

Elworth CofE Primary School

School Lane, Elworth, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 3HU

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not use information about pupils' progress to identify precisely what actions are needed to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently strong. Teachers do not always use what they know about gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan learning that ensures that all pupils reach the heights of which they are capable.
- Pupils in key stage 1 who have special educational needs or disabilities are currently not making enough progress.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they do not hold leaders fully to account for their actions to narrow the gap with other pupils.
- The progress of current pupils in the school is not consistently good in all subjects and classes.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make rapid enough progress to narrow the gap in attainment compared to other pupils nationally and within school.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) has been successful.
- Mathematics is led and taught well across the school. As a consequence, current pupils are making good progress and deepening their understanding well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, attendance is above the national average.
- Pupils are well behaved, respectful and polite. They are proud of their school and value their education.
- Strong leadership and good teaching in the early years results in children getting off to a good start in their education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well through a vibrant and exciting curriculum.
- Pupils make a valuable contribution to the school through the wide range of responsibilities that they take on.
- Pupils achieve well in the arts. Many pupils learn how to play a musical instrument or join the talented school choir.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring leaders use all of the information available to them, including assessment information, to precisely identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - ensuring leaders use what they know about the strengths and weaknesses of the school to map out a clear and measurable plan for improvement
 - making sure that governors highlight the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and hold leaders to account for the impact of pupil premium funding.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that all teachers use what they know about gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan learning that ensures that all pupils reach their full potential
 - ensuring that all teachers have the very highest expectations of what pupils can achieve.

- Improve pupil outcomes by:
 - making sure that disadvantaged pupils make the progress required, in all subjects, to rapidly narrow the gap in achievement between them and other pupils nationally and in the school
 - ensuring that all pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring that the progress that pupils make, including the most able pupils, is consistently strong in all subjects.

- An external review of pupil premium funding should be undertaken so that this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the school has improved since the previous inspection. However, some key aspects require improvement.
- Leaders generally know the strengths and weakness of the school. However, they do not use assessments of how well pupils are achieving, in a range of subjects, to specifically identify what needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and consequently outcomes for pupils. Action plans for improvement, in most subjects, do not get to the heart of the matter, failing to provide a precise and measurable route map towards improvement.
- Leaders undertake frequent checks on the quality of teaching, including checking the work of pupils. In many classes, the clear feedback given to teachers has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching. However, in a small number of classes, teachers have not taken advice on board as quickly. As a result, the progress that pupils have made, for instance in writing, in these classes has been slower.
- There are many aspects of leadership that are positive. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are undoubtedly ambitious for the pupils of the school. They care passionately about the education that they provide and want only the very best for each and every pupil.
- Leaders have demonstrated their capacity for further improvements. Robust actions taken to address a fall in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening test, for example, have resulted in improved teaching and learning and consequently pupils' achievement.
- Middle leadership has improved since the previous inspection. Changes, introduced by the mathematics subject leader, to the way the mathematics curriculum is taught, for instance, have been successful in raising standards. Pupils of all abilities are now developing their understanding of mathematical concepts to a greater depth.
- The fundamental British values of respect and tolerance are very well woven throughout a rich and vibrant curriculum. In Year 5, for instance, pupils have learned about the life and religious belief of the athlete Mo Farah. As a result, they are able to articulate that success can be achieved by everyone, no matter what their background or their faith.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is also very well promoted at the school. The arts, in particular, are given a very high profile. Many pupils learn an instrument and join the school orchestra or sing in the choir. Opportunities for pupils to develop as artists and understand art are strong. In one class, for example, pupils used art as a medium to convey the attributes of Allah. The school link with an orphanage in Rwanda has contributed strongly to pupils' very good understanding of different cultures.
- The leadership of information technology across the school is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in relation to e-safety. Pupils display a very strong knowledge of this aspect of keeping safe. Furthermore, the provision of workshops for parents has enhanced understanding of this topic at home.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding on a variety of initiatives, including classroom support and learning mentor time. However, the impact on educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is variable. In some classes, pupils make progress that is similar to that of their peers, while in others not enough pupils make the progress that is expected of them.
- Senior leaders ensure that sport funding is used effectively. A wide range of after-school sports clubs are offered to pupils, including football and table tennis. Leaders state that strong links have been established with external sports clubs, such as Elworth Cricket Club, and pupils often go on to join these, increasing participation in competitive sports. Teachers with specialist skills in sports, such as gymnastics and swimming, work closely with their colleagues to share good practice and consequently enhance the teaching of physical education across the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors mirror the passion and desire of the headteacher to do the best for the pupils of the school. They have taken the opportunity, since the previous inspection, to restructure governance and allocate their roles more closely to their skills.
 - Where close links with subject leaders are well developed, such as in the early years, and the information provided is detailed and relevant, governors hold leaders to account for their actions. Governors also use the information provided to them to contribute to the writing of the school improvement plan.

