

Marks Gate Infants School

Lawn Farm Grove, Romford, Essex RM6 5LL

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors do not have an accurate picture of the school's overall effectiveness. They have not identified priorities for development sharply enough to drive swift improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The early years provision requires improvement. Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year have been below national averages over recent years. Children are not well prepared for the start of Year 1.
- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. Leaders have not made sure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is not well planned to build pupils' key skills strongly. Together with gaps in teachers' subject knowledge, this slows pupils' progress.
- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Teachers' use of assessment information is variable. Tasks are sometimes too easy for the most able pupils and too demanding for pupils who need to catch up.
- Pupils' personal development requires improvement. Sometimes pupils do not persevere in their work when teachers set tasks that are not well matched to their learning needs.
- Members of the governing body have not challenged leaders to improve pupils' outcomes with urgency. Governors' checks on the use of additional funding have not made sure that differences in achievement diminish rapidly between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They conduct themselves sensibly in classrooms. Behaviour in the dining hall is calm and orderly. Boys and girls play well together at breaktime and readily share sporting equipment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully.
- Pupils' handwriting is neat and careful. Teachers encourage pupils to practise handwriting regularly. This helps pupils to present their work neatly in all subjects.
- The new headteacher has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and has identified where rapid improvements are needed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and increase rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers develop their subject knowledge where they have weaknesses
 - teachers set suitably demanding tasks that enable pupils to make swift progress in their learning
 - teaching assistants contribute more consistently to pupils' learning
 - the curriculum develops pupils' key skills securely
 - pupil premium funding is used more effectively to diminish the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Improve children's learning in the early years by making sure that they make swift progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, by making sure that:
 - information about pupils' outcomes is used accurately to measure the effectiveness of teaching and the school's performance and identify where improvement is necessary
 - development planning identifies the most significant priorities for action to drive rapid improvement
 - governors develop their skills in holding school leaders rigorously to account for the school's outcomes.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not made sure that teachers' expectations of pupils' learning throughout the school are ambitious enough. Over recent years, improvements to children's outcomes at the end of the Reception Year and in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been slow. Leaders have not worked with urgency to increase rates of progress and raise pupils' outcomes. Since the previous inspection and currently, too few children are well prepared for the start of key stage 1 compared with national averages. Fewer pupils than the national average reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Although standards are average by the end of Year 2, pupils' progress requires improvement.
- Leaders have not made sure that evaluations of teaching, learning and assessment take enough account of the impact of provision on improving pupils' progress and raising standards. Teachers' performance has not been well managed to secure consistency in teaching quality. As a result, variability in the impact of teaching on pupils' learning has not been identified and addressed quickly to secure better outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, have not assured themselves that training helps teachers and teaching assistants to develop secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Variability in approaches to teaching phonics between classes and year groups hinders pupils' progress in early reading. Pupils' progress in mathematics is diminished when explanations of tasks are not clear.
- The impact of additional funding on diminishing differences is not measured closely enough. Leaders and governors do not check routinely how effectively the pupil premium funding promotes equality of opportunity and leads to better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, differences remain between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils at the school and other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The impact of the curriculum on pupils' development and progress is variable. Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum helps pupils to build key skills strongly in reading, writing and mathematics as they progress through the school. Pupils enjoy studying history, science and creative subjects which enrich the curriculum.
- A more systematic approach to developing pupils' handwriting is successful in helping pupils to write fluently and present their written work neatly in all subjects.
- The new headteacher and recently appointed leaders have been quick to identify correctly where improvements are needed to the school's provision. It is too soon to see any impact on outcomes for pupils.

