

Elston Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104351
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	336291
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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	550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Len Kruczek
Headteacher	Kevin Grayson
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning. They observed 16 lessons; saw 19 teachers and held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, key partners, staff and the Chair of Governors. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress, the latest school improvement partner's monitoring report, the school improvement plan and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and analysed the responses of 251 parental questionnaires.

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

- current attainment and rates of progress, particularly in mathematics across the school and for groups of pupils
- current rates of attendance and persistent absence
- the effectiveness of teaching in securing good progress, particularly in mathematics and for higher ability pupils
- the impact of leadership and management across the school in tackling the issues from the previous inspection and their capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Elston Hall is a larger than average primary school situated to the north of Wolverhampton city centre. The school was subject to special measures in October 2006 and subsequently removed from a category of concern in December 2007. There have been considerable changes in teaching staff since the last inspection, and the leadership team has been restructured. The large majority of pupils are from White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language is much lower than average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School Award, Investors in People, ActiveMark and the first stage of the International Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Elston Hall is a good school which has consolidated and improved its performance since the last inspection. Behaviour is outstanding and parents are extremely positive about the school, and say such things as: 'The school has gone from strength to strength. My daughter's time at Elston Hall has been a very happy one. She has grown into a well balanced and well mannered girl.' Pupils report they feel safe in school and are confident that their concerns and worries will be addressed swiftly. They have a good knowledge and understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, which they carry into their everyday lives, even influencing their parents. The quality of support, guidance and care provided for pupils and their families is a strength. The school works very closely with all parents and makes good use of external agencies to ensure that pupils with specific difficulties receive good quality support. Attendance is average.

Pupils make good progress through the school as a result of the good teaching they receive. They join the school with starting points lower than expected for their age and progress well, so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 they achieve levels in English that are above national averages. Results are not as high in mathematics and are in line with national averages in science. Teachers involve the pupils in interesting activities that encourage them to talk about their work and enjoy their learning. However, opportunities to challenge more able pupils are occasionally missed, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments. In the best examples, pupils are given clear guidance to enable them to improve their work, but this is not consistent across the school.

The headteacher provides passionate and dedicated leadership which has enabled the whole school community to move forward since the last inspection. He has developed a strong team with a common purpose, who are fully involved in monitoring the school's effectiveness. By working together they have built a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation is effective. School improvement planning is robust, but does not have clear lines of accountability for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work. Sustained progress, improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the last inspection indicates the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring learning objectives are clearly understood by pupils and precisely matched to tasks

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- developing success criteria that are clearly focused on learning and enable progress to be evaluated by teachers and pupils
- ensuring that higher ability pupils are sufficiently challenged, so they achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that teacher's marking consistently gives clear advice to enable pupils to improve their work.
- Ensure that school improvement planning has appropriate milestones and clear lines of accountability for monitoring and evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children enter the nursery class with skills below those expected for this age, particularly in their personal development and basic skills. They make good progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching. There has been an upward trend in attainment since the last inspection and by the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils generally achieve in line with national averages. In 2009, attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 2 was above national averages but below in mathematics, in part due to unforeseen staff changes. The school's most recent data shows that progress and attainment in mathematics is improving and a greater proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected levels. Thorough tracking systems ensure that all teachers are aware of any differences in performance between different groups of pupils. Girls generally perform better than boys, although the gap is narrowing. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities perform well as a result of individualised support programmes implemented by the school and highly effective support.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and participate eagerly in lessons. In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils made good progress in their work due to good teaching. Pupils collaborate happily in pairs and groups and sustain their concentration well. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent, and routines are very well established and respected by pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils were able to transfer between changing activities in a science lesson with no time lost as they were keen to move on to the next challenge. Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as a result, attendance is improving and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Pupils' contribution to the school is good with an active school council who often lead assemblies. Many opportunities are available for pupils to organise fund raising and suggestion boxes for ideas on how to improve the school are popular. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, activities and events. They develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures through links with local places of worship and visitors to school. For example, pupils reported that they were particularly proud of their contribution to a local multi-faith celebration day.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are consistently well planned using up-to-date assessment information. The enthusiasm of the pupils is captured through lively, good humoured teaching alongside interesting activities. Pupils work very well with each other and they have good cooperation skills. Support staff are used very effectively to enhance and consolidate learning. In many lessons, teaching is brisk with a good rate of learning and pupils have opportunities to assess their own progress. For example, in one lesson observed, pupils in Year 1 were given clear guidance about what they were going to learn and then supported in developing their own success criteria for rhyming poems. These practices are developing, but are not yet consistently used by teachers across the school.

Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed by teachers. Comments are positive and encouraging but pupils are not always given clear advice on how to improve their work or reach the next level. Progress is systematically tracked in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and this enables the school to intervene early when a pupil is at risk of falling behind. The school has been particularly successful in providing individualised support to quickly get pupils back on track. Curriculum planning and provision has improved since the last inspection. It is carefully planned to meet the needs and aspirations of Elston Hall pupils. Good provision is made for the development of basic skills. A wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are offered, including a choir and four residential trips, alongside many sporting and creative clubs.

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

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Pupils report that after school clubs are very popular and over half the school participate in these activities.

Care, guidance and support are strong features in the school and this is endorsed by the positive response in the very large majority of parents' questionnaires. There are well-organised systems for promoting positive behaviour, relationships and respect for each other. Case studies provided by the school show successful outcomes for pupils as a result of timely and effective intervention and liaison with outside agencies. The school ensures that pupils' safety and security, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are a high priority.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example in setting out and sharing his vision. One parent typically commented: 'He is a kind, inspirational headteacher who knows every child in the school.' A number of new staff have joined the school since the last inspection and restructuring has taken place. As a result, the capacity of leaders and managers to drive forward further improvements has increased. Teamwork is strong and a distributed leadership style ensures that there is not an overdependence on the headteacher. All staff and governors are involved in development planning and self-evaluation. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the school's priorities. The quality of teaching and learning are regularly monitored, with subject leaders and senior staff involved in the process. Teachers are given clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They use their expertise to benefit the school and fulfil their statutory duties. They are aware that school improvement planning, although robust, would be even more effective with the inclusion of regular milestones and clear monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were fully met. The school is beginning to seek the views of the local community and is establishing useful links. They have been successful in achieving the first stage of the International School Award. These successes contribute to satisfactory community cohesion.

The headteacher and senior staff play a leading role in ensuring the equal opportunities are promoted at Elston Hall. The performance of different groups is regularly tracked and effective action taken to ensure that any differences are fully investigated and remedied. The school was able to provide robust evidence of improved performance for

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particular groups of pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school. They have a great deal of respect and admiration for the headteacher and all the staff. Parents report that: 'Elston Hall staff go the extra mile to make sure that everybody is included.' Regular newsletters, curriculum booklets, merit assemblies and the availability of staff are just a few examples of highly effective communications with parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Induction procedures, including home visits, are good and children settle quickly into school life. From starting points that are lower than expected for this age, children made good progress. This is due to good teaching and because staff pay close attention to children's interests. This information is then used to plan the next steps of learning and to ensure that the children are motivated. Staff work closely with parents, getting to know the children well and developing a strong partnership which is maintained through newsletters and regular meetings. The learning environment is welcoming, well resourced and organised to provide a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities. All classes have direct access to the outdoor environment and the school has plans to offer a greater range of activities in this area. Children feel safe and are beginning to understand how to keep healthy as they enjoy a healthy snack together. Good leadership and management ensure that there is close teamwork between all adults involved and planning is cohesive. Ongoing assessments and observations are used well to plan for individual children's needs. 'Learning Journey' logs are being developed to provide a record of children's progress.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the questionnaire and those met by inspectors have a very positive view of the school. The overwhelming majority regarded the school as keeping their children very safe and helping them to enjoy school. Most other responses received were also very positive, with 98% of parents indicating they were happy with their child's overall experience at Elston Hall. A very small minority of parents do not believe the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour or takes sufficient account of their concerns. The inspection team fully investigated these issues during the inspection and found behaviour to be consistently outstanding and the opportunities for parents to discuss their suggestions or concerns with the school to be appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elston Hall Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 251 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 550 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	52	109	47	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	137	59	95	41	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	98	42	123	53	9	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	115	49	109	47	6	3	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	117	50	109	47	6	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	103	44	120	52	5	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	44	118	51	8	3	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	84	36	123	53	5	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	103	44	121	52	6	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	37	126	54	14	6	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	80	34	135	58	11	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	133	57	96	41	1	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	138	59	90	39	4	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elston Hall Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV10 6NN

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school this week. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what we thought the school could do to become even better.

You go to a good school and your parents agree.

Your school has improved since the last time it was inspected.

Your behaviour is excellent and the school has a really positive relationship with your parents.

All the staff at school care about you very much, want you to do well and make sure that those of you who need extra help are well supported.

Your school council do a really good job on your behalf.

You have many opportunities to develop your interests, go on visits and join clubs.

Your headteacher and senior staff lead the school well.

These are the things we have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do to make Elston Hall even better.

Make sure you do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science. They are going to do this by making sure you fully understand what you are going to learn and help you check at the end of the lesson if you have been successful. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you all do as well as you can, particularly those of you who are more able in mathematics.

Make sure that when teachers mark your work they give you clear advice about how to improve your work further.

Make sure that plans the school has to improve further are helpful to all the staff and the governing body so they can check how well the school is doing.

I would like to wish you all the very best for your future at Elston Hall.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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