- Governors have a good understanding of how extra funding is used. However, their understanding of the impact of pupil premium funding on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is not strong. As a result, they are not able to fully hold senior leaders to account for its effectiveness on narrowing the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders and governors put keeping pupils safe at the forefront of everything that they do. Staff at the school have undertaken a wide range of training in areas such as preventing radicalisation, female genital mutilation and domestic violence, ensuring that they have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe.
- Junior safety officers play an important role in helping their peers develop a good understanding of how to keep safe. They have led a range of assemblies this year on topics such as 'stranger danger' and keeping safe when online.
- Many parents and pupils who spoke to inspectors shared their view that the headteacher and the leader of information technology have taken very effective steps to ensure that pupils are kept safe when using devices that are connected to the internet. Inspectors agree that this is a strength of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently strong across the school. Teachers do not always use what they know about gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding to plan learning that ensures that all pupils, including the most able, reach the heights they are capable of. Some teachers do not set their sights high enough, taking too long to address weaknesses in pupils' work so that improvement for some pupils is not as rapid as it should be.
- In a small number of classes, pupils' learning in writing lessons falters because teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong as it needs to be.
- These weaknesses are not endemic across all classrooms. Where teachers use assessment effectively, work is well matched to the abilities of the pupils. This is particularly true in mathematics where many teachers plan activities that stretch all groups of pupils, including those who grasp concepts quickly. In a key stage 2 lesson, for instance, pupils developed their reasoning skills at the same time as gaining a solid understanding of ratio. This was because their teacher planned activities that enabled pupils of different abilities to deepen their understanding while still working on the same topic.
- The very best teaching in the school grabs pupils' attention and heightens their sense of curiosity. In one lesson, for example, pupils were inspired to produce tension-filled writing when their teacher used a mix of film and text to provoke deeper thinking and questioning.
- In many lessons, teachers keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing. They spend time to ensure that those who are struggling to understand new ideas are well supported while also adding further challenge to those pupils who are more confident. Most teachers recognise when further reinforcement of new learning is required, grasping opportunities to pause lessons and share high-quality work to support the learning of other pupils.
- Some teachers use marking in books to good effect, supporting pupils to understand what it is that they need to do to get better.
- In some classes, information technology is used well by teachers and pupils to enhance learning. Inspectors witnessed this to good effect in one class when pupils used an application on handheld digital devices to produce a range of vlogs (blogs in video form). This included one on 'how to keep your school bully proof'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are proud of Elworth and say that they enjoy coming to school.
- Those pupils who spoke to inspectors, or replied to the online Ofsted survey, state that they feel safe in school. They trust adults in the school to provide them with help when it is needed. Pupils speak highly of leaders in the school, who they say deal quickly and sensitively with issues such as bullying and problems with social media.

- Pupils cherish the wide variety of meaningful responsibilities that they take on across the school. Junior safety officers lead assemblies on many aspects of how to keep safe. Prefects and play leaders play a key role in helping their peers resolve any disagreements that arise during break and lunchtime.
- The relatively recent introduction of an anti-bullying programme has ensured that pupils have a very good understanding of the different kinds of bullying. Pupils now see it as their responsibility to reduce incidents of bullying and are not prepared to be bystanders. Pupils say that bullying is a rare occurrence in school but when it does happen, teachers act swiftly to resolve the issue. Leaders and teachers promote clear messages about bullying and its impact.
- Pupils make a valuable contribution to their local and wider community. They are proud of their efforts to raise money for an orphanage in Rwanda that has close links with the school. Events organised by the school council, such as a cake sale and a superhero day, have raised £2,000.
- The school promotes healthy lifestyles well. Pupils are able to attend a broad range of extra-curricular sporting clubs. Furthermore, pupils grow their own produce in the large school polytunnel. They develop their entrepreneurial skills well by selling items such as strawberries to visitors and staff.
- The school encourages pupils to broaden their personal horizons effectively. Thirty-nine challenges that are undertaken throughout the year inspire pupils to become adventurers, problem solvers, communicators, explorers, friends and creators through challenges such as 'climb a tree' or 'play with someone from a different year group'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn and in most lessons listen attentively to their teacher. However, in some classes, some pupils can become distracted and chatter, particularly when teaching does not enthuse them.
- Pupils' behaviour outside of the classroom is also generally good. They play sensibly on the playground and increasingly help each other to resolve their own differences. Older pupils who spoke to inspectors say that behaviour has improved significantly this year. However, for a very small proportion of pupils, unkind name-calling is seen as an issue. There have been no recorded racist incidents this year in the school.
- Pupils welcome visitors to their school warmly. Their conversations with inspectors, throughout the inspection, typify their good manners and respect for adults.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and value their education. As a result overall attendance is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are absent often (persistent absence) from school has grown over the past two years. However, leaders and the learning mentor take a range of robust actions to support pupils and families to improve their attendance where it is a concern.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' books and data provided by the school show that there is significant variation in the progress that pupils make and the standards that they achieve in different subjects and in different classes. This is because in some classes teachers set their sights too low and are not using assessment information precisely to move learning forward rapidly.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Data presented to inspectors shows that the progress that current pupils make varies between subjects and classes. While most pupils from this group make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by the time they leave the school this is not enough to narrow the gap between them and other pupils. The overall gap in attainment, compared to that of other pupils nationally and other pupils in school, has grown for the past two years.
- Likewise, the progress that pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make is inconsistent. Discussions with leaders and evidence from school data shows that pupils in key stage 2 make progress that is at least in line with that of their peers. However, in key stage 1, most pupils from this group do not make progress that is in line with their ability. This is partly because targets that are set in their education plans are not clear.
- Strong leadership and teaching in mathematics means that outcomes for all groups of pupils, including the most able, in this subject are relatively strong. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills across mathematical topics. Books show that pupils are fluent mathematicians and have a firm grasp of basic skills.

