

Ellesmere Primary School

Elson Road, Ellesmere SY12 9EU

Inspection dates	11–12 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and middle leaders, provide very strong leadership. They have established a culture of high expectations within the school which is shared by all staff and pupils.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully improved the quality of education on offer. Teaching and pupils' outcomes have improved, particularly in key stage 2.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils show a keen interest in learning, feel safe and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Governors are now a highly effective force in providing challenge and support to school leaders. They have a wide range of skills that they use effectively to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Children in the early years make good progress and develop a love of learning. Teachers plan activities that are well-matched to their interests and needs.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of their social responsibilities and helping others less fortunate than themselves.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school and this has helped in bringing about improvements in all areas of school life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Tasks set for pupils in key stage 1 do not always stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to do their best. Pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Insufficient checks are carried out on the school website to ensure that it is up to date and contains all necessary information.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure consistently rapid rates of progress for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - all teachers, particularly in lower school, set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to help them reach their full potential
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by frequently checking the school website so that it contains all appropriate up-to-date information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has recognised the need to significantly improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement. He has successfully achieved this by establishing a strong and determined team of school leaders, including governors, who share a common set of high expectations. School leaders at all levels have brought fresh ideas and expertise and have taken on full responsibilities for their area.
- Almost all staff who responded to the online questionnaire are very supportive of the work of the headteacher and his team to bring about improvements. As one member of staff put it: 'The school has improved immensely since the last inspection. This I feel is due to the establishment of a new leadership team, who have clearly set objectives. There is a clear sense of teamwork throughout the school.' Staff, governors, parents and pupils all agree the school has improved since the previous inspection.
- Systems to track pupils' progress have been strengthened. Information is collected throughout the term and the majority of staff use this well to identify where and when pupils need additional support and help.
- The leadership of teaching is now good. There are clear expectations for high-quality teaching based on a new teaching and learning policy introduced by the headteacher. These expectations have brought greater consistency to teaching across the school, including in the early years. Pupils say they enjoy the vast majority of their lessons.
- There are strong systems in place for senior leaders to check the quality of teaching through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and analysis of information about pupils' progress. Systems for managing teachers' performance have been overhauled and are now robust. Leaders are ready to take action where necessary to improve teaching. They set staff challenging targets that are linked to improving pupils' progress and their own teaching skills.
- Newly qualified teachers who are early in their career are supported well. Those spoken to value the support they receive.
- The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is open, honest and accurate. Plans for improvement are credible and set out appropriate actions to address the areas for improvement.
- The range of subjects and topics taught in all years is good. The curriculum recognises local, regional and global differences, including different cultures and beliefs, and it promotes an understanding of others' points of view. Planning promotes fundamental British values of democracy, liberty and respect and tolerance of faiths and beliefs. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school website is not checked often enough to ensure it contains all appropriate up-to-date information, including the curriculum and British values and how the school allocates its most recent pupil premium and sport funding.
- Leaders use the funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. It has helped, for example, to develop the role of teaching assistants in providing pupils with good individual support. The school evaluates the impact of its expenditure through information showing how well pupils achieve. This shows that all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, are making at least good progress and in some classes it is even faster.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium funding is used well to extend the range and quality of sporting activities that pupils can take part in. Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in sports competitions within school and with other local schools. Members of staff also lead lunchtime and after-school clubs, including dance and athletics. These additional opportunities have led to pupils' greater participation in sport activities and their understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and improved physical fitness.
- The local authority is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and has been a strong force working with senior leaders in bringing about school improvement.
- Responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, indicate that parents have a very positive view of the school, with a large majority of those who responded saying they would recommend the school to another parent. Parents' comments recognised and appreciated the changes that the headteacher had brought about and felt these had been of benefit to the pupils. A small minority expressed some concerns over communication with parents but evidence gathered during the inspection, confirmed by the view of pupils, staff and the majority of parents indicated that the school has made changes that were necessary and communicated effectively with parents.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors are now a highly effective force in providing challenge and support to school leaders. They have reviewed and changed their structure and the ways they operate since the last inspection. They recognised a need to have a wider range of expertise and have appointed new governors. This has resulted in a governing body that has a clear understanding of what is happening in school and how it can be improved further.
 - Governors carry out a wide range of regular activities checking the school's work and contribute to ongoing school improvement planning. They visit classrooms regularly and meet with school leaders to review progress. They have an extremely good understanding of the assessment information that is available to them and use this to track the progress of all groups of pupils. They also have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.
 - Governors ask challenging questions of school leaders and use their link-governor and sub-committee structure well to monitor particular aspects of the school's work. They then report these activities back to the full governing body. They have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and the links between this and their pay progression. They manage the finance and resources that are available to the school, including the pupil premium, very well and measure the impact of spending on pupils' achievement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Robust systems are in place to ensure that the safeguarding needs of pupils are a high priority. Regular training for all staff helps to make sure that they are in a strong position to identify if any pupils are at potential risk. Vulnerable pupils and their families are well-supported, with good links in place to work with outside agencies when required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- As a result of the strong drive by leaders and their regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall. As a result, pupils are making good progress across the key stages and subjects and standards are rising.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers provide a range of tasks that motivate their pupils and encourage them to want to succeed. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 6 literacy lesson, where pupils were practising their spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils were enthusiastic to answer the teacher's probing questions and share their answers with their classmates. They showed a clear understanding of the strategies needed to develop their work to reach the highest standards.
- Teachers generally plan and teach activities that are adjusted to the different range of needs and abilities within their classes. They question pupils well to check their understanding and adjust the questions carefully to challenge pupils of different abilities. Teaching for the most-able pupils is planned very well to challenge and stimulate them. However, not all teachers, particularly in the lower school, set tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to help them reach their full potential.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively and the help they give is matched well to the accurate assessment they make of pupils' learning needs. This means that the majority of pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs or disability, make good progress.
- The teaching of reading, including the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is due to training for all the staff and the introduction of a whole-school approach to reading. From the time they start in the Nursery classes, children are taught how to recognise sounds and to blend them together to build words, which they now do with increasing success.
- In the past, boys have not achieved as well as girls. Leaders have investigated reasons for this and have introduced new initiatives including more boy-friendly resources and competitions in mathematics. School data now indicates that boys are achieving as well as girls in the school.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Pupils are given good guidance on how to structure their writing. They are encouraged to use interesting and imaginative vocabulary. Pupils' written work is now of a much higher quality and this was evident in a range of books that were seen during the inspection. However, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- The teaching of mathematics is good, with a strong focus on developing pupils' ability to use mathematical knowledge to solve problems relating to real life. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were given opportunities to explain to others in the class their understanding of multiple-step calculations. They used a wide range of complex vocabulary, took pride in the presentation of their work and were able to put forward well-thought-out and convincing arguments that showed their depth of understanding of the subject.

