

Elsley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101519
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	323472
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Frater HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Amanda Rigali
Headteacher	Ms Nicola Arundell
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 April 2006
School address	Tokington Avenue Wembley HA9 6HT
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, including samples of pupils' work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plan; self-evaluation; observations of teaching; records relating to progress monitoring, attendance, safeguarding children and checks on the suitability of staff; and 131 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and of boys, more-able pupils and those at an early stage of learning English, to ascertain if teaching was sufficiently challenging and meeting the needs of these pupils
- the use of assessment to determine whether it meets the learning needs of all pupils
- behaviour and attendance, to ascertain whether they impede achievement and whether the school's actions are addressing these areas effectively
- monitoring and evaluation of learning and progress, particularly by middle leaders, and the impact of these actions on teaching and achievement.

Information about the school

Elsley Primary School is larger than average. It has a high proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Almost all of its pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups, mainly Asian, Black African and Caribbean. English is not the first language for most of the pupils, and many are at an early stage of learning English. Almost a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is below average. Learning difficulties relate mainly to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or to speech, language and communication. Pupil mobility is high, with around one in five pupils in Years 5 and 6 leaving or entering the school during these last two years. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy School Award.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Elsley Primary School provides a satisfactory education.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Most reach age-related expectations by the time they enter Key Stage 1, although writing and calculation remain weaker than other aspects of learning.
- Across Key Stages 1 and 2, the progress that pupils make in their learning is satisfactory overall. Progress is better in reading and science than it is in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is effective in including new arrivals and pupils at an early stage of learning English, and those with learning difficulties in speech and language, to enable them to make expected progress. In some lessons, however, middle- and higher-ability pupils are insufficiently challenged to make good progress.
- The introduction of regular assessment and reviews of pupils' progress enables teachers to identify pupils who are not making sufficient gains. As a result, teaching now meets the needs of less-able pupils, but the school has identified the need for further work to be done to meet the needs of more-able, gifted and talented pupils.
- While most pupils behave well, a small minority of pupils, mostly boys, lose interest in lessons that do not actively engage them and this slows the pace of their learning. A similarly small minority of pupils display overly boisterous behaviour in the playground which is inconsiderate towards others.
- Attendance is improving, although it remains below average.
- While leaders and managers at all levels monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, their evaluation does not focus rigorously on the impact of teaching on the achievement of all pupils to ensure they make good progress. However, given the improvements in the achievement of less-able pupils, those with learning difficulties, and pupils at an early stage of learning English, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics across the school by:
 - ensuring that effective teaching and learning strategies are used to challenge all pupils to make good progress
 - building on the existing good partnership with parents to engage parents, pupils and staff in working together to achieve a consistently high standard of behaviour, both in lessons and around the school
 - improving monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, by leaders and managers at all levels, to ensure that the actions taken improve outcomes for all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning overall. However, the pace of learning and the expectations of pupils' progress vary between classes and groups of pupils. Girls make better progress than boys, particularly in a small minority of lessons that do not engage boys actively in their learning. In these lessons, interest and attention wanes, and the time spent on managing behaviour slows the pace of learning. In most lessons, pupils enjoy their learning. Lower-ability pupils and those at an early stage of learning English make better progress than middle- and higher-ability pupils in both English and mathematics. This is because in some lessons the level and amount of work expected does not challenge middle-ability and more-able pupils to make good progress. The school has focused successfully on improving pupils' reading. It is now focusing appropriately on improving their writing and, with the support of the local authority, their mathematics.

