problem solving and pupils show confidence in tackling more complex problems. In a Year 5 class, pupils were working out problems involving decimals. Pupils were using their good knowledge of perimeter, shape and money to identify the key components of the problem. Effective questioning by the teacher and teaching assistant allowed pupils to move on well with their learning.
- Pupils read well and enjoy doing so. They read regularly and the daily sessions have promoted an enthusiasm for reading. The planned activities support pupils in developing their reading and comprehension skills. Pupils are expected to read regularly at home and the school provides additional support for some pupils so their skills and confidence develop well. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well to break down unfamiliar words.
- Tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs and provide appropriate levels of challenge. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have improved measurably and these are particularly high in English and mathematics. However, in other curriculum areas teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not as consistently high. Consequently, opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to make the best possible progress.
- Teachers generally cater well for the most able pupils. In English and mathematics, teachers ensure that

these pupils are given work which is demanding. However most-able pupils are not challenged as keenly in other subjects.

- In writing and mathematics, teachers provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve or give them additional challenges. However, the quality of this guidance is not consistent and in line with school policy across all subjects and teachers miss opportunities to embed and extend pupils' learning further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils show a positive 'can do' attitude to their work. They are keen to learn and understand how to get better. Year 5 pupils conduct a research project annually to investigate and address improvements in the school. This year the focus was on girls' performance in mathematics. The group spoke eloquently about their findings and the opportunities they had to observe lessons and question staff and pupils. Their action plan for development is being shared with staff and governors.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for because adults who work in the school know each pupil very well. Relationships between pupils and staff are highly positive. Pupils have confidence in adults, saying they completely 'trust' them and know that any issues will be quickly resolved.
- Pupils feel safe and the school works with a range of agencies to ensure pupils have an astute understanding of how to keep safe in areas such as fire and road safety. Pupil e-safety ambassadors provide advice through assemblies and competitions and additional sessions ensure pupils know how to keep safe on the internet.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to question and debate on different topics, showing respect for each other's points of view and an understanding and tolerance of differences. Pupils have developed belief in their own abilities through work done on building 'secrets to success'.
- Pupils say that any incidents of bullying are rare and swiftly dealt with. Pupils understand very well the different forms bullying can take and that it is not acceptable in any form. Anti-bullying weeks and a relationship charter reinforce this message.
- Pupils understand the importance of keeping healthy and eating healthy meals. There is a wide range of after-school clubs available for pupils to participate in, as well as a lunchtime club which encourages participation in healthy lifestyles. The breakfast club provides pupils with a positive start to the day where they can socialise with pupils of different ages. The school is involved in a project to support pupils with additional mental health needs, working effectively alongside other agencies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and engage enthusiastically with the activities set for them. They respond positively to the challenges set and interact readily with each other and their teacher to ask and answer questions. In one session, pupils were exploring which numbers combined together would result in a particular answer. The resulting discussion showed that they have high levels of resilience and determination.
- Pupils are unerringly polite and well mannered and speak with pride about their school. Pupils who have been at other schools previously talk positively about how they have been welcomed into the school and have grown in confidence.
- Pupils behave extremely well around school and in the dining hall and outside play spaces. They show an acute understanding of the expectations for behaviour, such as putting up their hand and waiting patiently to be able to leave the dining hall.
- The behaviour system is clearly understood and pupils spoke with maturity about how any lapses in behaviour are managed. They explained that pupils are expected to reflect on their behaviour and the impact of this on others; as a result, they say that poor behaviour is very uncommon and swiftly addressed.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are frequently absent from school, representing a very small number of pupils, has decreased significantly. Leaders check on the attendance of pupils and groups on a weekly basis and work with external agencies to address any needs. Pupils arrive at school punctually and are keen to get on with their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes have improved since the last inspection. Outcomes for pupils currently on roll in the school are good and they make good progress from their different starting points. Work in their books and observations show that pupils make good progress and that work is of a good standard. This reflects teachers' increased levels of expectation.
- The proportion of Reception children reaching a good level of development and the number of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics check have continued to improve; in 2015, results were above the national average. Current information shows that the majority of Year 1 pupils are reaching the expected standard. Changes to the way in which phonics is taught have led to improvements in pupils' skills. Teachers ensure that skills taught are matched well to pupils' different needs. Careful tracking of pupils' skills identifies where there might be gaps in understanding which can be addressed. As a result, pupils quickly gain an understanding of letters and the sounds that they make and are able to apply these successfully to their reading and writing.
- In 2015, the majority of pupils at key stage 1 achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. A similar proportion to the national average achieved the higher levels in reading and writing. The proportion achieving the higher levels in mathematics was lower than the national average.
- In Year 6, in 2015, all the pupils made the expected progress in reading and writing and the proportions making better than expected progress were similar to the national average. The majority of pupils made the expected progress in mathematics, though few made more than expected progress. School information shows that, over the year, these pupils made good progress. However, a legacy of weaker teaching in the past had an impact on their overall progress.
- The strong focus on developing mathematical skills has paid dividends. The training and support for teachers have ensured that they have secure subject knowledge for the year group they teach and that the work provides an appropriate level of challenge for most pupils. As a result, pupils are making rapid gains in their mathematical skills and, in particular, their ability to solve problems and to reason. However, although pupils do have some opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects, these are not consistent across all classes and do not focus enough on developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Pupils' writing is of a good standard and this is reflected in the good progress pupils make across the school. Teachers give clear direction, challenging pupils to improve their writing. Marking reinforces the improvements needed so pupils know what to do to improve.
- The numbers of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding vary significantly between year groups. Current school information shows that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress, in line with their peers, and are closing any remaining gaps with their peers. The funding is used effectively to provide support in developing pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics, as well as opportunities to benefit from enrichment activities.
- As a result of thorough tracking, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good and sometimes better than expected progress from their individual starting points. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that the provision for pupils is appropriate and addresses their individual needs well, working effectively with other agencies to support this where necessary.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress in line with their peers.
- The most able pupils make good progress from their starting points and school assessment information shows that increasing proportions of pupils are demonstrating strong skills and understanding in their different year groups. This is because activities are usually well planned to challenge their thinking.
- Progress in other subjects is usually good. In science, pupils show good understanding of scientific knowledge and use this well to make predictions when carrying out experiments. The recent 'rocket mice' investigations show that pupils across all year groups used their knowledge well to ask and answer scientific questions, for example. However, expectations across all areas of the curriculum are not consistently high and there are opportunities missed to challenge pupils further in their learning, including the most able.

