

Inspection of Elton Primary School

School Lane, Elton, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4LT

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Elton Primary School is a happy place. Staff and pupils get on very well together. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. They feel safe in school and on their journey to and from the school building.

Staff want all pupils to do their best. To improve pupils' achievement, they are reorganising what they teach, so that pupils learn and remember more.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. Bullying sometimes happens, but staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

The staff work well as a team. They are very caring, helpful and approachable. Regular newsletters and twitter posts keep parents and carers well informed about what is happening in the school. The headteacher takes the time to get to know every child and family. He is on the playground every morning, so that parents can speak to him and sort out any problems quickly. Staff help pupils settle quickly into school when they first come and to settle back in if they have been away.

The pupils enjoy the visits and residentials that the school organises. They also like working on projects with visitors from outside school. Leaders listen carefully to pupils' views on how to make the school a better place.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

In the past, Year 6 pupils have not achieved nearly as well as others across the country, especially in mathematics and writing. A new mathematics teaching programme, brought in last year, is working well. It is carefully structured so that pupils can build on what they already know as they move through the school. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 showed how it is helping them to learn and understand more and to solve more difficult problems. One thing that is still holding pupils back is that they do not know their times tables well enough to be able to answer questions quickly.

Staff are now introducing a new programme to improve pupils' achievement in writing. They are doing this with the same care as they took over mathematics.

The teaching of reading is very important in the school. As soon as they arrive, children begin to learn letter sounds. They quickly move on to reading simple words and sentences. The books they read match the sounds they are learning. Most pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils who fall behind have extra help, but they are not catching up quickly enough. They have difficulty making sense of words and sentences and understanding what they are reading. Older pupils cannot remember much about what they have read in the past, and they show little enthusiasm for reading.

In the other subjects, leaders have identified what they want pupils to know by particular points in their school life. They have drawn up clear plans to show what to

teach and when to do so. It is too early to see the effects of these plans. At present, pupils often have difficulty remembering what they have learned in the past. This stops them from moving on with their learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance has not been as high as it should be, but the school is working hard to improve this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are less able get good support. They cover the same range of subjects as everybody else. The same is true of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils learn about the major religions of the world and about life in modern Britain. They discuss interesting questions, such as whether war is always wrong. They raise money for charity and, through activities like Eco warriors, they work towards making the world a better place.

After the last inspection, pupils' achievement declined. The new headteacher has worked hard to improve the situation. He has gained the respect of parents and staff. Most of his senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. There is still further work to do before the full effects of their efforts are seen. They have the support of dedicated, able governors who know the school well.

The children in the early years make a good start to their schooling. Parents and staff work well together to help the children settle in. The children quickly learn the school's routines. They are well looked after and happy. They enjoy the activities on offer. The vast majority of them behave well and keep to task for long periods of time. The new early years leader has made important changes to what is taught and the way that staff check on how well children are learning. The children make good progress through the early stages of learning to read, write and count.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff really care about the pupils. They are highly trained to spot signs of abuse and neglect and know exactly what to do if they have any worries about a child. Leaders work very closely with the community, the police and other services to give the right support to any children or families who need extra help. Pupils know about the possible risks of using the internet and mobile phones. They also learn how to keep safe near roads railways and water and what to do in the case of fire.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have produced subject plans to cover the full range of the curriculum. They have also produced a clear schedule for training middle leaders to help their colleagues increase their skills and confidence in teaching each subject. This programme is at a very early stage of implementation and its impact has yet to

be seen in teaching and learning across the school. There is, therefore, a need to ensure that the subject plans produced by the recently appointed middle leaders are fully implemented and embedded.

- Pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have learned in the past, especially in the non-core subjects. This is hampering their progress. There is, therefore, a need to ensure greater coherence in planning for the development of subject-specific knowledge and skills, so that pupils know more, remember more and make good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils find it difficult to remember what they have read in the past. The range of genres they have had access to has been too limited. They show little enthusiasm, even for the books they say are by their favourite authors. There is now a need to focus across the school on extending pupils' love of reading.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is in line with the national average. Pupils who fall behind are not being helped to catch up quickly enough. These pupils have difficulty in applying phonics skills to help them decipher even familiar words. Their reading lacks accuracy, fluency and understanding. There is, therefore, a need to improve the catch-up arrangements for the lower-attaining readers in the school.
- Attendance has been below average and persistent absence has been higher than average for a period of time. Leaders have identified specific factors that lead to low attendance of particular groups of pupils. Staff are working with those families and with external agencies to improve attendance. However, this has not led to sufficient improvement in attendance across the school. There is now a need to review and renew the approaches to tackling absence and persistent absence, to ensure that attendance is at least in line with national averages.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111225
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10082080
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Andy Canham
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Manning
Website	www.elton.cheshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2015

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed this year.
- The school makes provision for 2-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we met with the headteacher and the senior leaders.
- We held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- We spoke to pupils about behaviour and expectations in the school and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- We considered the 42 responses and 23 free-text responses to Parent View. We also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- We examined the 10 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 28 responses to the staff survey.

- We examined records in relation to safeguarding.
- As part of this inspection, we considered carefully how phonics and early reading are taught at Elton. We also considered how the curriculum is planned in mathematics, science, the arts and in the early years. During these activities, we met with subject leaders and visited lessons. We spoke to the teachers about the lessons they had taught and to the pupils about their learning. We also examined examples of pupils' books and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Aelwyn Pugh, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Garry White

Her Majesty's Inspector

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