- Extra-curricular clubs are popular, including those for street dance and computing. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered positively. For example, pupils are enthusiastic to take responsibility for the buddy bench in the playground. Pupils' careful art work on display around the school shows the good range of artists whose work they have studied. Learning key vocabulary in a foreign language each month supports pupils' cultural awareness effectively. Visits to local places of worship help pupils learn about a variety of faiths and encourage respect and tolerance of others. Together with electing pupil members of the school council, this helps pupils learn about fundamental British values.
- Pupils appreciate the wide variety of sporting equipment that is available to use at breaktime and the activities organised by sports coaches. The physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively to organise a variety of sporting clubs, including those for football, gym and multi-sports, and to increase participation rates.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has an over-positive view of how well the school has done since the previous inspection. Too readily, governors have accepted senior leaders' and outside consultants' confident evaluations of the school's work. Governors have not made sufficient use of the school's assessment information to challenge leaders to raise outcomes for all pupils and diminish differences between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. They are aware of how the pupil premium is used but have not held leaders to account over outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school makes sure that pupils are supported and safe. Specialist staff work very closely with parents and carers to support vulnerable pupils and their families. In informal discussions, parents were appreciative of the school's work to keep their children safe.
- Safeguarding training takes place at least annually and keeps staff and members of the governing body up to date with current guidance. Staff are confident that they are fully aware of different types of abuse. For example, leaders have made sure that members of staff are well informed and know how to identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm from extreme behaviours and views. They have also considered specific local risks to pupils' safety. Leaders make sure staff know that they all play a fundamental part in keeping pupils safe from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite the range of pupils' abilities, teachers often set pupils tasks in class with a similar degree of difficulty. Teachers do not use information from assessments carefully to plan what pupils need to learn next. Pupils' learning is hampered when there is a lack of stretch for the most able pupils or when work is too demanding for pupils at risk of falling behind and those who speak English as an additional language.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently secure, particularly in reading and mathematics. Sometimes, teachers do not select the most suitable tasks to help pupils deepen their knowledge in mathematics. As a result of inconsistencies in approaches to teaching phonics in key stage 1, weaker readers are not helped to build early reading confidence. This includes those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. When the most able pupils practise letter sounds that they know already, their rate of progress slows.
- Pupils' progress is not well supported when teachers and teaching assistants do not pick up and address inaccuracies in their work quickly. Learning time is wasted when the most able pupils finish tasks quickly and wait to be told what work they need to do next.
- Teaching assistants' contribution to pupils' progress is variable. Leaders have not made sure that all teaching assistants are trained to support pupils' learning effectively, particularly in phonics.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also variable. These pupils learn well when teaching assistants help them to complete tasks that are selected to meet their needs. For example, in a mathematics session in key stage 1, these pupils learned well because the additional adult helped them to use resources and supported their understanding successfully.
- Handwriting skills are developed consistently well. Pupils practise handwriting regularly and as a result, written work in pupils' books, including in science, history and design and technology, is typically careful and neat.
- Classroom routines are well established and teachers make sure that pupils understand the behaviour that is expected. As a result, lessons run smoothly although learning flags when teachers do not spot quickly those pupils who cannot set to work because tasks are too difficult or they have not understood.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils follow teachers' instructions but do not always listen carefully in lessons or understand fully how to be successful learners. Some pupils lack perseverance and their attention wanders, for example when work is too demanding, or while waiting to know what to do next.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility at the school as members of the school council. Leaders have made changes to the school curriculum in response to suggestions made by the pupils. Pupils enthusiastically use the sporting equipment available at breaktime and this fosters their physical development well.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They are confident that members of the school council will help them sort any issues if they sit on the buddy bench in the playground. They confirm that instances of any bullying are rare. Older pupils know how to cross the road safely. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to avoid risks to their well-being when using information and communication technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming and get on well together. Relationships in lessons and around the school are positive. Pupils show respect for one another. They look after the school's resources carefully and the school site is graffiti- and litter free. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly at breaktime and in class. The most able pupils wait patiently when they have completed their work. Pupils who lose concentration rarely disrupt the learning of others.
- Attendance rates in this infant school have improved since the previous inspection and are close to the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced. Pupils know the importance of attending school every day and are motivated to win the trophy for the class with the best attendance each week.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Expectations of pupils' outcomes have not been sufficiently ambitious since the previous inspection to help pupils make swift progress in their learning and raise attainment strongly.
