

Inspection of Elmlea Junior School

The Dell, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3UF

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The executive headteacher of this school is Lorraine Wright, who is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of Russell Education Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Colin Mackinlay, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Karen Lynch.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this warm and welcoming school. Everyone feels a strong sense of belonging. Pupils are immensely proud of their school, and they attend well. They have a deep understanding of the schools' core values of 'kindness, respect and community'. They consistently demonstrate these in all aspects of school life.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils live up to these in how they approach their work and in their excellent conduct around the school. They are polite, courteous and respectful. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely strong. Pupils feel safe. They receive effective help in their work and with any concerns they have.

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and are eager to know more. They are curious and demonstrate high levels of focus in their work. Their work across the curriculum is of exceptional quality. Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education.

The personal development offer is extensive and comprehensive. The school supports pupils to make a positive difference. Pupils are proud of the many leadership roles they hold. These support them to be responsible citizens who make a highly effective contribution to the school and local community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The quality of education at this school is outstanding. The school has designed a curriculum that supports pupils exceptionally well to build their knowledge in a clear and logical order. Leaders continually review and refine the school's curriculum offer. They respond quickly to any areas for improvement. For example, where there was a blip in the published data for the Year 4 multiplication tables check, leaders recognised and addressed this through thoughtful modification of the mathematics curriculum. This robust approach has ensured that current pupils achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum is highly engaging. It challenges pupils to make insightful connections between their previous and current knowledge. Pupils across the school can talk with confidence about the curriculum. Pupils receive specific and timely feedback that helps them to improve. As they progress through the curriculum, they build and apply their knowledge when learning complex themes and concepts. For example, in geography, pupils study the many causes of climate change in different countries. They consider how this might impact their own choices when buying in supermarkets.

The school has designed a highly effective reading curriculum that exposes pupils to a wide range of diverse texts. Pupils receive expert help to build their phonics knowledge. Pupils who need extra help to learn to read receive skilled support to build their reading fluency and confidence.

The school is highly proficient in identifying the barriers that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have. Staff make sure pupils with SEND receive very effective support through whole class provision and targeted interventions. Pupils with SEND show a strong understanding of the curriculum and achieve exceptionally well.

Behaviour is exceptional. Pupils move around the building in a highly calm and orderly manner. In lessons, pupils listen very well to each other and sustain high levels of engagement. Pupils share their ideas and ask questions that deepen their understanding. Staff know pupils extremely well. They provide expert, sensitive support for the small number of pupils who need help to manage their emotions.

Guest speakers and visitors significantly strengthen pupils' knowledge of different cultures, religions and world views. This enables pupils to learn about the beliefs of others and celebrate diversity. Pupils make a demonstrable difference to their school. For example, 'language ambassadors' share their curriculum knowledge by teaching infant pupils French. 'Bravehearts' make sure that playtimes are enjoyable.

The school keeps a sharp focus on attendance. It is proactive in quickly identifying and addressing any instances where attendance does not meet the schools' high expectations.

Governors and trust leaders have an incisive and accurate understanding of the school, its strengths and next steps. Staff greatly value the systems that are in place to minimise their workload and improve their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136830
Local authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	10371321
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Lynch
CEO of the trust	Colin Mackinlay
Headteacher	Lorraine Wright
Website	www.elmleaschools.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of six schools in the Russell Education Trust. Prior to joining the trust in March 2025, the school was formerly part of a different multi-academy trust since its initial conversion to become an academy in July 2011.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors met with the CEO, trust leaders and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to pupils and looked at samples of work in writing, science and history.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- An inspector spoke to some parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments, and Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Musty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Wigley	Ofsted Inspector

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