Taking the last three years overall, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with the national average, although it declined to well below average in 2008. The school identified low attainment in writing and mathematics. In both English and mathematics, lower-ability pupils made better progress than middle- and higher-ability-pupils, which confirms that progress in some lessons is too slow for some pupils.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, lower-ability pupils, new arrivals to the school and pupils at an early stage of learning English are integrated well in lessons and make satisfactory progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of personal safety, including safety in using the internet, and feel safe around the school. They say that there is little bullying, that they get on well together, and that occasional fights in the playground are addressed quickly by staff. Most pupils behave well, and they are confident that the school keeps them safe, even though a small minority play overly boisterously in the playground. Pupils are aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the healthy eating options prepared by the school's cook. Many pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular sports available. Inspectors observed

some pupils working towards their cycling proficiency test.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities by engaging in the school council, acting as ‘playground friends’, and participating in local events such as a Refugee Week writing competition, Youth Parliament and a music festival. They also produce a newsletter for the community. Pupils learn to value different religions and cultures, and contribute positively to cultural and social events such as Black History Month, International Day and musical events. However, the occasional inconsiderate behaviour of a small minority of pupils indicates that their understanding of right and wrong is not as well developed as the other aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils develop appropriate skills in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), and in team work in preparation for secondary school and their future employment. Their attendance and punctuality are improving.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, but it is not consistent across the school. There are many examples of good teaching where teachers use assessment and their teaching assistants to match tasks to the range of pupils’ abilities. However, there is not enough good teaching to promote the consistently good progress required to raise standards of attainment. Features of effective lessons include a clear sequence of tasks leading pupils to the learning intention, and good use of modelling – as in calculation in mathematics – to set expectations. Other good features include checking pupils’ understanding through the use of talk partners and questioning at different levels. Pupils make most progress where they are engaged in practical investigation. For example, in the Nursery, children explored the use of ICT through

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

microphones and cameras. In a Year 1 literacy lesson on poetry, pupils investigated shapes in the sand, sounds in seashells and the texture of seaweed. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils organised themselves into roles in giving group presentations following research into the solar system.

In too many lessons, however, the pace of learning is slow for middle- and higher-ability pupils, because not enough is expected of them in relation to the level and amount of work. In these lessons, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and too little time engaged in independent work. Across the school, teachers make limited use of marking to identify next steps to help pupils to know what to do to improve their work, or to help them to check their progress towards their literacy targets.

Some well-considered initiatives are being introduced to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including boys. However, they are too recent to show any impact on pupils' achievements. Initiatives include a managed learning environment which enables pupils to access a range of online learning resources within and outside of school, and to communicate with their teacher and other pupils; there is also an after-school literacy project to engage a group of black ethnic minority pupils by providing notebook laptops which can be used at home. More investigative tasks are being introduced through emphasis on a 'creative curriculum'. The personal, social and health education programme is being reviewed to include the development of pupils' awareness of others and of the impact that their actions have. Some previously established developments are promoting the progress of different groups of pupils successfully. For example, 'precision teaching' sessions are proving effective in supporting the language development of pupils at an early stage of learning English. A range of intervention strategies, mostly provided by teaching assistants, is effective in supporting the learning of lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties, but there are few opportunities for enrichment and extension for more-able, and gifted and talented pupils. The curriculum is suitably enhanced by a range of well attended extra-curricular activities.

Pastoral care is effective in integrating new arrivals, including asylum seekers and refugees, and pupils at an early stage of learning English, into lessons. Pupils whose parents do not understand English say that the homework club supports them well. Appropriate support for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to make satisfactory progress, although the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is not always managed well in a few lessons and in the playground. The introduction of a programme on the social and emotional aspects of learning is helping pupils to control their emotions. The school is successful in reducing the number of persistent absentees, but attendance remains below average. The school provides appropriate guidance on transition between key stages and on to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3
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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders are motivated to improve pupils' outcomes, and are effective in focusing teachers on monitoring pupils' progress each term. They monitor the quality of teaching, but evaluation of the impact of this is not focused sharply on the progress of all pupils, including the more able, to identify further areas for development. Similarly, there is limited evaluation of the impact of actions in school and of subject improvement plans to help the school to identify how well it is reaching its targets and what further action is needed. Target setting is based on accurate assessment, but is only adequately challenging for middle-ability and more-able pupils. As a result, outcomes are broadly satisfactory rather than good. The school deploys its resources, including teaching assistants, to achieve satisfactory value for money.

