

Marks Gate Junior School

Rose Lane, Romford, Essex, RM6 5NJ

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The quality of teaching across the school is good, with some examples of high-quality teaching.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- The senior leadership team and the governing body have strong drive and ambition to improve the school even further.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve as well as other pupils in the school and as well as all pupils nationally.
- Teaching assistants play an active role in providing a good conversational model with teachers. This allows pupils to observe effective communication between adults and develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Leaders' systems to check the quality of teaching are rigorous. They identify the strengths and areas for improvement on a regular basis and ensure achievement is good.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are courteous and respectful. They get on well with each other and are keen to learn. Pupils feel safe at school.
- The governing body very effectively holds the senior leaders to account for pupils' results and the quality of teaching.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- Attendance is above average and pupils quickly settle into their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- At times the most able pupils are not given difficult enough work to enable them to make rapid progress.
- Middle leaders are not all sufficiently involved in making checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Sometimes, pupils' response to teachers' feedback in their marking is not very effective. Pupils do not always make the necessary improvements and so make the same mistakes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 parts of lessons, eight of which were jointly observed with the executive headteacher and head of school. Inspectors observed an assembly and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair as well as two representatives from the local authority.
- There were no responses to the online Parent View survey. Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers they met and the results of a parents' and carers' survey conducted by the school. Inspectors also considered the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test results and the school's own information about pupils' achievement, the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school development plan, safeguarding policies, and records and documents relating to the work of the governing body.
- The inspection team also looked at pupils' work, records of behaviour and incidents, the school's website, the data dashboard, records of the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, and the additional sports funding action plan.

Inspection team

Kewal Goel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Marks Gate is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Nearly half of the pupils are from a White British heritage. Other pupils are from a variety of other ethnic heritages, including Black African.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from forces families and those looked after, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times, is average.
- The school hosts a breakfast club managed by the governing body. In addition, some after-school clubs are provided by external organisations. These are not managed by the governing body and were not part of this inspection.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Marks Gate Infant School. The executive headteacher of Marks Gate Junior School is also the executive headteacher of the infant school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for Year 6, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure pupils make rapid progress by:
 - making sure that more is expected of more-able pupils and that they do not waste time on work that is too easy for them
 - making sure that teachers consistently check that pupils have responded well to the comments in their marking so that they do not make the same mistakes again.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress more regularly in their areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils join the school with average levels of attainment. At the end of Year 6, pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Achievement is not outstanding because the number making more than expected progress is not high compared with national figures. The most able pupils are not always challenged appropriately and teachers' expectations are not always high enough for this group of pupils.
- Pupils' work and the school's checks on pupils' progress show that pupils make good, and often very good, progress in some year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes very good progress because of the early identification of their needs and highly effective extra guidance and support from specialist staff.
- The achievement of White British pupils is improving because the school effectively supports parents and carers to improve their ability to learn well and their aspirations through very effective family liaison and targeted support for pupils, including through the breakfast club.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups make good progress because of clear focus on key vocabulary and support with specific action for learning grammar and promoting language development. Pupils are encouraged to use subject-specific vocabulary. The school has a clear induction programme to support pupils who arrive later than at the usual times. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- There is no gap in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. These pupils are making more progress in English and mathematics when compared with all pupils nationally. This is because the funding has been spent effectively on meeting their needs through, for example, targeted support for individual pupils and other small-group activities to accelerate their progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They are keen about reading in school as well as at home. The school promotes pupils' love of reading through a range of strategies. For example, older pupils support younger pupils in reading and trained reading friends listen to younger pupils read regularly.
- Pupils develop their knowledge and skills in literacy and numeracy quickly and apply these skills across a range of subjects. The school is using an effective conversational model to develop pupils' literacy and critical thinking skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection because teachers have been well supported to develop their skills. Teaching over time is good or better as is evident from a review of data on achievement, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teaching is not outstanding because the most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Sometimes they are required to complete tasks that are too simple and do not extend their learning. Teachers do not always convey their high expectations of the most able pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning is thorough and teachers use effective questioning to move learning forward. Less-able pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported, for example, through carefully targeted support and additional support in groups outside the class. As a result they are making good progress.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good conversational role models. Pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate this approach to speaking and listening in their interactions with each other. This develops pupils' enquiry, questioning and communication skills.

- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good so that classrooms have a positive atmosphere in which pupils can, for example, work well together and share learning with each other. Pupils are motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress, learning and understanding regularly and adapt their planning accordingly. Pupils are given opportunities to assess their work against the criteria used to judge success.
- Some examples of detailed and helpful marking which gives pupils clear guidance were seen. However this is not a consistent practice across the school and marking does not always help pupils to improve learning so they do not make the same mistakes in the future. Teachers do not check the quality of pupils' responses.
- Pupils take pride in their work and work in pupils' books is very well presented.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most of them behave well in and around the school. They have consistently positive attitudes to learning including during whole-class sessions, group work or when working alone. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They are well prepared for learning, for example in bringing correct equipment to lessons, and settle quickly.
- Pupils respond well to all adults in the school and learning flows smoothly. There is very little low-level disruption.
- All the staff that responded to the staff questionnaire agree that behaviour in the school is good and consistently well managed. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the school's annual parental survey and those who met inspectors agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Behaviour observed at break times and lunchtime was good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. It has provided training for all adults in managing any incidents which may arise. Pupils are clear on how to stay safe on the internet and say they feel safe in the school. This is also the view of parents, carers and school staff. The school has provided training on different forms of bullying. Promoting safe use of the internet is established across subjects.
- Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, which is promoted well through teaching and assemblies.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous and respectful to visitors. They play well together and enjoy good relationships with other pupils and adults. Pupils have a positive work ethic, as shown, for example, by the volume of work in books and pupils' typically good participation in lessons.
- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say that bullying and name calling, including racist behaviour, are rare and, if they occur, are dealt with effectively and promptly. This is reflected in the very low number of incidents recorded in the school's behaviour logs this academic year.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently well by using the school's behaviour management procedures. Pupils respond well to these procedures.
- Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities; for example, older pupils read with younger pupils, and they 'have a say' in improving school lunches and a playground improvement project. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve next steps in learning.
- Attendance is above average and fixed-term exclusions are reducing. There are good systems in place to support families and children. The school has appointed a parent support adviser who liaises with parents and carers actively and ensures that pupils are punctual to the school. The school works well with outside agencies resulting in positive outcomes for pupils at risk of not doing well.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors communicate high expectations and are passionate about continually driving the school forward. Leaders know the school well and share their ambitions with the staff. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. They have built well-informed plans for the future.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning of all staff so that they all know their strengths and areas for improvement. However, middle leaders who are new to their role are not making good checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects.
- There is a supportive culture within the school as senior leaders demonstrate highly effective teaching and learning.
- The system for setting targets for teachers is very closely linked to the quality of their teaching, pupils' progress and staff training. The school provides training and support linked to the school's priorities and staff development needs.
- Regular checks on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils are very good. These help teachers to identify pupils who are making good progress and others who require additional support including those who are at risk of not doing as well.
- The teaching of separate subjects is well planned. There are clear links between literacy and other subjects. The curriculum is focused on developing pupils' basic skills. It is enriched through a range of visits, community links, music and a wide range of after-school clubs and sports. All that the school offers promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The pupil premium is allocated very effectively to raise the achievement of eligible pupils by employing an additional teacher and teaching assistants to support targeted pupils. As a result, these pupils' progress is good. Parents and carers welcome this approach.
- The school makes effective use of the additional funding for sport to reduce the cost for pupil participation in sporting activities. The number of pupils who are participating in these activities has increased and now there is a waiting list for a number of clubs.
- The school works very well with parents and carers. It communicates through a range of channels, including emails, meetings, sharing curriculum plans, regular newsletters and the school website.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination by ensuring pupils who are not making sufficient progress are given extra support to achieve well. Regular checks on pupils' progress mean that any who need extra help are quickly identified and provided with specific support.
- The local authority support is regular and it knows the school's strengths and areas for improvement very well. It has full confidence in the leadership of the executive headteacher.
- The school's safeguarding systems are robust and maintained to a high standard.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable, passionate and have high expectations for the school. They know how the school's results compare against national standards and pay close attention to the school's checks on pupils' progress. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors visit the school regularly to gather the views of pupils, staff and parents and carers. They challenge the senior leadership team by asking relevant questions. Governors make sure that the system for setting targets for staff is robust and linked closely to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They regularly check that the pupil premium and the additional sports funding is used effectively. They check that the gap between the pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils in the school is closing rapidly. The governing body has employed a part-time school's finance officer to ensure that the budget is allocated carefully to match the school's priorities. Governors undertake regular training to improve their effectiveness and make sure that statutory requirements are met fully.

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

Unique reference number	101224
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	440285

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Gayler
Headteacher	Wendy Heffernan
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 November 2012
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