

Elmhurst School

Making a Positive Difference to the Quality of Learning
Headteacher ♦ Mrs Rachel Lee



14 December 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, the school was inspected by Ofsted on the 9th and 10th October. After some delay, the school received the final report earlier this week. We are writing to inform you of the inspection outcomes.

The school's staff and governors are working with education advisors from Buckinghamshire County Council to take prompt action following Ofsted's announcement that the school is being placed in special measures.

This result is, of course, disappointing for the whole school community. Executive Headteacher Marcus Faulkner, who is leading the school during Mrs Lee's maternity leave, is taking immediate steps to act on the report's recommendations.

The Ofsted inspection identified a number of strengths including:

- safeguarding is effective;
- pupils feel safe and well cared for;
- there have been improvements in Maths.

The Ofsted inspection identified a number of weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching which meant that the pupils were not gaining the knowledge and skills that the school intended. With the help of local authority advisors and a local multi-academy trust, the school leadership team will not only bring both the curriculum and teaching up to the high standard that we all expect but ensure that improvements continue into the future.

We attach a summary of the key findings for parents and pupils. The full report will be accessible through the school website this evening.

You are welcome to attend a meeting for parents and carers in the school hall on Monday, 17th December at 7.00 pm where we will set out what we are doing to address the weaknesses identified in the report. Representatives of the local authority and the board of governors will also be present.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of David Gamble in black ink.

David Gamble
Chair of Governors

Handwritten signature of Marcus Faulkner in black ink.

Marcus Faulkner
Interim Executive Headteacher

Elmhurst School

Dunsham Lane, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 2DB

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Turbulence in leadership has led to a decline in the curriculum, teaching, and pupils' outcomes. Leaders' expectations are too low. Their evaluations of the school's work to improve teaching, outcomes and behaviour are too generous.
- Too many pupils leave the school without reaching the standards in English and mathematics required for them to make a good start at secondary school.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in key stage 2 declined compared with 2016. Early data for 2018 shows that, in some subjects, progress improved. However, the achievement of current pupils is too low, especially in key stage 2.
- Pupils' vocabularies and their reading skills are not developed well enough. Pupils' phonics knowledge is not embedded.
- The curriculum is not effective. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in art, humanities and science are weak.
- Weaknesses in teaching, especially in teachers' subject knowledge, mean the tasks they set do not enable pupils to gain the knowledge and skills intended.
- Persistent absence rates increased last academic year compared with the previous year. Some pupils disrupt the learning of others. Pupils and children do not always follow instructions.
- Approaches to assessment do not support pupils in catching up, nor assist teachers in gaining a clear picture of where there are gaps in pupils' learning.
- Governors' feedback to leaders has sometimes not been challenging enough. Governors have not always questioned how reliable and accurate information provided by the school is.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have sought to strengthen the school by joining a multi-academy trust.
- Leadership of safeguarding is effective. Pupils are well cared for and say they feel safe. Staff are complimentary about the school.
- Some new approaches in key stage 1 are having a positive impact. Teaching in mathematics has improved in some classes.
- Early years is stronger than other areas. Better teaching is leading to improved outcomes. The leader's analysis of the setting is insightful.