- A whole-school approach to assessing pupils' work is now in place and this is used well to measure progress. Teachers meet together, including with staff from other schools, to compare work and to determine whether it is at a standard that is appropriate to the ages of the pupils. This information is then used to track progress and to plan the next stages of learning.
- Classrooms are bright and attractive places that promote and celebrate learning and achievement. Displays on the walls provide good prompts to help pupils with their mathematics, reading and writing. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and computers well to demonstrate to pupils what they are expected to do.
- Teachers generally provide good-quality constructive feedback to pupils both verbally and in written feedback. Teachers' written comments ensure that pupils are clear what they need to do to improve their work and progress.
- Homework prepares pupils well for the following lesson. The majority of parents who expressed a view are supportive of the progress that homework helps their children to make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show care, consideration and respect for each other. They are provided with good opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, including becoming prefects and members of the school council.
- Pupils say that they enjoy being part of the school. They participate well in the learning activities provided. They are attentive, cooperative and work well in pairs or groups when required to do so, for example participating in a 'walking to school' initiative to improve their physical fitness, and demonstrate a greater awareness of caring for the environment.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and are happy with their learning. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both within school and when they are away from school. They recognise the potential dangers when using the internet and say the school provides them with good information on how they can remain safe.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare in school and say when occasionally it does occur it is dealt with well by teachers. They understand the effect that unkind language can have on others and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying. Thorough school records indicate that any form of unacceptable behaviour is closely monitored and dealt with effectively.
- The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the online survey, or who were spoken to during the inspection, expressed great satisfaction and confidence about the work of the school.
- Staff have received appropriate training and follow the correct procedures in response to any concerns they may have about individual pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are courteous and respectful towards one another, adults and visitors. They treat the school environment with respect and there is very little litter around the site. The school has implemented its own behaviour policy which is understood and followed by pupils. They were able to explain accurately to inspectors what this meant to them and why it was in the best interests of all the pupils within school to behave well.
- Pupils' attendance has rapidly improved and is now above the national average. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has risen in the current academic year and is now close to the national average. This is as a result of the robust procedures that the school has in place to ensure that parents and their children understand the impact that good attendance has on the progress that pupils make in school. Pupils arrive at school on time.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have risen, including in writing and mathematics, and in 2015 were broadly in line with average in reading, writing, English grammar, spelling and punctuation, and mathematics.
- There have also been improvements in pupils' rates of progress, especially through key stage 2. In 2015, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 making at least expected progress from key stage 1 was better than nationally

