

Elmore Green Primary School

Elmore Green Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 2HW

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of teaching is good. Staff inject humour, interest and brisk purpose into lessons.
- Most pupils are attentive to their teachers, work hard and develop positive attitudes to learning. In upper key stage 2, in particular, there are some innovative and highly effective strategies for engaging all pupils in learning.
- Senior leaders and governors have brought about productive changes to teaching and have an informed understanding of its quality. Leaders are now working to improve aspects of curriculum planning, challenge for the most able and their analysis of pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- Middle leaders are effective teachers who are developing their roles in evaluating the school's effectiveness, sharing good practice and setting improvement priorities.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has had some ups and downs. More recently, attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2 has risen. However, pupils' progress across the school is not as strong as it once was.
- After a period of change, leaders' chosen assessment system is fit for purpose. In places, it needs further refinement to improve its use and reliability.
- The school is successful at teaching pupils to read. Whatever their starting points, almost all pupils reach the expected standards for their age in national assessments.
- The school's work to promote pupils' welfare and keep them safe is strong. Staff are quick to act on concerns. They provide pupils and their parents and carers with constructive support, or challenge, when needs be.
- Pupils are treated fairly and usually behave well. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and everyone understands what is expected from them. Good behaviour is noticed and rewarded. Poor behaviour is challenged and stopped.
- Pupils who find it hard to manage aspects of their behaviour receive extra support, which is usually successful.
- Most pupils attend regularly but a few are often late.
- Early years provision is effective. Good leadership and teaching help children to settle in quickly and acquire important knowledge and skills. Staff and parents could still do more to develop children's early language skills.
- Parents, governors and staff think highly of the school. Everyone in the school community views the school as a supportive place in which to work and learn.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning and increase pupils' progress across the school by:
 - refining curriculum planning and the use of assessment so that teaching makes the most of what pupils already know
 - maximising opportunities to improve children's early language skills when they first start school
 - raising expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve
 - making sure staff see and learn from the most effective practice in the school.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - expanding the roles of middle leaders so that they are more involved in evaluating and developing the school's work
 - improving leaders' analysis of information about pupils' behaviour and achievement in order to spot patterns, challenge poor punctuality and plan for improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other leaders have an informed understanding of the school's current performance. They ensure that pupils are taught well, are treated fairly, are kept safe and feel valued.
- Following the previous inspection, when the school was judged to be outstanding, the school's leaders took their eye off school improvement. They did not pay enough attention to national changes to assessment and the curriculum and, consequently, pupils' progress and attainment slipped. More recently, the school has caught up with current practice and attainment has risen. Currently, Elmore Green Primary is a good school with aspects that need further work if it is to regain its outstanding status.
- Morale in the school is high and good teamwork is apparent. Senior and middle leaders inspire trust, provide supportive leadership and keep staff up to date with training. The headteacher and assistant headteacher are on the ball and ambitious for the school's future. Effective subject leaders are in tune with their subjects and give helpful guidance to staff. Their role in evaluating the school's effectiveness and setting priorities for improvement has been underdeveloped in recent years. This is now starting to change.
- The school provides an appropriate curriculum and several after-school activities. Each week, pupils learn new things in different subjects. Some of the work they produce, notably in art, is high quality and indicative of a well-planned programme of study. Having said this, in some subjects such as design and technology and music, the school's long-term plans are vague. These plans do not set out clear expectations of how new teaching should build progressively and securely on previous teaching. Consequently, different staff interpret the plans in different ways. Individual lessons are engaging and purposeful, but staff sometimes lose sight of the long-term goals for pupils' learning.
- Specific funds such as physical education and sport money and the pupil premium are spent in line with their intended purposes. Leaders know how these funds are spent and have plenty of anecdotal feedback about how they have improved provision and outcomes for pupils. However, until recently, they have not routinely analysed the details in order to identify trends or patterns in pupils' achievement.
- The school makes sure pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and staff teach pupils about the dangers of prejudice and ignorance. An annual Remembrance event is a significant part of the school's tradition and identity. It serves to remind pupils about society's shared values and the importance of democracy. Similar messages about standing up for what is right and helping others are reinforced through assemblies and lessons.
- Parents are pleased with the school. About half of all parents entered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. 97% would recommend the school to others. This positive sentiment was echoed in parents' comments to inspectors during the inspection.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors are well informed and bring a range of relevant skills and knowledge to their roles. They have established routines for checking the school's work and are well known to staff and parents. They cross-check reports from the headteacher with information from other sources and provide a healthy level of challenge and support to the school's leadership. Governors know that school improvement stalled after the previous inspection and have realistic ambitions for the future.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- This aspect of the school's work is consistently strong. Staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety and are quick to act when necessary. All safety concerns are recorded and followed up correctly. Pupils know that adults in school will always listen to and help them if they have a worry or problem.
- All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out in line with legal requirements. The school site is kept secure and any accidents that occur during the school day are attended to promptly.
- Staff and governors have received 'Prevent' duty training and are informed about the potential risks in the local area. Through the school's work on equality, staff teach pupils about respect and help them to find out about the wider world. Pupils also learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet and mobile phones.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching in all classes is good. In upper key stage 2 it is particularly strong.
- At its most effective, teaching actively engages all pupils, prompting them to contribute, question, challenge and lead aspects of teaching and learning. In several classes, teachers use an approach called ABC which requires pupils to agree with, build upon or challenge a piece of information or other pupils' responses. This simple and consistent routine draws everyone into thought-provoking discussions about learning and makes pupils use what they know to learn more.
- Whatever approach teaching takes, all staff put energy and imagination into their work. In key stage 1, for example, to support pupils' research about animals a member of staff dressed up as a cat and then toured the Year 1 and 2 classes to answer pupils' questions. Elsewhere, lively lower key stage 2 teaching reminded pupils not to get caught by the 'capital letter and punctuation police'. In addition, some staff make innovative use of hand-held technology to share resources, question pupils and provide immediate and bespoke feedback. In these and many other instances, there is good humour, smiles and laughter underpinned by a well-understood work ethic. This typifies the school's approach to teaching and learning.
- Nevertheless, on occasions, some of the brightest pupils are held back when they evidently understand their work and are ready to press on further. Similarly, sometimes

