

Elton Primary School

School Lane, Elton, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 4LT

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Leaders' focus on improving the quality of teaching has increased pupils' progress.
- Pupils make good progress. Good teaching and provision in the early years ensure that children get off to a good start and achieve well from their individual starting points.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 from starting points which have previously been below average.
- Standards at Key Stage 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is above average in reading, writing and in the test for English grammar, punctuation and spelling. The progress that pupils make in Key Stage 2 is improving and is now good.
- Teaching is good and staff provide high-quality opportunities for pupils to learn well and enjoy a wide range of experiences.
- All staff create a positive and encouraging working environment which makes sure that pupils get the most out of their lessons.
- Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves very well. Their attitude to learning is highly positive. They make good progress in all subjects.
- Pupils behave very well and feel safe in school. They do not tolerate behaviour that makes others feel unwelcome or unhappy. They have high expectations that all pupils treat each other with respect and consideration.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved overall and particularly for Gypsy, Romany and Traveller pupils.
- The quality of care that all staff give pupils is exceptional. This is especially so for those with special educational needs or circumstances which make them particularly vulnerable.
- Governors are highly supportive. They have a very well informed and accurate view of the school's improving performance. Governors work successfully with senior leaders to raise standards, improve achievement and further improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On a few occasions, the work planned for lower ability pupils, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs does not build precisely on what they can already do and is too challenging.
- Strengths in teaching are not always effectively shared or used in the best way to raise even further achievement for all pupils.
- The quality of learning opportunities for children in the early years is not as good in the outdoor provision as it is indoors.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or part lessons in all classes.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff, members of the governing body, a group of parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 56 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and looked at the school's latest parental survey. They also reviewed written information about the school received during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: assessment data, the school's evaluation of its work, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation, reports from school improvement partners, information about the management of teachers' performance, monitoring records and the school's improvement plan.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and also reviewed samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed 32 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtime, lunchtime, around the school and in lessons.

Inspection team

Clare Daniel, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Fourteen percent of pupils are from Gypsy, Romany or Traveller families.
- At the time of the last inspection, the school hosted a resourced provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The resourced provision has since closed but almost all of the pupils who attended have remained at the school. They are currently supported within the mainstream classes.
- The headteacher, all governors and most teaching staff have joined the school since the last inspection.
- The school is situated in a building shared with Elton Children's Centre. The children's centre is subject to separate inspection and a report of its quality can be found on the website www.gov.uk/ofsted.
- In September 2014, the school took over the nursery provision which was previously managed by a private provider. It is registered to provide care for two-year-old children on the same site.
- Nursery and pre-school provision is part time and parents are offered morning sessions. Reception provision is full time.
- A far larger than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school during their primary education.
- The school operates a breakfast club during term time which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the next steps in pupils' learning always build precisely on what they can already do, particularly for lower ability pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - making sure that key strengths in teaching are shared more effectively in order to raise achievement for all pupils.
- Ensure children in the early years have as many varied and high-quality opportunities to learn in the outdoor environment as they do indoors.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders expect high standards, good progress, excellent behaviour and equality of opportunity for all pupils. Their knowledge of the pupils and the level of pastoral care they provide for pupils and their families are both of a very high standard.
- School leaders all demonstrate the same high levels of commitment to raising achievement. Senior and middle leaders monitor pupils' performance and the quality of teaching regularly and have an accurate view of the standards achieved by groups of pupils. All leaders ensure assessments made about pupils' achievement are accurate. They have taken every opportunity to have their judgements about pupils' performance checked rigorously by external consultants to ensure they are correct.
- Plans for improvement are having a significant impact on tackling the few remaining pockets of underachievement. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's overall performance.
- The senior leader with responsibility for overseeing the achievement of, and provision, for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs left the school at the end of the autumn term. A replacement is due to start in the summer term. Currently, the headteacher is fulfilling this role very effectively.
- Since taking up her post, the headteacher has implemented rigorous appraisal of teachers' performance. They now have targets which are closely linked to improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement. Senior leaders check these targets throughout the year. They can demonstrate clearly the impact that support and professional development are having on improving the quality of teaching.
- The school has detailed, well-thought-out curricular plans. These ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to write and use their mathematical skills in different subjects. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of trips and visits. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the range of sporting and musical opportunities they enjoy at school. During the inspection, a large number of pupils from Key Stage 2 took part in a Young Voices concert in Manchester. Others competed in sporting activity with other local schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is well supported by the range of subjects taught and by assemblies. There are also opportunities to take part in different extra-curricular activities. Pupils have a range of responsibilities in school which they particularly enjoy, and a strong sense of community responsibility within and beyond the school environment.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn about British values such as tolerance, respect, democracy, law and liberty through a variety of well planned activities. The school works particularly successfully to ensure that pupils co-exist harmoniously. Leaders celebrate with sensitivity and respect the differences and similarities of different groups within the school. Through this range of activities, the school fosters good relations, promotes tolerance and tackles discrimination. The range of experiences that the school offers pupils ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors spend the primary sports funding very effectively. They ensure all pupils gain health benefits from an improved quality of teaching and the opportunity to take part in a wider range of activities in physical education. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the good achievement of the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- The local authority has previously provided light-touch support for the school. It has recently begun working more closely with the school to support the large proportion of newly appointed staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Despite their relative inexperience, governors have a very well informed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They challenge senior leaders effectively about improvements in the standards pupils reach as well as the quality of teaching. Governors check the quality of the school's work regularly by taking part in a well established programme of checks in school alongside senior staff.
 - Governors' extensive training has had a significant impact on improving their understanding of the school's performance and assessment data, and their statutory roles. They understand the link between the arrangements to manage the performance of teachers and their impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. Governors are fully involved in overseeing the school's systems for pay awards related to the performance of teaching staff. They know how underperformance is tackled.
 - Governors have a good overview of the spending and impact of pupil premium funding and analyse the performance of disadvantaged pupils rigorously. They are committed to ensuring every pupil is given an equal opportunity to succeed.

