

# Elm Academy

Holloway Avenue, Bournemouth, BH11 9JN

**Inspection dates** 24–25 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Pupils throughout the school make rapid progress across a range of subjects. Senior leaders relentlessly and successfully focus on raising pupils' achievement, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start because of the outstanding teaching. The staff provide children with an exciting range of activities and a caring setting that parents really appreciate.
- The executive principal and head of school lead by example. They inspire all leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, to be highly ambitious for the pupils and this has led to improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The quality of teaching is monitored very rigorously. The information gained is used very effectively to identify training needs for staff.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. In lessons, pupils concentrate well and treat each other with respect and consideration. Their excellent relationships with the staff ensure that any difficulties pupils have are dealt with quickly and with care. Pupils said that they feel safe in the school.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences, including numerous exciting visits and activities. The opportunities offered through the links with specialist teachers from across the federation are exceptional.
- There is a constant drive for improvement by staff. They all have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It is embedded in the subjects taught and in the ethos of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or part lessons, some being observed together with the executive principal, the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the executive principal, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, teachers and other members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work, and heard pupils from different year groups read.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online Parent View survey, the school's own parent survey, letters from parents and 38 staff questionnaires.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, the school's improvement plan, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records, and arrangements for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sue Hunnings	Additional Inspector
Anne Bark	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-size primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose families are in the armed forces) is above the national average.
- An above average proportion of pupils is supported through school action, and the same proportion is supported at school action plus.
- The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- A significant number of pupils enter the school other than at the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a very large number of staff changes in the last two years.
- The Elm Academy converted to become an academy school in December 2012. When its predecessor school, known as Elmrise Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The Elm Academy is part of the LeAF Campus, comprising Elm Academy, Oak Academy and the LeAF Studio.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the plans to enhance the provision of information technology equipment for all pupils to use on an individual basis.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding because, from their low starting points, pupils are making exceptional progress, not only in reading, mathematics and writing, but also in music, physical education, drama and art. The extensive school information on pupils' progress and achievement, along with work in their books, shows that standards in Year 6 are above expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils, too, are achieving well, notably in mathematics where for the first time several are in line to attain highest available Level 6.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, with low skills and abilities, particularly in speaking, listening and in their personal development. Outstanding teaching and interesting learning activities mean that children make consistent progress and start Key Stage 1 with much stronger skills and abilities that are nearer to those expected for their age.
- The results in the most recent national Year 1 check on pupils' understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) were well above the national average. During the inspection pupils showed that they could use their phonics skills well to read unfamiliar words. Throughout the school a love of reading is encouraged.
- The school provides outstanding additional support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly through the work of the teaching assistants, and they make similarly rapid progress as their peers.
- The additional government pupil premium funding is used very well to support individual pupils through one-to-one sessions and group work. Last year, the gaps in attainment between the group of Year 6 pupils supported through the additional funding and other Year 6 pupils represented about three terms of progress. The impact of the school's investment of their additional funding in one-to-one individual tuition can now be seen in the pupils currently on roll. The pupils currently in Year 6 are now achieving standards that are in line with the others in their class. These gaps are now narrowing consistently as pupils move through the school.
- Those pupils who enter the school at times other than the beginning of the Nursery and Reception years make excellent progress. The school quickly assesses their needs and they settle very quickly. As one parent wrote, '... since they (our children) started at Elm all our worries have disappeared. Moving them has been the best decision we have made and we wish we had done it sooner!'
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the variety of sports that they do at school in sessions with specialist sports coaches from across the federation. The additional sports funding is being used to raise participation in sports through the employment of a specialist teacher. He encourages positive attitudes to keeping physically fit and healthy through lunchtime and after-school clubs and competitive team games with other local schools. Together with improvements to the school's sporting resources, these motivate pupils to reach high standards.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because it enables all pupils to achieve consistently well and enjoy their learning in a wide range of subjects. Teachers have high, but realistic, expectations of what pupils can achieve. More-able pupils are given work which engages them and is challenging enough to ensure they make outstanding progress.
- Teachers typically ensure that pupils are clear about what skills, knowledge and understanding it is intended that they learn. They also routinely keep a careful check on how well pupils have grasped the point of the lesson as it progresses and make adjustments accordingly.
- Teachers use questioning very skilfully, both to test out pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply about the work being undertaken. In a Years 5 and 6 English lesson, the teacher used questioning exceptionally well to draw out from the pupils how far they had got

in their understanding of how to give directions in their writing and use adjectives. When they then set to work, applying this knowledge, the level of challenge was precisely right and they made rapid gains in their understanding as a result.

