

Elson Junior School

Exmouth Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 4EX

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Many pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged, have not reached the standards of which they are capable by the end of key stage 2.
- Until recently, leaders have not given sufficient attention to ensuring that teaching covers all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth. This has limited some pupils' interest and success.
- Over time, the quality of teaching has been highly variable and had an impact on pupils' progress. Teaching has not reliably met pupils' needs or deepened their understanding.
- Governors have not maintained thorough and effective oversight of leaders' work and its impact, including on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- Some pupils are not respectful or considerate towards others, and do not always adhere to the school's behaviour policy. This is a matter of concern for some parents and carers.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up in reading receive variable assistance.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve or for the quality of pupils' work.
- Rates of persistent absence are above those seen nationally, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides clear vision and direction. Leaders' precise checks on teaching now provide a secure analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are taking effective action to bring about improvement.
- Provision for pupils with SEND is strong. This group of pupils is increasingly getting the effective support needed.
- Current teaching ensures that gaps in pupils' learning are accurately identified. Most pupils who need to catch up now receive targeted and effective support.
- Most pupils attend well and show a good understanding of the school's values. They are proud of their many sporting achievements and enjoy the responsibilities they are given.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils so that higher proportions reach the expected and higher standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, including governance, by:
 - improving governors' checks on the school's performance, including safeguarding procedures and provision for disadvantaged pupils
 - strengthening governors' challenge and support for leaders to promote the school's continuous improvement
 - ensuring that staff consistently apply the behaviour policy, so that learning is not interrupted
 - developing the curriculum further so that it engages all pupils and deepens their learning in all subjects
 - ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently effective, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of pupils, including the most able
 - it provides effective support for disadvantaged pupils and those who need help with reading
 - it fully engages all pupils and inspires them to take a pride in their work
 - pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed and deepened in all subjects.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher, along with senior leaders, demonstrates a firm and active commitment that the pupils of Elson Junior School have the best possible school experience. Together, leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are successfully implementing effective plans to bring about improvement. However, they recognise that further work is needed to achieve their vision.
- Recent changes to the structure of the leadership team have increased the rate of improvement. In a short space of time, new leaders have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. For example, they have put in place effective systems to identify gaps in pupils' learning and track progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders hold teachers firmly to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Carefully considered and targeted professional development is helping teachers improve their practice and develop their subject knowledge. For instance, teachers have received training on how to use resources effectively to support the teaching of mathematics. Pupils' work in their books confirms that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are rising. However, this improvement is not yet consistent across the school.
- Leaders' work to manage the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils shows some impact. The effective work of the special educational needs coordinator and individual learning support assistants is making a valuable contribution to this improvement. Nevertheless, leaders recognise the continuing concerns of some parents that more needs to be done to secure a consistent and successful approach.
- The curriculum motivates pupils and is broad and balanced. However, some subjects do not successfully develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in depth. Work in pupils' books shows limited opportunities for pupils to develop their scientific enquiry or their deeper understanding in geography. Leaders have helpfully shared their work, to date, with parents at curriculum evenings and have relevant plans to develop the curriculum further.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the improvements needed to strengthen the progress of disadvantaged pupils. For example, some pupils attend an outdoor learning group or young carers group, both being designed to develop confidence and build self-esteem. Building on the already strong support for the well-being of this group of pupils, sensible plans are now being enacted to further strengthen their learning. Nevertheless, these developments are at an early stage.
- Additional sports funding is used well. The quality of teaching in sport is a strength of the school and is led with enthusiasm and passion. As a result, pupils participate in numerous sporting activities and understand how exercise can help them lead healthier lives. Pupils participate in a wide range of clubs and local sporting competitions and are rightly proud of their many sporting achievements.
- Effective leadership is securing rapid improvement in the provision made for pupils with

SEND. Leaders' clear and measurable plans support increasingly tailored additional support so that the progress of this group of pupils is accelerating noticeably. Leaders are not complacent and are rightly ambitious to embed and extend this early success.

