

Inspection of Ellesmere Primary School

Elson Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9EU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Nicola Bond. This school is part of North West Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Docking OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nayland Southorn.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, safe and well cared for at this school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and kind and respectful to each other. Warm relationships between pupils and adults in the school support pupils in their endeavours to follow the 'Ellesmere Way', which has been introduced by the new headteacher. Pupils say that they like this approach because they know exactly what the expectations of them are. The pride they take in meeting these expectations is notable.

Pupils enjoy their learning. From the early years onwards, they are actively taught how to listen, how to communicate and how to work with each other. As a result, pupils develop effective learning behaviours that help them to make good progress across the curriculum.

Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the range of clubs they can attend. They enjoy the many visits to museums, historical landmarks, activity centres and places of worship, as well as community-based charity involvement. These opportunities, and the range of visitors to the school, help them to understand the wider world and support them to develop their aspirations.

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

A significant feature of the school's broad and ambitious curriculum is that reading and writing have been specifically woven through every subject. This provides pupils with daily opportunities to practise and apply their learning in many different contexts. This approach starts in the early years, where children are supported to use and extend their learning through well-designed play activities. As a result, pupils understand that what they learn in one subject supports their learning in another. For instance, they know that English is important in its own right but also helps them to learn well in all their other subjects. Pupils can explain how mathematics is important in science but is also useful in geography and history. However, occasionally, important subject-specific skills and knowledge are not secured. This is because learning activities focus too much on recording the knowledge taught and not enough on understanding and remembering it.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know the pupils well, and checking what and how well pupils learn is part of every lesson, including in the early years. As a result, potential barriers to learning are identified quickly, and rapid action taken, to help pupils achieve as well as they can. Because the curriculum has been planned with pupils with SEND in mind from the beginning, it is flexible enough to incorporate their needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expert support to adapt learning effectively. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide effective additional help.

A culture of reading permeates the school. Early reading is taught well. Children in the Nursery are quickly introduced to rhymes and stories. This helps them to develop their language and recognition of environmental sounds so that they are ready for more formal phonics teaching in Reception. The frequent checks on learning now in place quickly

identify pupils who may be having difficulties, so that there is timely support. This means that nearly all pupils learn to read fluently and accurately. Daily reading in all year groups and high expectations of how often pupils will read at home have created confident readers throughout the school who choose to read for pleasure. Pupils talk knowledgeably about genres and authors. The school's high expectations for reading extend to the youngest children, who can successfully identify their favourite stories and poems.

Pupils want to come to school. The school's constant attention to ensuring that parents and carers understand the importance of being at school every day is paying dividends. As a result, attendance is good and improving.

A well-designed programme for personal development is in place. This begins in the early years, when from Nursery onwards they are taught to begin to take into account the needs of others. Older pupils learn to understand and appreciate different faiths, cultures and beliefs in the wider world through both the academic curriculum and the wide range of activities that take place throughout the school year. The school values of 'nurture, inspire, achieve', are an integral part of the approach to developing pupils' resilience and independence during their time at the school. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about being responsible citizens through the leadership options in the school, including becoming peer mentors, mental health ambassadors and reading buddies.

Teachers are proud to work in this school. The school and trust leaders take their well-being into account. They have regular, high-quality professional development opportunities. They say that leaders at all levels are approachable and supportive. Trust and school leaders, including local governors, work effectively together with the aim of continually improving the outcomes for pupils. They know what is working well and the priorities for the future.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the intended subject-specific knowledge and skills are not clear enough to pupils. At times, learning activities focus too much on how pupils record their learning and not enough on deepening their knowledge. When this happens, pupils do not remember important concepts and facts as well as they should. The school should ensure that learning activities are designed so that pupils learn and remember more over time.

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	143326
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10344098
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	361
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nayland Southorn
CEO of the trust	Stephen Docking OBE
Headteacher	Nicola Bond
Website	www.ellesmereprimaryschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed, who has been in post since January 2024.
- Since September, the school has incorporated a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) for early years and key stage 1 pupils with autism, language and communication difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.
- The school does not use 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer, the trust's school improvement partner, teachers, support staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. 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 discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector visited the specially resourced provision and spoke with staff and pupils present.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school's work and their subsequent plans to improve the school, curriculum documentation, policies, minutes of governance meetings and the school's website.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through their responses to Ofsted Parent View and online surveys.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Dukes	Ofsted Inspector
Allyson Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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