pupils finish their work quickly and then occupy themselves with undemanding tasks. This is not commonplace, but it does happen.

- In recent years, the school's approach to assessment has changed several times as staff have tried and then abandoned different systems. Alongside this, the school was slow to adapt when the national curriculum changed in 2014. Consequently, in the years after the previous inspection the quality of teaching slipped because it was either not pitched at the right level or missed out some content. More recently, the school has got back on track. The current assessment system is manageable and is used to make sure most teaching hits the mark. Even so, some staff use it more reliably and efficiently than others. There is scope to increase opportunities for staff to learn from one another.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- This is a well-developed feature of the school's work. Pupils who find it hard to cope at school or have difficulties outside of school get attentive support. The school employs a family support worker who is a highly visible presence in school. Through her work, and that of the staff team, pupils and their parents know that the school will act quickly in response to any problems.
- Some pupils carry out jobs, such as helping with playground equipment or acting as a school councillor, and this helps them to learn about responsibility. Each week, staff give out awards to pupils who have demonstrated a particular quality or worked hard. This, and other incentives, teach pupils about the link between effort and success.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents agree. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In class, pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. Outside, on the playground, they make the most of the available space and, while pupils do fall out from time to time, bullying of any sort is rare. In most situations, pupils are friendly, good-humoured and quick to offer a cheery word.
- Pupils of all ages understand the school's rules and most pupils follow them most of the time. Staff are quick to spot and praise good behaviour and are equally quick to challenge poor behaviour.
- Some pupils do find it hard to control their feelings and outbursts can occur, both outside and in class. Teachers and teaching assistants manage such situations very well and classroom learning is not disrupted. The school has had cause to exclude pupils, but it is not common practice.
- Almost all pupils attend school regularly and wear full school uniform. A small number of pupils are often late, usually by a few minutes. This poor punctuality is a bad habit

and means they miss the start of lessons.

