

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Elmtree Infant and Nursery School

Elmtree Hill, Chesham, Buckinghamshire HP5 2PA

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Elmtree Infant and Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Diana Ohene. This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks School 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), Sulina Piesse, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Mill.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this kind and supportive school. They feel safe and can always talk to adults about any worries or concerns they may have. Staff ensure that pupils are at the heart of everything they do. From the early years, children learn to work independently and be kind to others.

The school has high ambitions for pupils' achievement. They rise to these aspirations and achieve well. Teachers present learning in informative and engaging ways, which motivates pupils and develops their confidence. Pupils are happy and inquisitive learners who enjoy the wide range of learning activities. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The school provides many opportunities for pupils, helping them become well-rounded individuals and citizens. Besides academic learning, pupils gain life skills such as food hygiene awareness and water safety, including a visit to a beach in West Sussex.

Pupils think about others' needs, including fundraising for charities and making up and delivering food hampers to elderly residents in the community. Pupils take on roles of responsibility, including as house captains and eco-ambassadors. These responsibilities enable pupils to make a valued impact on the school.

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

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced. It is designed carefully to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills build on their earlier learning. In mathematics, for example, children in Reception develop a secure grasp of numbers. This prepares them for later year groups, where they perform more complex calculations such as comparing unequal and equal parts of simple fractions.

Classrooms are purposeful spaces where pupils concentrate and learn well. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and explain learning carefully so pupils can relate it to what they already know. This helps pupils to make connections and deepen their learning through the curriculum. Teachers are astute in checking pupils' understanding. They use this information to adapt their teaching effectively to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge promptly. From the early years, children flourish due to the high levels of support, clear boundaries and care they are shown. Staff in the early years are skilled in developing children's fine motor skills through activities such as using scissors independently and drawing on large pieces of paper while learning about the life cycle of a hen. This supports children to develop their coordination and dexterity, for example, when holding writing materials and drawing and understanding shapes. Children interact confidently with each other and with the adults around them. They access a wealth of carefully selected opportunities throughout the curriculum to deepen their knowledge. This prepares children well for key stage 1.

The school acts swiftly to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff provide a range of support and adapt tasks when necessary to enable these pupils to access the full curriculum successfully. The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND supports pupils successfully with both their academic and wider development.

Staff routinely review the curriculum to check it meets pupils' needs securely. In the recent past, previous strategies for teaching handwriting did not lead to many pupils joining letters consistently. Consequently, the school has implemented a new strategy for teaching handwriting. Although there is evidence of progress, it is too early to assess the impact of these changes fully. As a result, many pupils do not have the required handwriting skills that they need to join letters accurately and consistently.

Starting in Nursery, staff support children effectively in developing their language and communication skills. Staff help build children's language abilities, including talking about what they are doing, modelling speech, reading stories and singing songs. From Reception, children benefit from a consistent and effective approach to the teaching of phonics. They learn how to blend sounds and pronounce words correctly and speak confidently. The school prioritises reading to help pupils become confident and fluent readers, encouraging them to read widely and frequently. Pupils access high-quality texts, including diverse books that promote pupils' cultural and social understanding of their world. Pupils who require extra support are identified swiftly and receive timely support to help them read fluently.

Pupils behave well, are enthusiastic learners and take pride in their achievements. The personal development programme supports pupils effectively beyond their academic learning. These opportunities include participating in events such as visiting the local theatre and participating in the town's annual carnival. Outdoor learning about nature and wildlife in the 'Wild Woods' area supports and develops pupils' rich life experiences. Staff skilfully interweave the teaching of fundamental British values through the curriculum. Pupils learn how to stay safe when, for example, riding a bike and using the internet.

The school is fully committed to continuous improvement for the benefit of the pupils. The support and challenge from the trust have been influential in the school's continued success. The trustees and local governing body members have an insightful understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The staff value the professional development opportunities provided, as these help them to support pupils effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The recent changes to the teaching of handwriting to ensure that pupils join letters accurately and consistently are not embedded fully. As a result, many pupils are not joining their letters correctly and with automaticity. The school should ensure that the newly implemented handwriting strategies improve pupils' handwriting effectively and consistently.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the

date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Elmtree Infant and Nursery School, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2017.

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	148015
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341889
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Mill
CEO of the trust	Sulina Piesse
Headteacher	Diana Ohene
Website	www.elmtreeschoolandnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Elmtree Infant and Nursery School converted to become an academy school in July 2020. When its predecessor school, Elmtree Infant and Nursery School, was last inspected by Ofsted, in November 2017, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2024.
- This school is part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks School Trust.
- The school offers a breakfast club and an after-school club, led by an outside provider.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils are placed here by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with the trust's CEO and director of education. He also met representatives from the board of trustees and a representative from the local governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

Inspection team

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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