

Elm Grove First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125863
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381143
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father John Eldridge
Headteacher	Pauline Warren
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 January 2007
School address	Elm Grove Worthing BN11 5LQ
Telephone number	01903 249387
Fax number	01903 246674
Email address	office@elmgrove.w-sussex.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 15 lessons and nine teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, questionnaires from 168 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school's strategies for assessment in improving pupils' progress, especially that of the more able in writing.
- Pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance their cultural development.
- The school's progress in achieving its aim of enhancing the curriculum to raise pupils' overall achievement.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are enabling continuity and development.

Information about the school

Elm Grove is an average sized school, which has been oversubscribed at entry for some years now, accepting pupils from the neighbouring wards. The school takes children from over 20 different pre-school settings as well as from childminders.

A broadly average number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs in the school. These needs include learning, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Elm Grove is an outstanding school. This success is due in particular to highly effective management and the outstanding quality of pastoral care. The headteacher, senior staff and governors know the school's strengths and what needs to be refined further very well. Their rigorous monitoring and clear self-evaluation, and a track record of employing initiatives to enthuse pupils and treat them all as individuals, have also contributed to pupils' excellent progress. These factors, and the many developments since the last inspection, illustrate the school's excellent capacity for continuing its improvement. One parent, reflecting the very positive views expressed by the vast majority of parents and carers, wrote, 'Throughout my child's three and a half years at Elm Grove we have been very pleased with his progress. He always goes into school happy and has been inspired by the many projects they have undertaken. I would recommend Elm Grove wholeheartedly and without reservation.'

Pupils' wider educational outcomes are excellent which helps their all-round achievement, both academic and personal. Very effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make excellent progress immediately in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This outstanding start is built upon consistently so that standards at the end of Year 2 have been well above average, and often high, for the last five years. As the school recognised, the standards reached in writing were slightly below those in other disciplines, particularly for the more able pupils. The school has made concerted efforts to remedy this small difference in standards. Inspection evidence shows that it has been very successful.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and acquire a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices and make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider community. Attendance is high, as pupils enjoy all their time at school. Pupils' excellent behaviour and their keen appetite for teamwork, together with their well-above average skills in reading, writing and mathematics, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning.

Although there are minor variations, the overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Lessons are planned to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. Planning is thorough and based on the use of careful assessments. The school has identified the need to share the outstanding practice of all of the teachers in order to raise the overall quality consistently to that of the very best. All staff work hard to create attractive classrooms with imaginative displays, and provide a very positive learning environment. A huge range of additional activities, visits and visitors enhances the

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outstanding curriculum.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent and pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times. The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works effectively with many organisations and local businesses. The contribution of the parent school association is exceptional, and much appreciated by all concerned. The school's audit of community cohesion, undertaken by governors and staff, is underpinned by a careful analysis of the school's context. Links with schools abroad have begun to be established and pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are also being developed very well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the school's current monitoring systems to raise the quality of each lesson to that of the best by extending opportunities for staff to observe and share the outstanding practice in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and understanding that are below those expected for their age. Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of pupils make excellent overall progress, regardless of their background or ability, and enjoy their learning at this school. Discussions with the Years 2 and 3 pupils showed that they become independent and highly motivated learners. By ensuring good-quality help from very well-qualified teaching assistants wherever it is needed, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most vulnerable pupils, make excellent progress.

Not only are standards in English and mathematics at high levels for their age by the time they leave the school, but pupils also do very well in other subjects. For example, the singing heard in the two assemblies observed was very impressive. Outstanding displays show the progress and strength of pupils' achievements in art and design.

In all lessons, pupils demonstrate tremendous levels of interest and achievement in their learning. This was true of pupils in a good science lesson seen on simple circuits in Year 2 and when Year 3 pupils engaged in sophisticated discussions after using a variety of pictorial evidence to enhance their artwork. The presentation and content of their books and finished artwork were as outstanding as the pupils' interest and responses would indicate. The fact that every pupil was using an individual laptop computer was a very good indication of how the school supports their outstanding skills in information and communication technology.

The pupils' keenness to succeed at school and in later life was demonstrated

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admirably in a reward assembly when a cake was made based on their responses. The way that all pupils and staff joined in the session was particularly impressive. Such experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' excellent standards in speaking and listening, their high self-esteem and their very impressive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils consistently showed high standards of behaviour and social skills. Pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe is very impressive. They are given an excellent grounding in good citizenship and in contributing to the community, for example through the school and eco councils, and being play leaders or reading buddies. These efforts, and the healthy schools initiative, have ensured that pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and working together.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Observations of teaching confirmed that pupils make excellent progress regardless of their background or ability because of the very effective approach adopted by teachers. In all lessons, pupils are well motivated by the ideas and resources presented through a well-thought-out curriculum and are keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in an outstanding mathematics lesson in the Year 1 class where pupils delighted in working on their 'passion fruit flower problems' and finding ways of using different resources to help their calculations. The pupils' enjoyment and thoughtful consideration of each other's opinions and outstanding attempts to record their ideas were typical and impressive.

