

Elmlea Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108982
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309848
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Evans
Headteacher	C Galliers
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	The Dell Westbury-on-Trym Bristol BS9 3UF
Telephone number	01173 772266
Fax number	01179 622134

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • The impact of work to raise standards of boys' English and girls' mathematics across the school. • The impact of academic guidance and target setting on pupils' progress. • The quality of teaching and learning, to see if it is better than the school's own assessment. Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of mainly private housing. The majority of pupils speak English at home. Most are of White British ethnicity. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average.

At the time of the inspection a major building programme was in progress, designed to increase the maximum number of pupils admitted in each year group from 75 to 90.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an excellent school in which pupils' achievement is outstanding. Typically, a parent said, 'My child is happy at school and is achieving a high academic standard. She especially enjoys participating in clubs and music lessons.' Pupils enter Year 3 having attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and leave Year 6 having attained very high standards in English, mathematics and science. The inspector observed work of an excellent standard, including fluent, imaginative and accurate writing, detailed and perceptive scientific investigations, and well informed mathematical discussion, for example, by Year 3 pupils concerning the properties of a pentagon. There was also evidence of excellent work in other subjects including physical education (PE), information and communication technology (ICT), religious education (RE), art and music. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress because of the outstanding support provided by staff, which is greatly appreciated by parents. Staff have correctly identified some variation in standards of spelling across the school and are rightly making this a future priority for improvement.

Success has been achieved because leaders and managers are very effective in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses, and in rectifying the latter. In 2007, somewhat slower progress in boys' writing and in girls' mathematics was identified. Steps have been successfully taken to improve progress in both areas, by the use of writing themes of greater interest to boys, and by introducing more discussion into the teaching of mathematics. Strategies to improve pupils' independent learning skills have been very successful. Pupils assess their own and each other's progress and identify their own targets and next steps for learning. They talk with enthusiasm about monitoring their progress through the use of success criteria, and also have a very good understanding of how their progress relates to national standards. They receive excellent academic guidance from staff. This approach has led to outstanding development of a wide range of skills that the pupils will need in later life.

The guidance forms part of the excellent teaching. Teachers know their subjects very well and learn from each other. Where appropriate, specialist teachers are used, for instance, to teach PE and French. An outstanding feature is the level of involvement of pupils through questioning and discussions with each other and with the teacher. Lessons are conducted at a fast pace, enhanced by astute use of ICT as a teaching aid, and reflect high expectations on the part of the teachers. Teaching assistants give very good support to the pupils they work with. A wide range of additional activities, for instance, through sport, educational visits and visitors to the school, enhances the excellent curriculum. All pupils have access to the full range of these activities. A small minority of parents believe that the school places too great an emphasis on preparation for national tests. Pupils who spoke to the inspector did not agree, although they knew of others who felt under pressure to do well.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. They greatly enjoy school, as is shown by their attendance, which is well above average. Pupils' behaviour is also excellent and they respect adults, each other and themselves. They can provide details of what constitutes a healthy diet; to quote a Year 3 pupil, 'not just fruit and so on – you need protein and some carbohydrate – not too much of anything – a balance'. They also know about the need for regular exercise, and pupils as young as Year 3 are aware of the dangers of substance abuse. They know how to stay safe, for instance, when using the Internet. They also make an excellent contribution to the community, for example by taking responsibility through the school council, by promoting

care for the environment and by opposing bullying. The school's ethos and open, honest approach to pupils' personal and social education lead to excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school also provides outstanding care, and meets all requirements for child protection. It has excellent links with a wide range of partners. These include growing collaboration with the infant school on the same site, which almost all pupils have attended. The school makes every possible effort to link with the very wide range of maintained and independent secondary schools to which pupils transfer at 11. While the great majority of parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school, a small minority have a range of concerns. The inspection found no evidence to support these; some appear to stem from anxieties concerning the challenges presented by transfer to secondary school.

Leaders and managers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The morale of staff is high, as shown by the large number of staff keen to demonstrate their excellent work to the inspector. This excellence is exemplified by the headteacher, and extends to leaders and managers at all levels. Staff are keen both to extend and share their expertise, for instance, by working with schools in challenging circumstances, or through involvement in the development of science education at regional level. The school sets itself challenging targets, which are achieved. The governors have shown very good strategic leadership by obtaining the necessary resources to expand the school, but there is current uncertainty over the leadership of the governing body, which limits the quality of the support that leaders and managers are receiving. Nevertheless, there has been outstanding improvement since the last inspection and the quality of leaders and managers means that there is outstanding potential for this improvement to continue as the school faces the challenges of expansion.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the uncertainties over the leadership of the governing body are resolved as soon as possible.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elmlea Junior School, Bristol BS9 3UF

I very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when I visited your school recently, especially as I found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly.

Your school is excellent. These are some of the best things about it:

- You make excellent progress and pupils in Year 6 get well above average results in tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science, and you also do well in subjects such as art, music, RE, PE and ICT.
- Teaching is excellent. Lessons are interesting and fun and you get lots of opportunities to express yourselves.
- You have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and of how to keep healthy and safe, and your behaviour is excellent. I was particularly impressed with the amount you know about keeping healthy.
- You greatly enjoy school, especially all the different activities on offer. There are lots of clubs for you to take part in and you get lots of opportunities to help people and the environment.
- The care and guidance the school provides are excellent. You know how to use your targets and you get lots of help to show you how to improve, for example, from teachers' marking and by commenting on each other's work.
- The headteacher and other staff are excellent at leading the school. All the staff are really keen to help all of you to learn more, whether you find school work quite easy or hard.

I have asked the school to make sure that the leadership of the governors is made clear. You can help the school by continuing to work hard and play sensibly, especially while the building work is going on. I know the noise is annoying while you are working, but it will be worth it when you have new classrooms and facilities.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector

20 May 2008



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