- Pupils' progress in reading requires improvement, particularly in Year 1. Standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been below the national average since 2013 and improvements have been small. Provisional Year 1 phonics screening check results for 2016 suggest that this remains the case. Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils make inconsistent progress that requires improvement overall.
- The pupil premium is not used to secure lasting improvements to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reached the expected standards in reading and writing decreased compared with the previous year.
- However, in mathematics in 2014 and 2015, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reached the expected standards was the same as the national average.
- In assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics, fewer of the most able disadvantaged pupils reached the highest standards in assessments in 2015 compared with other most-able pupils nationally. In writing, the most able disadvantaged pupils did better and performed as well as other most-able pupils nationally.
- The progress of the most able pupils is uneven. In lessons, work is not consistently demanding to accelerate their learning. They generally make swifter progress in extra reading and mathematics club sessions in key stage 1 where work is tailored to their needs.
- Engaging activities in other curriculum subjects including art, science and history help pupils deepen their knowledge and make strong progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils and provision for these pupils requires improvement.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in reading, writing and mathematics that requires improvement. Teaching assistants are not well trained to support pupils' learning in these basic skills consistently well. Extra sessions from therapists and specialists support pupils' social and emotional development effectively.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children's outcomes overall at the end of the Reception Year require improvement. Fewer children compared with national averages are well prepared for the start of Year 1. Leaders and governors have not used the pupil premium funding to diminish fully the differences in outcomes between disadvantaged children and other non-disadvantaged children nationally.
- In the early years provision, the most able children's progress requires improvement. They are not identified and supported quickly to increase rates of progress from their starting points.
- The impact of leaders and managers on the quality of teaching requires improvement. In the early years provision, children do not develop the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics quickly. Leaders and managers have not made sure that children practise writing and phonics regularly in the Nursery and Reception classes. The contribution of teaching assistants to developing children's confidence as early readers is variable.
- In mathematics, children's progress slows when tasks are too easy. Information from assessments is not used thoughtfully to make sure that the most able children are given work that challenges them to extend and deepen their learning.
- Routines help to make sure that children settle quickly when they join the school and that they are happy. The school works in successful partnership with parents. Parents are encouraged to regularly spend time with their children in the Nursery class so they can help to support their children's early learning. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the same care and support as those in Years 1 and 2.
- In the outside areas, boys and girls enjoy the high-quality resources that encourage children's physical development effectively. Children shared tricycles, climbing apparatus and building blocks readily and safely. Speaking and listening are prioritised and this helps children to develop strong social skills.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 101210 |
| Local authority | Barking and Dagenham |
| Inspection number | 10000964 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 289 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roger Gayler |
| Headteacher | Jacqui Barnard |
| Telephone number | 020 82704448 |
| Website | http://marksgate-i.bardaglea.org.uk |
| Email address | office@marksgate-i.bardaglea.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16–17 January 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about admissions arrangements, links to school performance tables, the curriculum for each year including phonics, the PE and sport premium for primary schools, the pupil premium strategy, provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities and charging and remissions on its website.
- This infant school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is larger than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A greater proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language than found nationally.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has entered into a federation with Marks Gate Junior School. The two schools share a governing body.

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2016 and is the headteacher of both schools. There were a number of other staffing changes in September 2016, including to the school's senior leadership team.
- Children attend the Nursery part time in the morning or the afternoon and a few children attend full time for half the week. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 teaching sessions from Nursery to Year 2. Over half of these were conducted together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and around the school, and looked at work in pupils' books. They also met with groups of children from the Reception Year and pupils from key stage 1 and listened to pupils read. Inspectors held a discussion with two representatives from the local authority and met with four governors including the chair of the governing body.
- They looked at documents provided by the school, including assessment information and self-evaluation reports. The school's records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, for them to be reviewed. Inspectors spoke informally with parents during the inspection and considered the school's own recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Madeleine Gerard, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Sean Flood | Ofsted Inspector |
| Eleanor Whilby | Ofsted Inspector |
| Hilary Ryan | Ofsted Inspector |

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