

Elsley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101519
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	376581
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Emma Aylesbury

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Rigali
Headteacher	Nicola Arundell
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 May 2009
School address	Elsley Primary School Tokyngton Avenue Wembley HA9 6HT
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Emma Aylesbury

Additional inspector

Clementina Ogunsanwo

Additional inspector

Peter Stumpf

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, amounting to 10 hours and 10 minutes in total, observing 16 teachers, with four being accompanied by a member of the senior management team.

Meetings were held with the headteacher, a member of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its monitoring, assessment and attendance records, improvement plans, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, and safeguarding documents. In addition, they analysed questionnaires completed by 282 parents and carers, 99 pupils and 26 staff.

Information about the school

Elsley Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of minority ethnic backgrounds and the largest group are of Indian heritage. Over three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, these being mainly moderate and specific learning difficulties. The school has been above government floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, for the last three years.

The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark and the Healthy Schools award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which has improved steadily in the last three years. Pupils, parents and carers are extremely positive and acknowledge the improvements in leadership and teaching in recent years.
- Results in national tests are broadly average and pupils make good progress from their low starting points.
- Teaching is typically good and the school provides well-structured individual support in lessons for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teaching enthuses pupils to want to learn more and engages them in how this learning will relate to their present and future lives. However, in some lessons, teachers do not explain to pupils how they can improve their work, particularly the more able.
- The school works effectively with external partners and agencies such as the educational welfare officer and the Child and Adult Mental Health Service.
- Behaviour is good and pupils demonstrate that they are keen and excited to engage with their learning and take on responsibilities throughout the school, such as playground friends, register monitors and pupil leaders. Pupils work well together and enjoy good relationships with adults. Pupils say that they feel safe and that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly.
- Pupils get on well together whatever their backgrounds. For example, they designed class charters based on the UNICEF 'rights-respecting school' agenda. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are good. Through accurate self-evaluation staff know the school's strengths and areas for development. They have been successful in improving pupils' academic performance.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start, especially in communication and social development. However, the outside learning space is not utilised to its full potential to extend learning and make it more interesting.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching in lessons to raise attainment, particularly for the most able, by:
 - extending the challenge for the higher-ability pupils
 - improving the consistency of marking to guide pupils in their next steps in learning.
- Sharpen the practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage by improving the outdoor area to enhance free flow in order to promote a more vibrant learning environment.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start school mostly with skill levels that are below those expected for their age, particularly in the areas of speaking, listening and communication. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress, particularly in the areas of reading and personal development. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress; for example, in Reception they were observed confidently matching sounds and letters with words beginning with 'z'. They were able to trace the letter shape in the air with their finger and match the correct sound.

The quality of pupils' learning and progress is good. Pupils are keen to learn and respond very well to the teachers. Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are extremely positive. Pupils work diligently and display good attitudes to learning. This was seen in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, for example, where pupils were able to practice their tens and units successfully. Here, they randomly rolled the dice, then selected the number showing and worked out how many multiples of tens and units there were. Through effective learning strategies pupils demonstrated their good understanding with well-thought-out answers.

At the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment, representing good achievement from their starting points. The school's own data for 2012 shows a similar picture. Pupils make particularly good progress in their reading; attainment is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and often above average by the time they leave the school. Those pupils who read to inspectors used effective strategies to sound any unfamiliar words and were keen and motivated readers. Progress is further accelerated in reading through one-to-one guidance and small group work.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as their peers, as do those who are new to learning English, as they receive effective guidance such as group support and one-to-one tuition. As a result, gaps in performance are narrowing quickly compared to those nationally. No groups are underachieving and some make rapid progress. Many parents and carers commented about the good progress their children make, and inspection evidence supports these

views.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. Generally, teachers deepen pupils' understanding well and give pupils opportunities to extend their learning by attempting more difficult tasks. For example, this was evident for those observed in Year 5, where teaching was engaging, tasks were well planned and pupils were motivated to do their very best. This ensured that all pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, were fully involved with the lesson.

Staff have established strong and caring relationships with their pupils and this has been enhanced through the use of one-to-one support and individual intervention. The positive responses of parents and carers to the questionnaire reflect this. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their team planning ensures that the lessons are well matched to pupils' needs. However, in a few lessons, work set for the most able is not always sufficiently challenging in order for them to attain the higher levels. Although marking is regular, it is not always sufficiently detailed to 'signpost' the next steps.