- Parents and pupils express mainly positive views about behaviour in the school although pupils say that a few pupils swear or damage school property. This inspection found that staff are alert to this and always record incidents of poor behaviour. However, leaders do not routinely analyse these records to spot any patterns or risk factors.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress at this school. Since the previous inspection, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has had some ups and downs. However, in 2018, attainment in all three subjects rose and pupils who left at the end of Year 6 were well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils do very well with reading. In the Year 1 phonics check, and assessments at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard for their ages are all above national figures. Attainment in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is closer to national averages. Given pupils' typically below-average starting points on entry to school, these results present a positive picture of progress across their primary years.
- Recent measures of progress across key stage 2, however, have not been so positive. There are two main reasons for this. First, attainment at the end of key stage 1, particularly in reading and mathematics, is strong and sets a high standard for key stage 2 to follow. Second, the school changed its assessment routines several times in the last few years and this interfered with its reliability and the flow of teaching.
- However, there is no doubt that pupils currently in the school benefit from good teaching and are doing well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive some excellent support and, in most cases, respond positively to this. The most able pupils also make good progress overall. In fact, in upper key stage 2, these pupils make strides forward in their learning because teaching routinely gets the very best from them. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not significantly different to the progress made by other pupils in the school.
- All pupils experience success in subjects other than English and mathematics. In science, art, music and history, for example, pupils produce good-quality work and are proud of their achievements. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve planning for progression in these subjects so that new teaching makes the most of previous learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Good leadership ensures that children feel safe and secure when they first start school. Effective teaching encourages children to develop good behaviours and learning habits that set them up well for the years ahead. Classrooms are organised to develop independence, perseverance and creativity. Children enjoy coming to school and learn how to cooperate and get along with one another.
- Most children start in the Reception Year with levels of knowledge, skill and experience

below those typical for their age. Their language, communication and fine motor skills are usually the weakest aspects of their development. In response, the early years team makes sure that classrooms are full of resources and activities that require children to cut, draw, paint, write, and handle different things. This prepares them well for developing their early pencil grip and writing.

- Indeed, this focus on fine motor skills has led to more children reaching the early learning goal for writing. This, in turn, has lifted the proportion of children reaching a good level of development before starting in Year 1. In 2018, for example, two thirds of children were ready for the key stage 1 curriculum when they moved up into Year 1. This is still below the national figure but is a step up from previous years' results and represents good progress during their Reception Year.
- Similarly, early years staff encourage children to talk and develop their vocabulary. During a construction activity, for example, an adult questioned the children about their ideas and prompted them to expand on their answers. Role play areas such as a Fruit and Veg Shop and a Three Bears' Cottage invite creative play and dialogue between children. This is having a positive impact on their progress but, here and there, adults' interactions with children do not give children enough opportunities to speak, question and discuss.
- The early years leader and her team have established positive relationships with parents. Even so, inspectors recognised that the school could do more to inform parents about ways to develop their children's spoken language at home.

School details

Unique reference number	104153
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10058652

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	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Lemm
Headteacher	Penny Jones
Telephone number	01922 710 162
Website	www.elmore-green.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	postbox@elmore-green.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average overall but the proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is more than twice the national average.
- The current headteacher was previously the deputy headteacher. She started her headteacher role in January 2019.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Inspectors also examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school test and assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and the school's routines at the beginning and end of the school day, in lessons, assembly, at lunch and breaktimes and when pupils were moving about the school site.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 151 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspection team considered these and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, school leaders and governors to gather their views.
- Inspectors examined school documents. These included: information about pupils' achievement, evaluations of the school's performance and several policy statements. Records relating to governance, staff training, special educational needs, early years, behaviour, attendance, punctuality, exclusions, safety, safeguarding and the quality of teaching were also scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Barnes	Ofsted Inspector

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