- Leaders provide pupils with interesting experiences that support their wider learning. Pupils say that they enjoy having visitors come into school, residential trips and educational visits to extend and deepen their learning. Pupils are greatly looking forward to their impending trip to The Living Rainforest.

Governance of the school

- An experienced new chair of governors was appointed in the summer term. A number of new governors have joined the governing body recently. Governors are supportive of the school and committed to its improvement. They demonstrate good intentions and actively seek to develop and deepen their knowledge of the school and governance, to inform their work. They have attended training courses to gain a better understanding of the school's performance information and to keep abreast of their statutory duties.
- Governors have the necessary skills for their roles but do not yet have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, their challenge and support for leaders lacks a sharp focus. As yet, they have not challenged in relation to the school's safeguarding arrangements nor the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress and well-being of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's site is kept secure and appropriate systems are in place to check, welcome and induct visitors. Leaders and staff have a deep knowledge of pupils' specific needs and demonstrate high levels of care for pupils' well-being.
- Effective systems are in place for recording safeguarding concerns and tracking referrals made to the local authority. Leaders swiftly follow up any issues raised by staff. They are relentless in ensuring that the right support is provided for vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Leaders ensure that the staff team is properly trained in all areas of safeguarding. For example, staff have a good understanding of the government's latest guidance and have received appropriate induction to make sure that they understand their statutory responsibilities.
- All pupils spoken to say that they feel safe and that staff look after them well. They can confidently explain how to keep themselves safe when online. However, some pupils spoken to and some who responded to the pupil survey said that, sometimes, the behaviour of a few pupils causes them concern and disrupts their learning. The comments of some parents and staff to inspectors reflected the same concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some teaching engages pupils well so they work hard and make progress. However, at times, where teaching is less well planned or lacks sufficient depth, pupils lose interest in their learning.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and for the quality of pupils' work are not consistently high. As an example of this, teachers do not routinely encourage pupils to take pride in the presentation of their work or pay attention to their handwriting. At times, pupils do not finish the work set for them and this goes unchallenged by teachers. As a result, pupils do not consistently achieve what they are capable of.
- Leaders have implemented a robust assessment system and made impressive improvements to systems for checking how well each pupil is doing. As a result, reliable information about pupils' attainment and skills is now provided. However, teachers do not use this well when planning tasks to meet the different needs of pupils, including the disadvantaged and most able.
- Where provision is most effective, teachers use well-devised questioning to deepen pupils' thinking. They use high-quality texts to successfully develop pupils' language and comprehension skills. Inspectors observed pupils fully engaged in applying their knowledge and inference skills when reading a text about the Ancient Greeks.
- Teachers make interesting links between subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils learned about the functions of the human heart in science and then made intricate hearts out of clay as part of their art work. However, engaging approaches of this kind are not consistent practice across the school.
- Pupils in all year groups display a love of reading. They enjoy reading books from the well-stocked library and demonstrate impressive comprehension skills. Teachers match closely the home-reading books to pupils' reading ability. However, pupils who start the school with weak reading skills do not receive effective support to help them become confident readers.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are given appropriate challenge and guidance in their learning. Leaders model expectations and support teachers well to ensure that this group of pupils receives the help needed. One pupil commented that he enjoys school and no longer feels lonely as he is now able to access his learning as part of the class.
- Many of the learning support staff provide effective support both to individual pupils and to groups of pupils in class. Where they are deployed effectively by teachers, these adults actively seek opportunities to extend pupils' learning and provide the right level of support and encouragement. However, where teaching is less well planned, the work of additional adults is less effective.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Teachers expect too little of pupils and, as a result, some pupils do not consistently apply themselves well to tasks so their work remains incomplete. In some cases, pupils do not routinely display resilience or determination towards their learning and need frequent reminders from adults to keep on track.
- Leaders ensure that the school's values of compassion, adaptability, aspiration and integrity are modelled well and reinforced frequently. These are regularly explored through weekly assemblies. As a result, pupils understand these values deeply and the majority of pupils model them with pride.
- The school's programme of personal, social, health and economic education contributes well to most pupils' personal development. The majority of pupils respect each other's beliefs and opinions. Pupils told inspectors with great assurance, 'We are all human and we don't tolerate racism in this school.' Pupils who join the school at different points in the year confirm that they are made to feel welcome and accepted.
- A small amount of unkind behaviour was seen between pupils during the inspection. Pupils agree that, occasionally, this does take place. However, staff are effective at sorting out problems. Inspectors observed this happening. Nevertheless, some parents are not confident that issues are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils relish the opportunities they have to contribute responsibly to the life of the school. For instance, pupils aspire to be head boy or head girl, team captains or eco-councillors. They enjoy showing visitors around the school and frequently lead whole-school assemblies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons. Most pupils are keen to learn and are respectful towards their teachers. Where teaching is strong, pupils display highly respectful and thoughtful behaviour. However, pupils can quickly come off task, and a few seek to distract others from their learning.
- Occasionally, pupils display overly boisterous behaviour on the playground. Although this is dealt with quickly by staff, it unsettles other pupils.
- The new behaviour policy is showing some positive impact. Pupils understand that there are consequences for unacceptable actions as well as rewards when they behave well. For example, pupils are keen to collect 'tokens' for their house teams for modelling the school's values. Leaders recognise the need to build further on this initial success to further promote and reward positive behaviour.
- Overall attendance is in line with the national average. Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils closely, and are alert to any patterns of absence and the reasons behind them. However, the persistent absence of some pupils, particularly those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, has risen compared to the same period last year, and is