in writing, close to the national average in reading and just below in mathematics. Current school assessment information and evidence gathered during the inspection, including work in pupils' books and lesson observations, indicate that pupils currently in the school in all year groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, are making progress that is at least in line with expected progress and with many making better than expected progress. Evidence seen during the inspection demonstrates that standards of attainment are continuing to rise.

- The outcomes of the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 were higher than the national average in 2015. This was an improvement on the previous year. This year, outcomes are expected to be even better.
- In 2015, pupils in Year 2 attained standards that overall were above average in all subjects and this indicated good progress from their previous starting points. Currently, in Year 2, more pupils are now demonstrating skills and knowledge that are above those expected for their age.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similar progress to their classmates because of well-targeted support which is ensuring that none fall behind during the academic year.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 were about a year behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in mathematics and reading. They were approximately four terms behind in writing and English grammar, spelling and punctuation both with their classmates and other pupils nationally. School data and inspection evidence confirms that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress and these wide gaps in attainment are closing rapidly.
- The most-able pupils in school make similar good progress to other pupils in school. Teachers are challenging higher-ability pupils in lessons by encouraging them to undertake 'stretch' tasks and work seen in books suggests that they are making the progress expected of them. In 2015, the proportion of pupils making better than the expected rate of progress in mathematics was above the national average.
- Pupils in all year groups display positive attitudes to learning, show perseverance and resilience in tackling new tasks and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Occasionally, some pupils, particularly in key stage 1 are set work that does not stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities to do the best they can. Consequently, these pupils do not always achieve as highly as they might.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in Nursery below expected levels because their communication and language skills are weak. They begin Reception, however, with skills and abilities which are broadly typical for their age. Some children from minority ethnic backgrounds are learning English as an additional language and need extra support with reading and writing. Children make good progress from their starting points due to effective teaching and well-planned activities that engage their interests and match their needs. In 2015, the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was above the national average. As a result, children are well prepared for when they start in Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Staff work well together. They have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development and use this knowledge to plan for improvement.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Initial assessments of children's abilities and needs are accurate and are used to measure their progress throughout the year. The classrooms are lively and stimulating places with areas set up that support learning in all areas of the curriculum. An example of this was seen during the inspection where children were working enthusiastically with a member of staff to recognise how letter shapes make words such as 'caterpillar'.
- Children are keen writers and use their phonics knowledge to make good attempts at spelling words. Occasionally, opportunities to refine and develop children's writing further are not developed. Adults are careful in ensuring that children use and write letters and numbers correctly and they model correct speech well.
- Children behave very well and also cooperate well with each other. They know how to take turns and listen to what each other is saying.
- Robust arrangements are in place to ensure children's safeguarding and welfare needs are fully met. As a result, children feel happy and safe and this helps them to thrive in their first two years in school.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and are valued as partners in their education. Parents are encouraged to frequently drop-in to enable them to see what their children have been doing in school and to work alongside them.

School details

Unique reference number	123365
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10012402

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Digby
Headteacher	Andrew Everett
Telephone number	01691 622 288
Website	www.ellesmereprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@ellesmere-pri.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2014

Information about this school

- Ellesmere Primary School is an above average-sized primary school.
- Children in Nursery attend part time and Reception attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average compared to similar schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about curriculum content and current allocation of pupil premium and sport funding on its website.
- The headteacher was appointed to the post in April 2015.
- There have been significant changes in staff in the last school year, with the appointment of seven new members of staff in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met a group of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; governors' minutes and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. He met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked to parents at the beginning of the school day. They also looked at the 40 responses to the online staff questionnaire and 55 responses to the pupil online survey and scrutinised the school's website.
- The inspection took place at the same time that Year 6 pupils were undertaking their national tests. Inspectors looked at Year 6 books in addition to observing some lessons, taking into account the disruption to the normal timetable for these pupils.

Inspection team

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Elizabeth Ellis-Martin	Ofsted Inspector

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