- Governors ensure that the school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils are highly motivated and eager to learn. They listen carefully, follow instructions well and are keen to succeed. Inspectors did not observe any disruptive behaviour during the inspection, either in lessons or around the school. This reflects the school's commitment to providing a safe, calm, well-managed learning environment.
- Pupils behave very well around the school and are polite and well mannered. They welcome warmly visitors and new pupils who join the school after the normal time. They talk confidently about their work and the quality of relationships between staff and pupils which helps to maintain good order and a respectful working environment.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. They have a clear understanding of the school's systems of rewards and sanctions and the effect these have on maintaining good order and high expectations. Pupils report that although there are a few rare incidents of weaker behaviour, these are managed fairly, promptly and consistently by all staff.
- Almost all staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire believed behaviour was good and consistently well managed in school. Inspectors agree with this view. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school makes sure pupils behave well and deal effectively with bullying.
- Behaviour records are well maintained. While the school has excluded a very small number of pupils this academic year, the action taken has been consistently well managed within the framework of the school's behaviour policy. Information has been clearly documented and accurately reported to the relevant authorities.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are keen to attend.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are warm, supportive and respectful. Pupils trust staff members to help them if they have a problem or concern. They say that while incidents of bullying are very rare, staff deal with them consistently and fairly. Pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe both physically and, for example, when using the internet.
- Pupils insist that racism and discrimination are not tolerated within school and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They say that pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together and appreciate the opportunities to learn about different cultures.
- Highly effective procedures are in place to keep vulnerable pupils safe. There is clear evidence of how the school quickly involves other agencies if it has concerns about a pupil's safety to protect and nurture those who are particularly vulnerable.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now average. The school has worked particularly effectively with Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families. As a result, the attendance of these pupils has increased by almost 20%.

The quality of teaching is good

- A significant feature of the good teaching in the school is the calm, well-managed learning environment. Activities are well thought out and expectations of what all pupils can achieve are high. As a result, learning is purposeful, well ordered and pupils are keen to do well. They listen and respond to all staff very well and get on with their work quickly and enthusiastically.
- Activities are well prepared in all classes. Inspectors observed the most able pupils being highly challenged in their learning and enjoying the opportunity to work on extension activities, particularly in mathematics, without having to repeat tasks that they could already complete. On a few occasions, the work set for lower ability pupils or those with special educational needs was too challenging and was not effectively planned to build on their existing skills.

