

Ellwood Primary School

Bromley Road, Ellwood, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 7LY

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have raised expectations of all following a period of low outcomes. As a result, current pupils are making increasingly strong progress across the school especially in reading and writing.
- Outcomes at end of early years and key stage 1 are strong and have risen over the past two years. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are also improving but have further to go. Due to increasingly strong teaching and learning, standards are rising rapidly. However, there is still not enough challenge to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standards.
- The teaching of writing has improved and is now good. It is ensuring that more pupils extend their writing and consistently apply their grammatical skills. However, spelling with accuracy remains an area for improvement.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of calculation in number. Their problem-solving and reasoning skills are less well developed.
- The school's curriculum and enrichment activities enable pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills further.
- Early years teaching is a strength of the school. The leader has a clear and accurate understanding of how young children learn and provides varied activities for them to develop well. However, routine outdoor activities do not contribute to children's learning well enough.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well planned. Welfare, support and interventions for these pupils are effective. Current pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes and apply themselves diligently to their work. Pupils are polite and enjoy all that the school has to offer.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. There are positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Teachers and support staff are very committed to pupils' care and well-being.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school's culture ensures that pupils remain safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance overall is in line with national average. Leaders are taking the right steps to decrease persistent absence especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disability.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders and teachers address practice in teaching, learning and assessment that is limiting pupils' better progress and outcomes
 - activities planned for children to learn outdoors in Reception contribute more to their progress and development.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - providing consistent challenge for pupils, especially the most able so that more pupils are progressing well from their starting points
 - ensuring that teachers provide pupils with activities in mathematics that enable them to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
 - ensuring that pupils' knowledge of phonics and reading is transferred into pupils' ability to spell with increasing accuracy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Ellwood Primary School has undergone a period of dramatic change. Turbulence in teaching staff has had an impact on the outcomes reached by pupils by the time they leave school. These changes, combined with small cohort sizes, mean that the published performance data for the school is not an accurate reflection of current pupils' progress. During the last two years the headteacher has worked well to address historical underperformance. Currently pupils achieve well and are making rapid progress.
- The headteacher is ambitious and is relentless in improving the quality of teaching and learning. She has been rigorous in ensuring a consistency of teaching across the school. Along with other school leaders she has developed a culture of high expectations for pupils and staff. Leaders promote equality of opportunity for pupils within school. As a result, pupils participate well in their learning and when taking part in the many extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders know their school well and actions are improving pupils' outcomes such as their achievement in writing rapidly. This is due to precise and appropriate improvement work on grammar and purpose for writing. A scrutiny of pupils' books, including those of pupils who are disadvantaged, alongside the school's assessment information for current pupils, shows that the vast majority of pupils currently on roll make good progress.
- Leaders and governors are proud of the school and ensure that everyone works closely as a team. Leaders have used professional development and training effectively to target reading and writing. As a result, reading and writing progress for current pupils are improving quickly. Leaders recognise that pupils' outcomes, including progress, at the end of key stage 2 still have to be improved further in all subjects.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching ensures that actions taken to improve pupils' progress are having a positive impact, especially in English. They adapt these plans according to need well. However, the school's plans for improving mathematics have not been implemented with the same urgency as those in English. This is especially linked to the application of skills through problem-solving and reasoning activities.
- The school provides well for the high proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The special needs leader has a good understanding of pupils' needs and tracks the provision effectively. This contributes towards current pupils making strong progress. They are well cared for socially and emotionally as well as physically.
- Pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Leaders check the plan rigorously. They have adapted the way funding is used for interventions to help them 'catch up' to their peers. However, pupils who also have SEN and/or disability are not making as much progress. Provision to improve pupils' self-esteem and meet their social and emotional needs is having a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and attendance.
- Leaders use the sport premium effectively. Funding is used well to develop the provision for all pupils. This is increasing pupils' take-up of and involvement in a range of physical activities, for example through the use of specialist dance teachers and

various sporting competitions. Funding has increased levels of participation for pupils and provides greater access to competitive experiences within and outside school. The school has been successful in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

- Leaders ensure an interesting curriculum with links through the local community. They are keen to share their learning and skills, especially in science. Pupils' understanding of the world around them is developed through first-hand experiences, such as trips and residential visits. This enables them to have a better understanding of the learning taking place in the classroom.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils talk confidently about democracy, respect and tolerance of each other. Pupils were also keen to discuss the wide variety of displays around the school which celebrate their learning achievements.
- Parents are positive about the school. They feel that their children are well cared for and the school is well led and managed. Parents particularly praise the manner in which staff manage their children's needs well.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance well and have reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very committed to the school and support leaders well. Governors meet with school leaders frequently to discuss improvement plans, pupils' progress, look at books and visit classes. Governors undertake relevant training and have a good understanding of their own skills and expertise that will aid the school to move forward.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. Leaders provide them with pertinent and relevant information to enable them to check progress on actions specified in the school's improvement plans.
- Governors hold leaders to account and ask challenging questions regarding the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress and outcomes. They have an accurate picture of the current attainment and progress of all groups of pupils across the school, particularly those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Governors exercise effective oversight of pupil premium funding, additional funding for SEN provision and the primary school PE and sport premium. As a result, pupils' needs are catered for well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have developed a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Leaders are highly vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Leaders quickly identify and respond to concerns that pupils may be at risk from harm. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and how to escalate issues they feel have not been dealt with appropriately.