The leadership team analyses information on the various groups of pupils, including their progress and attendance. Improvement is evident where the school has targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties, those at an early stage of learning English, and persistent absentees. To further promote equality of opportunity, the school engages parents in family learning programmes to enable them to support their children's learning. Parents are fully supportive of the school's work. Partnerships with other organisations, such as a sports partnership, an extended schools cluster and educational psychologists support the learning and well-being of pupils appropriately.

All safeguarding regulations and duties are met, and arrangements and policies for safeguarding are in line with government requirements and are reviewed systematically. All staff have been vetted appropriately and trained in child protection. The school carries out health and safety risk assessments, although inspectors brought a health and safety issue to the attention of senior leaders. The school monitors the personal development of its pupils and uses the support of external agencies effectively.

Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities, respond quickly to parental concerns such as supervision in the playground, and support areas of the curriculum appropriately. Until very recently their role in holding the school to account for its achievement and standards, and ensuring that weaknesses are addressed decisively, was limited. The new Chair of the Governing Body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and is beginning to challenge the school's performance. However, given the track record, governance is currently satisfactory.

Following analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context, the school has developed a good strategy to promote community cohesion. This includes addressing community cohesion within the school through celebrating a range of religious and cultural backgrounds, and engaging with community groups beyond the school, such as the Somali community. Through the family learning programme it encourages parents to participate in adult education courses to attain qualifications for employment. The school's work has contributed to the respect that pupils show for

each other's backgrounds and to their ability to work together in harmony.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The coordinator's ambition and drive for improvement is shared throughout the teaching team in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, the children are making good progress and enjoy the welcoming and well-resourced environment. When they start school, many of the children do not have the range of skills and abilities expected for their age. Some children speak little English. Talk plays an integral part in all activities and this increases the children's confidence. A sharper focus on linking letters and sounds has also accelerated progress in communication, language and literacy development over the past two years. The children are now working securely within age-related expectations for all areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year, although writing and calculation remain weaker than other aspects of their learning.

Staff provide effectively for children's welfare. The stimulating outdoor areas promote children's physical development well. Both inside and outdoor activities support children's personal development, as well as the other areas of their learning. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. The activities are planned thoroughly using information drawn from extensive observations, interviews and photographs, which are used to assess each child's progress.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are positive about the school and support its work. They like the frequent communication and the fact that their children are happy. A few parents express concern about supervision of behaviour at playtimes. Inspectors found the level of supervision is appropriate, but that staff could do more to address the overly boisterous behaviour of a small minority of pupils to encourage them to act more considerately towards the other pupils. The inspectors identified this as an area for improvement. A few parents express concern about their children's progress, while others express satisfaction. Inspectors found pupils' progress was variable, although satisfactory overall, and have identified this also as an area for improvement. A very small number of other minor concerns were expressed, but there was no pattern to these and most have been addressed through the inspection.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elsley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 131 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 517 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	40	5	1

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



1 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elsley Primary School, Wembley, HA9 6HT

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- Those of you in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress, but you could make better progress.
- Your teachers help you to settle into school well and support those of you who find learning difficult, or who are learning to speak English.
- Your teachers assess your progress each term and help you if you are falling behind with your work.
- Most of you behave well, but a few children are not considerate to others when they run around the playground and bump into other children.
- You are getting better at coming to school every day.
- Sometimes your headteacher and other leaders visit your lessons to see how well your teachers are doing, but they do not always tell your teachers how they can challenge all of you to make better progress in your lessons.

We have asked your school to improve the following things.

- Raise your attainment and progress in writing and mathematics across the school by:
 - making sure that your lessons challenge all of you to make good progress
 - working with you, your parents and all the teachers to make sure that your behaviour is always excellent in lessons and in the playground
 - improving the way that your headteacher and her team check your lessons and all the other work of the school, to make certain that you achieve the best you can.

You can help by working hard in lessons and by making sure that you all behave considerately towards each other.

Yours faithfully

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector

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