- The use of adults to support learning has a significant impact on the standards achieved by pupils and the progress they make. Teaching assistants and support staff understand the focus of each session clearly and have appropriate resources to work with groups and individuals. As a result of this high quality support, most disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Teachers carefully plan opportunities to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. Pupils enjoy reading and talk with confidence about the range of books that they are encouraged to experience. All pupils were dressed as their favourite book characters on World Book Day during the inspection and talked with confidence and an impressive degree of knowledge about the characters they had chosen and their reasons why. Their love of books, reading and stories was evident.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Pupils are challenged well and make good and sometimes outstanding progress. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils made rapid progress because the teacher had a very accurate understanding of their skills and was able to plan work that built on what they could already do. No time was wasted while pupils repeated work which did not challenge them. As soon as they felt confident enough to undertake the task, pupils were encouraged to work independently and in small groups. Pupils who needed extra support remained with the teacher and received some further explanation. Feedback to pupils was accurate, evaluative and helped to move their learning on swiftly.
- Pupils' work is marked in accordance with the school's policy. Pupils have daily opportunities to act on advice and correct their work or to respond to additional challenges set by teachers. This supports pupils' good achievement in all subjects.
- Evidence in pupils' books show that they have made particularly rapid progress this year as a result of good teaching, well-focused support and high-quality feedback from teachers and other adults.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school from their individual starting points. In some year groups, up to 50% of pupils join or leave during their journey from Year 1 to Year 6. The school's data show that pupils who are new to the school do just as well as others because their individual needs are met effectively.
- The published data from outcomes in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6, do not always give the full picture of pupils' achievements. This is a direct consequence of the much higher than average proportion of pupils joining or leaving year groups during an academic year.
- At Key Stage 1, from their previously low starting points at the start of Year 1, standards are rising rapidly and are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. A greater proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics than in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. This difference reflects the high proportion of pupils who enter school with weaknesses in their communication and language skills. These skills are still developing as pupils move through Years 1 and 2.
- In the most recent Year 1 phonic screening check (a check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make), almost two-thirds reached the standard expected for their age. Although this was a little below the national average, the school's data and inspection evidence shows pupils achieved well.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils are now making much more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics than was seen previously. Pupils who remain at the school for an extended period reach at least the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all three subjects was above average in 2014.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good overall. They make similar progress to their peers, although they occasionally do not reach the same standards because their starting point is often lower. The school is quick to assess disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are at risk of underachieving. These pupils receive a range of effective support which ensures they continue to achieve well.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been variable over time, although the number of pupils has historically been small. In 2014 in Year 6, the number of disadvantaged pupils was too small to make a meaningful comparison with the achievement of their peers nationally. In half the classes across the school, standards currently achieved by disadvantaged pupils are higher than those achieved by their non-disadvantaged peers.
- The most able pupils make at least the progress expected of them, and often better than expected progress. They achieve well, especially in the test for English grammar, spelling and punctuation. The

proportion of pupils on track to achieve the higher levels, particularly at Key Stage 1 has increased significantly in 2015 and is currently in line with the national average. The school's work to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well reflects their commitment to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age and, in a few cases, significantly below. Children demonstrate particular weaknesses in communication and language development and their understanding of the world. Children make good progress in the early years from their individual starting points. In 2014, the majority of children achieved a good level of development. Children of all abilities are prepared well to start Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The senior leader with this responsibility has a clear and well informed view of achievement and the quality of teaching. She ensures that the curriculum is appropriate and is planned to build on children's previous experiences and meets their interests.
- The early years leader has supported the headteacher through the significant difficulties that occurred during headteacher transfer of the provision for two year olds from private provider to the school. The school recognises that there are currently some differences in the quality of provision between the Nursery and Reception classes. Their improvement plan is addressing these swiftly.
- Indoor and outdoor provision are both safe and secure. The outdoor area has been recently developed and more plans are ready to enhance it further. The variety and quality of activities available to children in the outdoor provision are not as consistently strong as those available indoors.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Adults organise learning activities with clear consideration of what the children need to do next in order to make good progress. Indoor learning engages and excites children. It ensures they have many high-quality opportunities to develop their communication and language skills rapidly.
- During the inspection, children dressed as their favourite book characters to celebrate World Book Day. They spoke with confidence about the stories they were representing. The environment is rich with opportunities to support and develop spoken language, as well as reading and writing. Children count, sing number songs and use construction kits to support their understanding of number concepts and shapes.
- Children use technology confidently. Staff recognise how encouraging children to use new technologies every day is highly effective in developing language skills. This also widens children's experience of the world and community around them. These are areas which the early years leader identifies as potential weaknesses in children's skills when they start school.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and behaviour is good. Children from a range of backgrounds work and play together in a harmonious atmosphere and enjoy finding out about each other's families.
- Staff support disabled children and those who have special educational needs so that they make good progress in the early years. Staff identify the individual needs of these children early and so they receive effective support.
- Children are safe and secure, relationships are warm and encouraging, and welfare requirements are well met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111225
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	456166

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne-Marie Wright
Headteacher	Victoria Carr
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2012
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