Early years provision

is good

- The leader of the early years has a good understanding of the strengths and areas that need improvement in the provision. The disruption to staffing within the setting has been managed effectively by senior leaders and appropriate actions put into place to continue to improve the provision. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children start the Reception class with skills which vary year on year. The majority of children usually start with skills which are broadly typical for their age, though a significant proportion have skills which are significantly below this. In the current Reception class, a large proportion of children started with skills below those typical, particularly in reading and writing. By the time they start Year 1, the majority of children have reached a good level of development. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has improved and, in 2015, was above the national average.
- Activities are usually planned to interest and engage children in their learning. A group of boys were observed building a house which kept toppling over. Through discussion they worked out that if they stuck a piece on the back it would balance; they were delighted when this worked. However, not all the areas of the early years setting, including the outdoors, are consistently sufficiently stimulating to encourage children to apply what they know and to develop their skills for themselves.
- Children develop their phonics skills well and are able to identify and sound out letters and words. In one session, children worked with a partner to play a game, successfully identifying the sounds and words they had on different cards and swapping them.
- Transition is carefully planned for children starting Reception. New children are invited to attend during the summer term to familiarise themselves with the setting. On inspection, a small number of children were enjoying this experience, with older children helping them with routines such as where the toilets were. The recently introduced 'Stay and Play' session for pre-school children provides parents and children with good opportunities to engage in different activities together.
- Children behave well. They are encouraged to play and share with one another. Children are aware of each other's achievements and encourage success. One child recognised another child's achievement in completing an activity and commented that they 'deserved a pebble', the highest reward given to children.
- Teaching is good. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together and have acted on advice to continue to improve the provision. They know the individual needs of the children well because tracking of children's progress is accurate. They use this knowledge to plan effectively to address any gaps in children's learning. Parents are able to follow their child's progress through the online system used to record children's achievements.
- Children's early writing skills develop well and there are a range of different opportunities for children to write, such as in the 'Safari vets'. The story and rhymes sessions encourage children's language development, which is having a positive effect on their writing skills.
- In developing number skills, children are able to access different resources to support their understanding. Effective questioning in one session ensured that good progress was made in building number patterns and counting to 15 successfully. Children enjoyed the maths week activities, such as using the environment to find 2D and 3D shapes or using 'Elmer' the elephant to count different squares.
- There are small numbers of children who are eligible for pupil premium funding. Their needs are looked at on an individual basis to ensure that appropriate support, such as help with speech and language, is put in place. Their progress is good and similar to the rates of progress of their peers.

School details

Unique reference number	111163
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10012179

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Green
Headteacher	Margaret Blease-Bourne
Telephone number	01270 764 669
Website	http://www.elworthhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@elworthhall.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- Elworth Hall Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much smaller than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to staffing, including the appointment of three new members of teaching staff and some disruption to staffing in early years.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils. This was visited as part of the inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and also looked at pupils' work.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from three different year groups reading, and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors spoke to parents, took account of the 48 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's consultations with parents. The views of staff were also taken into account, informed by the 11 returns to the Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

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