- Leaders are diligent in ensuring that staff training in safeguarding is up to date. Staff are very secure in their knowledge of the procedures in school and familiar with guidance in such areas as child protection, radicalisation and extremism. As a result, staff are vigilant and know their responsibilities very well.
- Parents and pupils say that the school is a safe and happy place. Pupils are able to talk confidently about how they stay safe, both in and out of school and online. Pupils are also taught about road safety and other dangers in the real world.
- Pupils are aware of bullying. However, they report that this is extremely rare at Ellwood. Pupils have confidence that rare incidents of bullying are not tolerated and are dealt with quickly by staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school has been successful in halting a decline in the quality of teaching and learning in recent years. Over the past two years a complete change in teaching staff has had a major impact on improving this. Current teaching and learning is now stronger and more focused on ensuring that pupils' progress is good across the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of the pupils. They plan and deliver lessons to build well on prior learning and increase pupils' skills and understanding. Consequently, more pupils are on track to achieve expected standards for their age at the end of the year. However, there is still a lack of challenge for pupils in their writing, especially for the most able pupils.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to provide additional support to those pupils who need it. Both teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' thinking as well as maintaining pupils' focus on learning activities. Pupils generally use feedback well to help them to improve and edit their work.
- Teaching of writing has undergone rapid improvement. Lessons are now focused on ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of grammatical features of writing, sentence construction, punctuation and the purpose for writing. As a result, pupils are able to apply these to their writing and are making stronger progress. However, the school has only recently introduced a new system to improve pupils' spelling. This is not yet taking full effect as pupils still are not always choosing the correct spelling patterns.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are encouraged to read widely and often. Pupils report that they have found the focus on different authors an inspiration and many of these have visited the school to work with pupils. Leaders promote the reading of a set '100 books' during their time at the school. Pupils are now transferring some the features of the focus authors into their writing, extending their language choice and complexity of sentences.
- Phonics is well taught in early years and Year 1. Pupils are able to decode and segment words using their phonic skills. However, the lowest-achieving pupils are not confident in applying these skills to their reading. The proportion of pupils achieving the national phonics screening check is increasing and current pupils are on track to be at least in line with national average.
- Mathematics teaching has focused on improving the pupils' understanding of both mental and written methods of calculations. Pupils enjoy the challenges within their

'Maths Passports' and of times tables checks. However, pupils across the school are not, as yet, able to apply these skills in problem-solving and reasoning activities. Pupils lack the precise mathematical language to explain themselves or prove that mathematical hypotheses are correct. Teaching remains variable for some pupils in mathematics. In particular, there is sometimes a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. As a consequence, not enough pupils are reaching the higher standards they are capable of achieving.

- Teachers are using assessments to adapt and amend lessons to be bespoke to the needs of those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- The curriculum develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them very well. Pupils particularly enjoy science lessons and learning about the world around them. The school links topic work to the local area as well as the wider world. This provides the pupils with a good understanding of life in Britain and beyond. Pupils are transferring their key skills from English into their written work. However, spelling remains an issue. Pupils enjoy the visits from outside speakers and parents who share their expertise and are used to further aspirations of different career choices.
- Teachers set regular homework. Pupils stated that they receive homework linked to the aspects in mathematics, reading and spellings covered in class. They reported that this helps them to develop further their understanding of areas such as calculations and time in mathematics.
- Examples of pupils' high-quality work on display set the tone for the vibrant learning environment in classrooms and around school. Writing is a key feature of the displays, which is aiding celebration of the improvements being seen. Other useful displays, with learning prompts, are used well to enhance pupils' learning further.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident across the school. This results in high levels of engagement and a shared purpose and a belief that everyone can achieve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are able to carry out roles of special responsibility in school, such as school council, buddies for younger children and sports leaders. Pupils enjoy being given the opportunities and take these roles seriously.
- Leaders have created a nurturing culture which is firmly built on the values of the school, and pupils understand the school motto, 'Believe, Achieve and Belong', and what it means to them. They have a good knowledge of the school values and how these form the basis for the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils.
- Leaders are effective in meeting the needs of vulnerable learners using the support from outside agencies where necessary. The good teaching of personal, social and health education, in particular, is enhanced through regular opportunities for all children to take part in regular exercise such as the school's 'daily mile'.

- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the potential risks when using the internet and use it safely and with confidence. For example, they know the importance of protecting their personal information and know not to agree to meet someone in person who they have met online. They are clear that they must tell an adult if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They take pride in their work and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have a good understanding of their individual targets to improve their work. They work well together and support each other when they get stuck in lessons. They follow the school's practice of '4 before me', which encourages them to solve their own problems before seeking assistance from adults.
- Where teaching is weaker, some pupils do not sustain their attention. This is because some teachers do not recognise quickly enough that pupils are ready to move on to more challenging activities.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and courteous to adults and work cooperatively with each other. Pupils respond quickly on the rare occasion when they need to be reminded to behave well. High expectations from staff have a positive impact on the way that pupils behave.
- Leaders ensure that robust systems are in place to support and deal effectively with incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders and staff members are also rigorous in following this up, involving parents and external support when necessary.
- Leaders work effectively to engage families and improve rates of attendance, particularly for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils who have in the past been persistently absent. Attendance is now in line with the national average. Persistent absence has reduced significantly over the past year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been weak for the past two years. However, over the past year, pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly across the school. Current pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
- Observations of pupils' learning and a scrutiny of work in their books over the past year supports the school's evidence that current pupils are making good progress. This is rapidly increasing the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standards in reading and writing.
- Leaders responded promptly and with determination to a dip in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing in 2016. As a result, the proportion achieving the expected standard rose in 2017. This improvement is continuing, with the vast majority of current pupils making strong progress. However, outcomes for higher-attaining pupils have further to go before improvements are secured.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is improving. However, progress is not yet consistent across all year groups and some most-able pupils are not yet fully reaching

the standards of which they are capable. The school recognises this and has effective development plans to increase the application of calculation skills in problem-solving and reasoning.

- The most able pupils are also not routinely challenged enough when reading to reach the higher standards in this subject. Recent actions introduced by leaders are proving successful but have not had the time to result in tangible improvements in this area.
- Attainment has improved in both early years and in key stage 1. More pupils are working within age-appropriate expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Phonics teaching in Reception and Year 1 equips pupils to learn new sounds and read tricky words. However, low-attaining pupils find blending sounds together more challenging. The proportion of pupils who achieved the phonics screening standard at the end of Year 1 is improving quickly.
- Progress for current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for those pupils who are disadvantaged is good. This is as a result of focused and pertinent support provided by leaders and teachers. Pupils who fall into both of these groups are provided with bespoke learning to aid their progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in early years foundation stage within the school is good. The leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. A robust action plan is in place to tackle weaknesses. Leaders have identified relevant actions to improve provision, teaching and learning and assessment as well as outcomes.
- The teacher, along with the additional adults who support the children, has a clear understanding of the learning needed to ensure that children make good progress. However, at times teachers are not always focusing on transference of phonics skills into wider range of opportunities to write during these sessions.
- Outcomes at the end of 2017 improved and are above national averages, especially in reading and writing. Current assessments and a scrutiny of children's work demonstrate that these aspects of learning, along with mathematics, are being maintained. Children continue to do well and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Assessments are precise and accurate. The teacher uses information well to plan the next steps of learning for the children. This ensures that individual progress is strong.
- Teaching for the least able children in the Reception class is strong. These children are given well-considered activities to extend their understanding. Bespoke teaching and learning for developing social and emotional aspects of learning as well as communication and language skills of current pupils are successful. These children are making strong progress. However, the most able children do not reach the highest standards across all of the different areas of learning.
- Children sustain their learning focus for long periods of time. They maintain positive learning attitudes and enjoy their time in school. As a result, they are making strong progress.
- Relationships are good. Teachers and additional adults interact well with children and

have fostered their personal and social development. As a result, they cooperate well with each other to develop positive behaviours. The children are confident and self-assured as well as being independent in their learning. They are also being taught how to resolve their own difference, when and if they arise.

- The leader and teaching assistant are very well trained and utilise good-quality professional development to improve the provision for the children continually. They collaborate well together to create a warm, conducive and stimulating environment for learning. However, the outdoor area is not routinely used well to promote good learning. This is being tackled through current plans.
- Leaders and staff have formed strong and trusting relationships with parents, carers and families. Parents regularly contribute to the learning journals of the children and provide detailed outcomes of achievement of their children. These are used in the assessments carried out by the teacher.
- All safeguarding and welfare requirements meet statutory requirements. Staff are well qualified and have the necessary experience and expertise to deliver good teaching and sustain improving outcomes for children and their families.

School details

Unique reference number	115552
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10037849

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Cornock
Headteacher	Donna Milford
Telephone number	01594 833232
Website	www.ellwoodschool.co.uk
Email address	head@ellwood.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February – 1 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils the school receives funding for who are in receipt of pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and disabilities is well above the national average. The number of pupils who have education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The school has experienced a significant period of instability in staffing. Three new teachers started at the school in September 2017.
- In 2016 and 2017, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning across the school. All observations were undertaken alongside the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' current work in books across the curriculum and carried out learning walks across the school.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6 and spoke with them to find out about their attitudes to reading.
- Meetings were held with governors, middle leaders and pupils. The lead inspector talked with the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 72 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and informal discussions with parents when they brought their children to school. The lead inspector also took account of online staff and pupil surveys. The lead inspector talked to pupils at break and lunchtime, as well as during lessons.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, governors' minutes of meetings and the school's own assessment systems and monitoring records.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding evidence, including the school's single central record and behaviour and incident logs.

Inspection team

Paul Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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