- While the achievement of the most able pupils is relatively strong in mathematics, the progress that this group of pupils make in other subjects and in different classes is variable because of the inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- In 2015 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check fell sharply to below the national average. However, leaders' decisive actions to revamp how phonics is taught has paid dividends. Current pupils are now making good progress and higher proportions of pupils are on track to reach the standards expected of them in 2016.
- The progress that pupils make in reading, by the time they leave the school, has remained broadly in line with the national average for the past three years. Those pupils who read to inspectors did so, in the main, with fluency, using their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. Pupils are able to explain their book choices and can predict what they think will happen next.
- In some classes, pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. They are able to use a sophisticated range of vocabulary and punctuation effectively in different genres. However, progress in some classes falters when teachers do not use assessment to precisely plan learning to support pupils to improve and reach the standards expected for their age.
- Pupils' achievement in other subjects such as music, computing and geography is good. Well-planned lessons enthuse pupils and help them to deepen their understanding. Pupils developed their understanding of rivers and streams, for example, when they visited Macclesfield Forest to measure the speed and depth of a stream.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is a strength of the school. Strong leadership and effective teaching means that children make a good start to their school life. From starting points that are generally typical for their age, children progress well in all areas, so that when they leave the Reception class they are well prepared for the curriculum in key stage 1. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was slightly above the national average.
- Class teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities that sustain children's interest, enthusing them to learn and ensuring that they maintain good levels of concentration. Children developed their understanding of symmetry well, for instance, while making colourful butterfly designs.
- Expectations of behaviour are high and clearly communicated. Well-established routines serve to ensure that children are attentive and follow adults' instructions. As a result, little learning time is wasted. At the start of the day, for example, children were observed arriving promptly and calmly before answering the register politely in French.
- The early years leader is passionate about the learning and development of the youngest children in the school. She has succeeded in developing a rich and vibrant environment that supports learning well. Through the use of accurate assessment, she has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of her department and uses this information to improve teaching and learning. Good links with a nominated governor have been established and built on, ensuring that she is held to account for her actions.
- Those parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the early years provision. They particularly value the excellent transition arrangements into the school. Teachers visit feeder nurseries and undertake home visits to ensure that they have a good understanding of children's starting points as they enter the Reception class.
- Adults diligently supervise children to ensure that they are safe. Positive relationships between adults and children have been carefully nurtured. As a result, children feel confident to challenge themselves without fear of failure.

School details

Unique reference number	111256
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10012113

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edwin Lea
Headteacher	Neil Garrett
Telephone number	01270 685 170
Website	www.elworthce.cheshire.sch.uk
Email address	head@elworthce.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 April 2014

Information about this school

- Elworth CofE Primary School is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average (pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is not, or believed not to be, their first language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities is below the national average.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school website meets statutory requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in each class of the school.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, representatives of the governing body and one representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, assessment information and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime, lunch and before and after school. They also met formally with two small groups of pupils to chat about their learning and behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors heard a number of children read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- A range of pupils' books were checked with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the day. Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took note of the 14 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for school staff and the 17 responses they received to the inspection questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Martin Bell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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