

Inspection of Elliott Park School

18–20 Marina Drive, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, Kent ME12 2DP

Inspection dates: 26–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They are confident that it is a safe place where staff know them well and help them to learn successfully.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Leaders have made changes for the better. That is why, on the whole, standards have improved, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils work hard. They find their learning interesting and they are keen to do well. Teachers ensure that the classroom environments are calm and well organised, to help pupils learn.

Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy warm and good-humoured relationships with staff and each other. Barely anyone talks about bullying because it is so rare. Leaders tackle any potential problems quickly.

Parents are very positive about the school. They particularly value the wide range of opportunities offered to their children. These are offered both in school and, for example, through the many sporting tournaments, cultural experiences and links with the community. As they move up through the school, pupils are helped to grow in confidence. They are polite, engaging and articulate. This equips them well to move on successfully to the next stage of their education.

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

Staff are positive about the changes which leaders have made since the last inspection. Leaders have improved the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils' achievement in these subjects has risen across the school. Teachers have benefited from well-chosen training and academic research. They have pooled and shared their knowledge. Teachers use this subject knowledge well. They create challenging and interesting sequences of learning in reading, writing and mathematics. These build pupils' understanding effectively over time.

Reading is prioritised throughout the school. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and develop strong comprehension skills. By the time they reach key stage 2, pupils can confidently discuss complex themes within the many stories they have read.

Leaders have rightly focused on the teaching of phonics right from the start in early years. Pupils quickly develop knowledge of a range of letter sounds which they recall accurately and confidently. Occasionally, pupils do not learn to blend sounds together to make words alongside learning the individual letter sounds, and this slows their progress. Sometimes the books they take home are not carefully matched to support them in practising their new skills.

Leaders have reorganized the way they teach some of the other subjects, such as art and geography. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This helps them to plan ambitious sequences of learning for pupils. For example, in art pupils are now studying the work of artists before learning about the skills they use and applying

these to their own work. This is helping pupils to develop their knowledge and skills well. Leaders have started to consider how these sequences will build on pupils' knowledge as they move through the school, but this planning is not yet fully developed.

Teachers match learning very carefully to pupils' needs. While there are currently no pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), teachers are keenly aware of pupils who may need additional support in different aspects of their learning. They make sure that the needs of all learners are met well so that everyone benefits from the rich curriculum.

Pupils across the school, from the Nursery upwards, display a thirst for knowledge. They delight in learning about the wider world and sharing their many diverse backgrounds and interests. They are taught to respect the views and beliefs of others who may be different to them. As they move up through the school, pupils enjoy the way their learning is made interesting. Teachers include relevant links to societal issues, such as global warming. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well. No time is wasted in classrooms by off-task behaviour.

Right from the start in Reception pupils have a chance to be part of the wider life of the school through the school council or the eco group, for example. Leaders have taken great care to build in regular links with the wider community and to take advantage of local musical or theatrical events that enhance pupils' learning.

Children are safe and happy in the early years. Staff put much effort into providing activities that interest them and build firm foundations for their future learning. They provide a wide range of opportunities for children to play and explore. Adults take particular care to develop children's communication and language skills. They read to children often and share children's delight in rhymes.

Leaders have ensured that the school fully meets the requirements of the independent schools standards, including The Equality Act 2010. The proprietor supports leaders well in developing the school. Leaders have ensured that the school is a safe, calm and well-ordered environment in which to learn and that the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. There is no governing body. However, leaders have wisely developed an advisory board to further support the proprietor in holding leaders to account, which is due to meet for the first time soon.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders do everything possible to keep pupils safe in school and within the community. They have taken steps to ensure that the curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including online. Regular visitors from community liaison workers further develop this, as does information for parents.

All necessary checks are completed on appointment of staff. Staff are well trained in child protection matters and know how to record and report any concerns. Leaders are not complacent: they are always looking for ways to improve the ways they keep and share safeguarding information.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders should ensure that they build on the knowledge pupils have gained when planning subsequent sequences of learning, so that pupils integrate their knowledge into larger ideas.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils learn phonics from the start in Reception. However, not all pupils learn how to blend these sounds into words as they initially learn them. Leaders should ensure that all pupils develop these skills securely, and that pupils have increased opportunities to re-enforce this learning by taking home well-matched reading books.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	119005
DfE registration number	886/6057
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10091638
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	Thomas Allsworth
Headteacher	Colleen Hiller
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,706 per school year
Telephone number	01795 873372
Website	www.elliottparkschool.co.uk
Email address	elliotparkschool@btconnect.com
Date of previous inspection	7–9 November 2017

Information about this school

- This was the first inspection since the school was deemed to require improvement in November 2017.
- Elliott Park School is a small, non-selective independent primary school. It opened in 1985, moving into its current, purpose-built premises in 1986. The Nursery class was established in September 2011.
- The school currently has no pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has no governing body.
- There is a sole proprietor, who has been in place since before the last inspection as have the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher, leaders, staff, pupils, and the proprietor.
- We toured the school with the headteacher to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- We spoke to parents at the school gate and considered 39 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 26 free-text responses.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and art. We visited a range of lessons and looked at learning plans. We spoke to pupils and staff about pupils' learning and looked at pupils' work.
- We spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. A range of safeguarding documentation was considered.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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