

Elmhurst Junior School

Elmhurst Lane, Street, Somerset BA16 0HH

Inspection dates

12–13 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils requires improvement. Although improving, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 remain below the national average.
- Leaders have not successfully tackled all areas for improvement from the previous inspection. In particular, weaknesses remain in the teaching of mathematics.
- Until very recently, governors have not held leaders stringently to account. Their understanding of achievement is not sharp enough.
- Leaders have not developed precise enough systems for planning and evaluating the impact of the school's work.
- Although improving, teaching is not closely enough matched to the needs of pupils. Consequently, some groups of pupils make slow progress, for example lower-ability writers.
- Pupils' understanding of how to reason in mathematics has not been developed well enough. In particular, too few of the most able pupils do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Although this is getting better, too few disadvantaged pupils make the progress they should, particularly in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and around the school are good. They take pride in their work. This has contributed to improved rates of progress.
- Leaders have used funds from the physical education and sport premium effectively to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The school has a welcoming and inclusive feel. Pupils feel safe and their emotional needs are well met.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leadership and management have a greater impact upon the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - leaders' evaluation of pupils' achievement is rigorous and accurate
 - leaders use the information gathered to plan and check the effectiveness of school improvement activities with greater precision
 - governors rigorously hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Raise the achievement of pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers make effective use of assessment to closely match the activities to pupils' needs
 - teaching is more challenging in mathematics and deepens pupils' ability to apply their number skills
 - teachers provide greater support for disadvantaged and less-able pupils in writing so that these pupils catch up quickly.

External reviews of the school's use of the pupil premium and its governance should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management can be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership of teaching requires improvement. There is too little rigour. Leaders do not ensure that improvements are planned for precisely or followed up methodically. Consequently, actions to tackle the school's weaknesses have been slow to take hold in some areas.
- Leaders provide a wealth of training and professional development for staff. However, the impact of this support to improve teaching is not consistently good across all curriculum areas. This is because leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching do not pick up sharply enough on the impact of teaching on pupil outcomes. New leaders have plans in place but it is too soon to see the impact in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- In the past, leaders have not been precise enough in evaluating the impact of the expenditure of pupil premium funding. However, they are now. Nevertheless, the new and improved plans are still being drafted and checks have not had time to have an impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- Leaders develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development effectively through a range of curriculum opportunities. The school's emphasis on fundamental British values helps pupils to understand and respect others who may have different views or lifestyles than their own.
- There is a comprehensive and diverse range of extra-curricular activities on offer for pupils, which enhances their experience of school. For example, residential trips and links with a school in France provide pupils with a broader understanding of life beyond their locality.
- Leaders regularly review the impact of their curriculum to ensure that pupils enjoy their topics. Leaders have recently begun to make some changes to the school's approach to curriculum planning. Their evaluation has been thorough. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional sports funding. Leaders have been particularly successful in encouraging pupils to take part in sporting activities. Over three quarters of pupils are involved in sports clubs. The school has received national recognition for its participation in sport.
- Currently, very few pupils attract extra funding to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Funds are spent effectively. The special educational needs leader keeps a close eye on pupils' progress and makes regular checks on the effectiveness of support. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that effective pastoral support is in place so that pupils who have social and emotional needs are not disadvantaged by their circumstances. Consequently, these pupils develop in their readiness to learn.
- Leaders' close work with the infant school over the past two years in particular has supported a clearer understanding of pupils' abilities when they join the school in

Year 3. Consequently, outcomes at the end of Year 6 are beginning to show that pupils are making better progress. However, leaders recognise that there is more to be done.

- The local authority officer and external specialists have provided effective support. However, changes in personnel have been a barrier to sustaining the pace of improvement across all areas of the school's work, and in particular mathematics.
- Parents value the 'excellent' communication that exists between them and the school. They report that the school staff are approachable and open. One parent's comment which was representative of many stated, 'staff are superb and very supportive; they go that extra mile to help the children and parents to feel a part of the school'.
- The co-headteachers have created a climate of self-improvement. They have created an environment where pupils are valued and everyone strives to be the best they can be. They enjoy the strong support of parents and staff. Rising pupil numbers reflect the community's confidence in the school.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, the governing body has not sufficiently held leaders to account. Considerable changes in governance inhibited the effectiveness and expectations of the governing body. However, governors are aware of their shortcomings and are committed to improving. They have engaged with external advisers and support from the local authority. Recently appointed governors have the experience and expertise and are providing the necessary challenge to senior leaders. However, it is too soon to see the impact of their work.
- Until very recently, governors have not monitored the use of extra funding and its impact on outcomes for pupils throughout the school closely enough. As a result, improved outcomes for the 2017 Year 6 cohort are not replicated elsewhere in the school.
- Governors monitor safeguarding effectively. They have been instrumental in determining staffing arrangements that have brought about improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- Governors are fiercely loyal to the school and offer support to senior leaders and share leaders' aspirations. They have been instrumental in developing the strong partnership with parents that exists.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that necessary checks to confirm the suitability of those who wish to work with children are detailed and thorough. The safeguarding governor has recently visited the school to make checks on senior leaders' actions. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the school's processes and provide effective challenge.
- Leaders work effectively with parents and external agencies to establish a rich culture of safeguarding. Leaders share concerns in a timely manner and engage fully with external services to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training. Consequently, staff understand the

issues that may lead children to be unsafe or abused, and act swiftly to put support in place where it is needed.

- Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that they feel safe in school. Adults help them to know how to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, when they use social media, they know how to respond safely to anything suspicious. Furthermore, pupils were confident that, if they had any worries, they could speak to an adult, and were confident that they would take appropriate action to keep them safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The work that teachers set in English and mathematics is not well matched to what some pupils already know, understand and can do. As a result, pupils' progress in some subjects is too slow over time.
- The teaching of mathematics, although improving, is not leading to consistently good gains in progress for some groups of pupils. As a result of improved teacher subject knowledge, mathematics teaching routinely meets the needs of the middle- and lower-attaining pupils, particularly in developing calculation skills. However, the most able pupils do not make good progress because they do not receive the challenge they need to make sufficient gains in their learning.
- The teaching of calculation strategies is effective. However, the teaching of reasoning in mathematics is underdeveloped. This slows progress, particularly for the most able pupils, who do not receive the challenge they need to deepen their mathematical reasoning skills and reach the highest standards.
- The support for less-able pupils in mathematics supports them in making good progress. Teachers make good use of mathematical resources to support pupils' understanding of concepts in mathematics. As a result, less-able mathematicians are able to access the work appropriate to their age and consequently make good progress.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in writing. Work in books shows significant improvements in the way pupils apply their knowledge of grammar and punctuation. However, leaders have rightly identified that teachers do not match work closely enough for lower-ability pupils in writing. Consequently, progress for this group of pupils slows.
- Teachers promote a culture of reading. The well-resourced library is inviting. Teachers use exciting and challenging texts in lessons which motivate pupils. Teachers support developing readers' comprehension with well-focused questions.
- There are strong relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, there is little low-level disruption in lessons. Teachers are therefore able to use time constructively so that little is wasted.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's well-led breakfast club provides a safe and positive start to the day. There

is a warm and sociable atmosphere. Pupils enjoy their breakfast and the wide range of activities on offer. Consequently, pupils are ready and eager to learn.

- The school rightly prides itself on being a caring and nurturing institution. The parent support adviser and the school's emotional literacy leader provide additional support for pupils facing challenging circumstances. Consequently, pupils say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. They say that on the few occasions when it does happen or, more commonly, when fallouts occur, adults are quick to help pupils to resolve issues. Most parents also reported that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and their differences. Respect is one of the school's key values and permeates its work. Consequently, there is a calm and harmonious atmosphere in the school.
- Roles such as school councillors, first aiders and sports ambassadors support pupils' understanding of responsibility and help them to contribute to the smooth running of the school.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on partnerships with parents. This ensures that lines of communication are good. Families are positive about the support that they receive. Parents praise the work of the parent support adviser.
- The school site, with its vast grounds and old buildings that need significant ongoing maintenance, has provided a particular challenge for leaders. It is well managed. Pupils show great respect for their environment when moving around the school. Displays of children's achievements lend a vibrancy to the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils, parents and staff agree that pupils behave well. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous. On various occasions, inspectors were cheerfully greeted. Pupils demonstrated high levels of cooperation in lessons and at break and lunchtimes, playing together and sharing equipment.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning are contributing to improved rates of progress for many. Inspectors saw pupils working conscientiously and following instructions.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work. Presentation in mathematics books is particularly good.
- Pupils wear their uniforms with pride, reflecting the loyalty to their school. They look smart and ready to learn.
- Although overall attendance is in line with the national average, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average. Rates of persistent absence have risen to above the national average recently. However, this is attributable to leaders taking a firmer stance on lateness. This work is proving effective and lateness, although high, is reducing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were below national averages. Fewer pupils achieved the expected standard for their age compared to others nationally. This did not represent good progress and placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally.
- In 2017, provisional outcomes remain below the national average. However, there is an improving picture. Assessments of current pupils' work show that more are on track to make good progress. However, pupils' outcomes in mathematics continue to be lower than in reading and writing.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books reflects improving standards, particularly in pupils' grasp of number. However, pupils' ability to apply their reasoning skills is less developed. In particular, most-able pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- End of key stage 2 outcomes in 2017 also show that more disadvantaged pupils are reaching the expected standard than previously. However, although improving, their progress is not consistently good enough across subjects and year groups. Progress for current disadvantaged pupils has been strongest in reading and weakest in mathematics. This is because leaders have made reading interventions a priority.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress in writing. Lower-ability pupils make least progress in writing. Books show that these pupils make little progress in grasping basic punctuation and grammar skills. However, where pupils have the basic skills they make stronger progress.
- Pupils' reading skills are typically strong. They develop in fluency and comprehension well as they progress through the school. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed reading.
- The progress of current pupils who receive special educational needs support is improving. Special interventions are effective in helping pupils to make steps of progress in their knowledge and skills.

School details

Unique reference number	123663
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10005725

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel White
Headteachers	Tracy Edwards and Mike Lawrence
Telephone number	01458 442979
Website	www.elmhurstjuniorschool.org.uk
Email address	office@elmhurst.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 November 2011

Information about this school

- Significant changes in leadership have taken place in the last three years, including the appointment of co-headteachers and new senior leaders for English, mathematics and special educational needs. In addition, there have been many changes to governance.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Elmhurst is slightly larger than the average-sized junior school. Pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium is below

the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in short visits to lessons across the school, some of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Discussions took place with the headteachers, senior leadership team and four members of the governing body. The lead inspector also conducted a telephone call with a representative of the local authority and met with an external adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including school improvement plans and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspection team carried out a joint scrutiny of the quality of pupils' work in books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and lunchtimes. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, in an assembly, at lunchtimes, at breaktimes and around the school.
- An inspector visited the on-site breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered 54 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, as well as 25 free-text responses from parents. Questionnaire responses from 14 members of staff and 84 pupils were also analysed.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017