



Elmwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115240
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279551
Inspection dates 6 October 2005 to 7 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Alison Pangbourne LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Guys Farm Road
School category	Foundation		CM3 5NB
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01245321301
Number on roll	377	Fax number	01245322498
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Bob Elson
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Aled James

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils in this school are white British. There are a few children from minority ethnic families and a few children speak French or Spanish at home. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is low. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. These pupils have either moderate learning difficulties, problems with speech and communication or autism. The school has developed an extended school community with breakfast and after school provision and a strong partnership with Elmwood Pre-school, which operate on the same site.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Inspectors agreed with the school's self evaluation. Many improvements have been made since the previous inspection and the headteacher has successfully helped pupils to do better since she arrived eighteen months ago. When pupils start school, many of them find it hard to listen and to speak clearly. By the time they leave, when they are eleven years old, most of them do better than other pupils of their age. They do well because the teaching is good and they are offered lots of interesting things to do, particularly the extra things such as playing in a rock band. Teachers do not always explain to pupils what they are going to learn and why; doing this would enable pupils to learn even more quickly. The very youngest children get a good start, having been well prepared by the pre-school in the grounds. The school already knows that the most able pupils could be helped to do even better and has made a good start in helping them to do this. It is already working to help pupils understand what they are going to learn. The school needs to continue to put into effect plans to improve attendance. The headteacher and the assistant headteacher work well to help pupils do better and the things that have already happened show that there is a good capacity for the school to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help more of the most able pupils to do even better. - Improve the way that teachers share what they are going to learn with the pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in the reception classes do well and make good progress. In recent years, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not done as well as many children of their age. This is partly because some of them have not had as much time in reception as others and some of the teaching did not meet their needs. The new headteacher has arranged for all children to start school at the same time and has improved the way they are taught. Last year, pupils in Years 1 and 2 did very much better, with most of them doing very well. Pupils did very much better in mathematics than they did the year before. However, they could do even better if the more able pupils were helped to fly higher. The older pupils make good progress and in recent years have done better than many children of their age. They work hard to reach the challenging goals that teachers set. The more able pupils could be helped to do even better. Pupils with learning difficulties do well. They get lots of support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Behaviour is good; pupils are polite and well mannered. Attendance is satisfactory and improving steadily. Pupils show interest in lessons, and work well in small groups. Their ability to work independently improves as they mature. They are pleased to accept the many responsibilities given to them. For instance, younger pupils help in class and the oldest ones act as play leaders in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their successes are frequently recognised and celebrated, and this raises their self-esteem. They understand why rules are necessary and contribute to making the school rules. Pupils have a thorough understanding of environmental issues through the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. They know which foods are healthy, and how to keep themselves safe at school. They take pride in the school grounds that they help to maintain and improve. They have also contributed to their local community by planting shrubs at a local centre. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to socialise and enjoy leisure time. Competitive sports help them to keep fit, and work in teams. Visitors, such as the police and fire service, give pupils an understanding of how society works and of the different jobs people do.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are eager to please, enjoy learning and make good progress. Teachers use an interesting range of resources and methods to help pupils to learn. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher used digital video to introduce the concept of night and day. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they receive a good level of support from knowledgeable teaching assistants. More able pupils are not always set work that challenges them enough. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to clearly explain new things to pupils. The use of computers and other forms of technology are not used regularly in lessons. Teachers do not always share the aims of the lesson with pupils. They mark pupils' work regularly but they do not always tell them what they need to do in order to improve their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and covers all the subjects that it should. The opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside lessons are outstanding. There is an impressive range of after-school and lunchtime activities, including Spanish, an environmental club and a computer club. Pupils are encouraged to play a musical instrument. The school choir and rock band perform at local events. All this encourages pupils to lead an active and healthy life, to develop an interest in the arts and build self-confidence. The school has good links with the local community. Pupils regularly

participate in a range of well-planned educational visits to museums, environmental and residential centres, which enriches their education. The school makes very good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties. Because of the sensitive support that is provided, these pupils make good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented are encouraged to develop their skills, and the school has some excellent links with the local secondary school and sports clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a healthy and safe environment, in which pupils feel secure. Health and safety matters are taken seriously, risk assessments are carefully carried out and well documented. Child protection arrangements are good, and staff training is kept up to date. Pupils are adamant that they have a trusted adult they can turn to if there is a problem. Staff keep a close eye on the progress of all pupils and intervene to give extra support if this is needed. For instance, gifted and talented pupils attend workshops at a local high school, and pupils who find it difficult to behave well all the time are given help to manage their feelings of anger. Pupils all have individual targets to work towards, and they know what these are and when they have achieved success. Staff work in effective partnership with other agencies to make sure that pupils get all the help that they need. Induction arrangements are good, so pupils soon settle, and Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school very well. She knows what the school needs to do to improve further and is setting about this with enthusiasm. She has reorganised the way that other teachers help her to manage the school and has appointed teachers who share her commitment. The new assistant headteacher supports her ably in this. Senior teachers act as buddies to less experienced ones and are beginning to help them fulfil their management tasks successfully. As a result, standards are rising. The strong sense of teamwork that includes the governors as well as staff is helping to drive the school forward. The inspection team agrees with the school about how well it is doing. The school rightly knows that the more able pupils were not doing as well as they should and has begun to improve this. Ways of helping pupils to understand what they are learning are already being developed. The views of all members of the school community are welcomed, although a few parents think that more could be done to take their views into account. The school provides well-organised and well-maintained accommodation. Staff and pupils take pride in, and care for, their school. The attractive school grounds provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for pupils who participate in a range of fun outdoor activities. There are plenty of well qualified teaching assistants. They help pupils to do well.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for letting us visit your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. This is what we thought about your school. What we liked best: - You all work very hard and behave well around the school. You play nicely with your friends and you are polite to your teachers and visitors. - You all looked very smart in your school uniforms. - You know a lot about the environment and how to be healthy. - You have lots of very interesting and exciting things to do after school and at lunchtimes. - Most of you are learning well because your teachers give you the right things to do in your lessons. - Your headteacher runs the school very well and all the teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you. - We think that you help to look after your school grounds beautifully. - Your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school. What we have asked your school to do now to make it even better: - We have asked the teachers to give some of you harder work to help you do even better. - We have asked the teachers to explain what you are going to learn at the beginning of lessons and to tell you how you can make your work even better.