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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Staff’s high expectations of pupils’ progress are reflected in the challenging targets set for individuals and year groups. This use of the individual targets is very good and teachers always take the chance to reinforce, during lessons or through their marking, what the pupils need to learn next when the opportunity arises. In the most effective lessons, the careful planning is implemented with enthusiasm and care and these targets are used very effectively. This was clear in a Year 2 mathematics lesson where the teacher very carefully prompted pupils to consider their choices when making a rectangular shape of a given size, as a design for a table for their bears to sit at. The pupils were enthusiastic and spoke confidently at the front of the class. The teacher’s good use of praise and attention to detail was a reflection of the way in which in the best lessons teachers take all learning opportunities that arise. Throughout they were prompted to share ‘what is good?’ and ‘what could be better?’

Very positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is excellent and caring. The impact of the school’s outstanding support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils’ excellent standards of behaviour and in their exceptionally strong spiritual, moral and social development. The range of opportunities, through the modified curriculum and through the support given to different groups, is outstanding. The parents acknowledge that the home-school agreement, which says the school will ‘make learning fun, active and challenging and foster the values of independence, creativity and collaboration’, is fully achieved. As one of them wrote, ‘The hard work and creativity of the staff make school an exciting place to be. There is always something interesting going on, from “flying down to South Africa” for the World Cup to attending a “Royal Wedding” in the church. I often wonder what they will come up with next!’

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding drive and ambition from the senior leaders sustains the school’s excellent capacity to improve and ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and everyone, including the administrative team and caretaking staff, are considerable assets to the school. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and work outstandingly well together. As one staff member said, reflecting the views of all, ‘The school has a very supportive team; we work closely together, often sharing roles and responsibilities. I feel I am valued as a member of staff and am proud to be working in this school.’

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The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to become even better. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school’s work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner. Governors’ outstanding work to secure the plans for significant building development in the future has been detailed and diligent. The opinions of parents and carers are very carefully noted and acted upon. The headteacher has expressed genuine concern even though there were a very small number of issues raised by the inspection questionnaire returns. It is her, and the governors’, intent at all times to ensure all pupils and parents are pleased with what the school is offering.

Excellent attention is paid by staff to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. There are very thorough procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. Pupils’ safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The staff are most effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all pupils across all aspects of the school’s work. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is excellent. A plan and clear actions are in place to promote pupils’ understanding from a local and global perspective. The school is implementing its plans for greater national links very well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes. The

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huge level of commitment and care shown by the teachers and all the staff is evident in the way that all children settle quickly into the school and immediately begin to learn. The many induction meetings enable the staff, children and their families to get to know each other and help make sure that starting school is a happy event. These visits lead to the full involvement of the local community which continues right through the school. As one parent said, 'The school welcomed my child's transition well. Flexibility on building up to full-time hours was excellent and managed with parents' input valued.'

Staff know the children very well and they ensure that the least able and most vulnerable progress well. All children are given a real sense of determining their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. The way that children decide on what they want to do, get out the required equipment and get on with their task is excellent. The fact that they could say why they had made their choices was inspiring.

Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in communication, language and literacy, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. At all times, all staff engage and stimulate the children's interests. The enjoyment and concentration of the children, as they made their bears, helped others to make a large car to 'go to the shops', or chose how much detail to include in their stories, were particularly impressive.

The classrooms are stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one activity to another. The outstanding outside area provides the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more capable children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The level of return of questionnaires from parents and carers was above the national average. The overwhelming majority of these parents and carers, and those who spoke to the inspection team, were very happy with the school. They consider that the school is very well led and managed and has a dedicated team of staff. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere, and most feel their children make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that all

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pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making excellent progress. Parents and carers were particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. Evidence from this inspection supports parents' and carers' very positive views. The very small number of their concerns, for example about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, school communications and pupils' progress, were followed up during the inspection and discussed in detail with the headteacher and governors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Elm Grove First 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 168 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 244 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	65	54	32	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	117	70	49	29	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	75	45	84	50	6	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	47	77	46	9	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	90	54	69	41	7	4	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	93	55	69	41	5	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	107	64	60	36	1	1	0	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)	67	40	80	48	5	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	45	84	50	6	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	42	79	47	12	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	40	85	51	6	4	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	77	46	77	46	3	2	7	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	102	61	56	33	4	2	2	1

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



27 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elm Grove First School, Worthing, BN11 5LQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with those of you we spoke to that Elm Grove is an excellent school. These are the main reasons why we thought the school was so good.

- You make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times.
- Children in the Reception classes get off to a great start at school.
- We saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school.
- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and reading buddies do a super job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers – all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

Even in outstanding schools there are some things that can be even better. We have asked your teachers to share their ideas so that no matter which class you are in all your lessons are as good as the best. In turn, you must all carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make the best possible progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall
Lead inspector

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