above the national figure. Leaders recognise the need to address this with greater urgency to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Provisional information indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 remained below national averages in 2018.
- Current pupils in Year 6 are making strong progress and pupils' progress in other year groups is showing improvement. However, due to the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, good progress is not yet well established across the school.
- Pupils with SEND are making stronger progress because their needs are identified with increased accuracy and appropriate provision is being made. These pupils are now catching up as a result of more sharply focused support.
- The 2018 end of key stage 2 outcomes show that a lower proportion of pupils achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than seen nationally. While work in current pupils' books shows that the most able are now making stronger progress, leaders recognise that more work is necessary to ensure that this group makes stronger progress and deepens their understanding across the curriculum.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium make less progress than their peers and other pupils nationally. Leaders are beginning to ensure that this group receives effective support. However, this work in the early stages of development and is not yet showing an impact on pupils' reported outcomes.
- Leaders have recently developed a rigorous system for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do. This means that they are confident that they have accurate starting points for each Year 3 pupil and can track progress as they move through the school. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of this system. The school's own performance information shows this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the benefits of the system have yet to be firmly established.
- Most pupils develop a love of reading and demonstrate their growing confidence in tackling vocabulary they have not previously encountered. In addition, their comprehension skills are developed well. However, pupils who arrive at the school with a lower than typical starting point in reading do not reliably receive the support they need to help them catch up. As a result, the reading outcomes of this group remain too low.

School details

Unique reference number	116162
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10046391

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Tyler
Headteacher	Penny Shaw
Telephone number	02392 583754
Website	www.elsonjunior.co.uk
Email address	adminoffice@elson-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2015

Information about this school

- Elson Junior School is larger than the average-sized junior school. It has three classes in each year group.
- The headteacher joined the school in the 2017 spring term. Prior to her arrival, acting leadership had been in place for approximately two years.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND and those supported with an education, health and care plan are above the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class. They also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms and observed groups of pupils learning. All observations were carried out with school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of senior and middle leaders during the inspection.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and held two meetings with a representative from the local authority.
- Together with senior leaders, inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and considered 52 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 49 free-text comments.
- To gain the views of pupils, inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and on the playground at breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors met more formally with a group of pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, and heard them read. Inspectors also considered 45 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a range of staff during the inspection. They also considered 46 responses to the confidential online staff questionnaire.
- Documentation and policies, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans and responses to the school's own questionnaires, were reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, together with the recruitment checks made before new staff are appointed.

Inspection team

Frances Nation, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Varnom	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Macdonald	Ofsted Inspector

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