- The teaching of mathematics is strong, and improving, especially with regard to using and applying mathematical ideas in practical situations.
- The standard of marking is consistently high in all subjects which represents a real improvement in the last year. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about how to improve their work and it was evident in the detailed scrutiny undertaken by inspectors that most put this into practice. Despite the reservations expressed by a few parents, the setting of purposeful and interesting homework makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school puts a high priority on making learning as enjoyable as possible and taking opportunities to promote pupils' cultural development. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, based on their outings as 'pirates' to Brownsea Island, the pupils wrote extensively and with great care.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils look forward to coming to school. They are keen to apply the skills they have already learnt and to explore new topics. A group of parents interviewed during the inspection explained that their children were eager to share with them what they had learnt during the day.
- Adults lead by example, demonstrating the respect and caring nature they expect from the pupils. They are quick to notice when pupils need encouragement or support. The positive relationships between staff and pupils make a strong contribution to the rapid progress that pupils make. This is evident in the vibrant displays and tidy classrooms, and in the typically neat presentation of pupils' work.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They show respect for the building and for the equipment they use. They move around the school quietly and calmly, showing an awareness of the needs of others.
- There are clear systems to encourage pupils to behave at their best. Pupils are rewarded for displaying good attitudes and are excited about being chosen for one of the reward certificates given in assemblies.
- The school's work with the few pupils whose behaviour has caused concern in the past has been extremely effective. Teachers think carefully about the impact of attitudes and behaviour on pupils' achievement. The school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity, promoting positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now above the national average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils spoken to during the inspection say that they feel safe at school. They know that the adults in school will help them to sort out any problems that arise. They act very responsibly on the playground, where they are well supervised. Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including those related to internet use and mobile phones.
- The school is highly responsive to pupils' individual needs, especially those going through challenging times in their lives, which may overflow into their behaviour in school. Staff work closely with support agencies, and parents, to help pupils settle down and learn successfully as soon as possible. The work of the federation's chaplain is particularly effective and valued.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The drive and ambition of the management, under the rigorous and outstanding leadership of the executive principal and headteacher, have moved the school forward exceptionally well.
- The senior leaders and governors have a very clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning. There is a high level of professional support for all staff, which is linked closely to setting targets for teachers in order to continually improve their

practice. Teachers are held accountable for pupils' progress at all times. Weaker aspects of teaching have been tackled vigorously, and better teaching is rewarded accordingly.

- The school sets the right, and very demanding, targets to become even better. Documentation is thorough and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and accurate. For example, there are plans to update aspects of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enable pupils to have greater access individually.
- The way the whole staff team works together ensures that thorough assessments of pupils' progress are enabling changes in the curriculum to be carried out smoothly. A real sense of urgency to continue to improve is established. Systems to track pupils' progress are detailed and individual. The information is used thoroughly to plan for pupils' next steps.
- The monitoring of pupils' work through marking is well organised and systematic and involves both senior and middle leaders. There are clear links to the well-coordinated arrangements for the management of staff performance. Middle leaders make a very effective contribution to the outstanding teaching in the school.
- The exciting and broad range of subjects offered meets the needs of pupils' aptitudes and interests exceptionally well. The strong focus on literacy and numeracy prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils say how much they enjoy taking part in the wide range of out-of-school activities, including sports, music and art, and this promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well.
- Very careful attention is paid by all staff to ensure the highest levels of safety and quality of care for each pupil. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet all current government requirements and there are robust arrangements in place for checking staff and other adults.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body know the school very well, and provide a blend of support and challenge to school leaders. The governing body has all the skills needed to thoroughly check data on pupils' progress and attendance and are knowledgeable about how the school compares with others. Governors also have a thorough knowledge of the quality of teaching and the management of the performance of staff. With this knowledge, the school's budget is used carefully to reward those staff who are doing the very best.
  - The government's additional funding is used very effectively to raise achievement for those who are eligible. Examples include additional literacy support and specific links to help home learning, and many additional enrichment activities. The governing body is vigilant at ensuring the well-being of staff through mentoring, coaching and training programmes. The procedures to screen and recruit staff are exemplary and the procedures for risk assessment and health and safety are robust.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138990
<b>Local authority</b>	Bournemouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	440037

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	322
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tina Waterman
<b>Executive Principal Headteacher</b>	Dr Annetta Minard Helen Janda
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 574212
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