Teachers' expectations are high and they set challenging targets which the majority of pupils know and understand. They also use every opportunity to develop pupils' literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. In a Year 3 humanities lesson, for example, pupils presented their research findings about the Romans, which provided a good opportunity for them to demonstrate their literacy skills by speaking to the whole class. As a result of effective planning, pupils were thoroughly engaged in the activity and made good progress. Similarly, in a science lesson, Year 1 pupils thoroughly enjoyed explaining the differences between mammals and reptiles and designed a table with pictures about the differences between these. This project from the 'connected curriculum' contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and enables them to deepen their understanding of the different social and cultural environments that humans and animals jointly inhabit. The support of teaching assistants allows disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who are new to learning English to access their learning fully.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The majority of pupils say that they feel very safe and cared for in school and that adults are approachable if they have any concerns. The well-developed home–school liaison between staff and families encourages good communication. One parent commented, reflecting the views of many, 'The relationship between home and school is very good, as they always keep me informed straight away if there is a problem or concern.' Staff work effectively with families, especially those who are

newly arrived in the country.

Typically, pupils' behaviour is good and fosters positive attitudes to learning. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives. For example, pupil leaders ensure that there is water available and they have a good understanding of risks such as cyber-bullying, both in and out of school. They say they understand how to deal with these risks and to inform an adult if there is a problem. As a result of the school's effective personal and social education provision, pupils display good attitudes to learning and attendance is above average. There have been no recorded instances of bullying. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and that all problems are swiftly dealt with. Senior leaders are confident that behaviour has improved and is consistently good. The scarcity of bullying is the result of the personal and social education programme, which strongly promotes respect for everyone. The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They share senior leaders' positive views of behaviour and note how effectively the rare elements of bullying are dealt with.

Leadership and management

All leaders and managers have successfully focused on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Consequently, standards of attainment and progress have improved and much has been done to strengthen the quality of teaching. For example, through well-considered training programmes, teachers are more skilful in developing question and answer sessions in lessons. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and knows what has to be done to improve. Nevertheless, the outside learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not currently allow for sufficient free flow movement between the activities in order to promote children's independence and learning through experience. This has been identified by school leaders as an area for development in the school's improvement priorities.

The curriculum is good. The 'connected curriculum' focuses on developing skills from all subjects, for example, humanities and information and communication and technology, through literacy and numeracy. These provide good opportunities for pupils to learn how science and design and technology complement each other well, for example, through the project on 'Space'. All contribute positively to developing pupils' good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, this has enabled pupils to focus on their behaviour for learning by helping them to adopt positive attitudes. As one parent commented, 'Every effort is always made to ensure my child is achieving and given advice on methods of encouragement.'

Members of the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and fulfil their statutory duties. As a result, this enables them to challenge and hold the school to account well. The school has good procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet all government guidelines and include well-planned approaches to the management of pupils' safety, risk assessment and the recruitment of staff.

The school works tirelessly to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The groups in school make progress of which they are capable because of the actions taken by leaders. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who previously displayed challenging behaviour now mostly enjoy their learning and make good progress. There are effective partnerships with external agencies to promote pupils' good achievement. Pupils are well prepared for a life in the United Kingdom and a global society because of the good provision made through leaders' good understanding of their own community and the different faiths, ethnic groups and cultures within it. The school's international links are developing and promote a solid awareness of global issues, for example, through fundraising for 'Red Nose Day' and the 'Help Somalia Foundation'.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved attendance and strengthened teaching, assessment and moderation procedures. These successful actions demonstrate good capacity to make further improvements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elsley Primary School, Wembley HA9 6HT

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with you, seeing how you were getting on and considering whether we could suggest anything to make things better. We really valued the discussions we had with you and were extremely pleased to see you getting on with each other. Your school is good and your attitudes and behaviour are good. You and your parents and carers explained to us that the school keeps you safe and that it is a harmonious place. You make good progress in your lessons because of the good planning and support you receive from all staff to help you learn. All of your teachers want to help you to succeed and give you the best education possible. I have asked them to:

- accelerate your progress even further by helping you to improve your work to show you how to move on to the next level so you can do your very best, especially the more able among you
- develop the outside learning space in Early Years Foundation Stage to make your learning even more interesting.

You too can play your part in improving the school by continuing to try your best at everything you do, by attending regularly, behaving well and achieving your targets. Once again, it was very good to meet you all and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Emma Aylesbury
Lead inspector

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