

# Marks Gate Junior School

Rose Lane, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 5NJ

## Inspection dates

3–4 October 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils are aspirational. The behaviour and personal development of pupils are outstanding.
- Pupils are resilient to failure and eager to know how to improve. This is because all teachers reinforce positive attitudes to learning.
- School leaders are aspirational, creating a culture that enables all to excel. This is reflected in the outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare seen in the school.
- The actions of the executive headteacher, head of school and middle leaders have maintained the good teaching and outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Overall, pupils attain well across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving across most subjects.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils and rates of progress of lower-ability pupils are not as high as they could be.
- Attendance has risen. Rates of persistent absence have fallen, as has the number of exclusions.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account. They have a clear vision for the school.
- Teaching is not consistently of the highest quality in subjects such as geography, music, art, science, design and technology, and history. It does not consistently enable pupils to develop their interests and talents in these subjects.
- The proportion of pupils that reach the higher standard in mathematics is below average.
- Leadership of the wider curriculum is developing. Some aspects of the curriculum are not sufficiently well planned to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities to extend and move pupils' learning on in lessons.
- Additional adults are not deployed as well as they could be to ensure that younger learners are fully supported.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
  - ensuring that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard in mathematics rises to match the proportion seen nationally
  - raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school and increasing the rates of progress of the lower-attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - identifying opportunities to move pupils along more quickly so that no time is wasted in lessons, presenting better opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' learning
  - strengthening teaching in the wider curriculum so that pupils can develop the interests and talents they have in these subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - deepening, developing and widening the curriculum offer across the school, so that all pupils, particularly the most able, can expand their skills and knowledge more rapidly
  - ensuring that the deployment of additional adults effectively supports the learning of the younger pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher, working closely with the head of school, has successfully steered the school through a period of change. Together, they have focused on the actions required to improve the school. They are skilful and effective delegators and are well supported by a dedicated senior leadership team. Senior leaders have ensured that the middle leaders are well trained. The school has good capacity to continue to improve standards further.
- Leaders and governors are aspirational, creating a culture that enables all to excel. This is clearly seen in the relentless drive to improve the personal development and behaviour of pupils, which is now outstanding.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have detailed plans to make it even better. The school's improvement in standards over the past two years demonstrates the impact of leaders' actions.
- Rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning are having a positive impact on strengthening their attainment. Teachers check the progress of different groups of pupils, and are alerted to any individual or year group falling behind or needing support. They take rapid action to get pupils back on track.
- Subject leaders conduct regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. This is done in a variety of ways, such as through formal lesson observations, learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. Leaders quickly follow up any actions and targets that are set for teachers.
- Performance management has a high profile in developing the effectiveness of staff. Teachers work in partnership with leaders to identify their strengths and any areas of practice they need to improve. They have access to high-quality training, coaching and mentoring support. This is having a positive effect on the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across all year groups.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used to benefit disadvantaged pupils. Specific interventions support learning and enable this group of pupils to participate in a wide range of opportunities, both in and out of school. During the last academic year, the progress of disadvantaged pupils improved. However, disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as they could, and pupils of lower ability do not yet make as much progress as they could. Sometimes the deployment of additional adults does not effectively support the younger pupils.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively ensures that their needs are met. Funding for these pupils is used well. Pupils are identified quickly and receive tailored support, such as speech and language therapy and emotional and behavioural support.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by visitors coming into school, special event days, and trips to local places of interest.
- Although the curriculum is sound, school leaders have identified that provision could be

widened so that the needs and talents of all pupils can be met more effectively. Pupils told inspectors that they would enjoy more opportunities to pursue their interests to more advanced levels in, for example, art, music, geography and design and technology. Also, too often in lessons, inspectors saw activities which limited learning, so that pupils, especially the most able, were not able to learn the most that they could.

- The school is justifiably proud of its work to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning and British values. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through a range of activities and studies. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and ways of life. For example, pupils visit buildings of historical, cultural or spiritual significance. Pupils talk reflectively and thoughtfully about these experiences, showing that they place a high value on them.
- Leaders have taken wide-ranging actions to reduce the number of exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions since 2014. The number of fixed-term exclusions has dropped sharply.
- Using a variety of support systems, leaders have improved attendance to above the national average while, at the same time, driving down levels of persistent absence at the school.
- The parents and carers who spoke to inspectors were overwhelmingly of the opinion that Marks Gate Juniors is a good school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need further improvement. This is because they receive detailed information from the executive headteacher, head of school, and other leaders about pupils' progress. They visit the school regularly to find out for themselves about the quality of teaching and learning. This enables them to ask probing questions about how well pupils are doing.
- Governors monitor the use of additional government funding to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors also play a full part in securing sufficiently skilled staff to meet the pupils' wide-ranging needs. The governing body undertakes regular training, for example in safeguarding and checking school performance, and ensures full adherence to statutory requirements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Marks Gate. The school provides a safe and caring environment for pupils. Leaders have put measures into place to ensure that all pupils stay safe.
- Leaders ensure that staff have received up-to-date safeguarding training and training for the 'Prevent' duty. Members of staff are familiar with the procedures employed in the school. Records are well maintained and governors effectively fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- All statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. The site is secure, and staff make appropriate checks on visitors when they arrive at

the school.

- Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they felt safe. This view is shared by parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching and support staff ensure that their classrooms are attractive and welcoming. Displays are colourful, well maintained and assist pupils in their learning. For example, displays are used well to explain the end-of-year expectations for pupils.
- Pupils show enthusiasm during lessons because staff take the time to find out about what they know and understand, and what they need to do to improve. Pupils appreciate the feedback they receive and take pride in their work.
- Pupils are resilient to failure and eager to know how to improve. This is because all teachers reinforce strongly positive attitudes to learning. This is a key strength of the teaching and learning in the school. All pupils want to succeed and relish the challenge. For example, one Year 3 pupil explained that she had chosen to read 'a hard book' about animals. Although she struggled with the text, she used her skills and showed great determination. At the end, she told the inspector that she wanted to get better at reading so that she 'could read lots of books about animals'.
- There is an agreed system for assessing pupils on a regular basis in all classes. This ensures that any individual or year group falling behind or needing support is identified swiftly. As a result of teachers' clear focus on pupils' progress information, most pupils make good or better progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are consistently high.
- There is minor variation in teaching across the school which leaders are addressing. Where teaching is more effective, teachers consistently use effective questioning to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in one lesson, pupils were acting and encouraged to speak with expression as they explored ways of building atmosphere in their written work. Similarly, strong teaching in mathematics stimulates and encourages pupils to think more deeply. Pupils rise to the challenge, for example when using their knowledge of times tables to explore multiples in depth.
- Where teaching is less strong, teacher's subject knowledge is less secure. Sometimes, pupils could be moved on in their learning more quickly. This occurs because the task is too easy or the curriculum is not matched to pupils' levels of ability. Similarly, opportunities to reinforce learning are sometimes missed.
- The quality of teaching in the wider curriculum is variable. Sometimes, the use of curriculum materials used by teachers do not offer sufficient depth or breadth to extend pupils' learning. Occasionally, the curriculum places unnecessary limitations on what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teachers incorporate pupils' diverse backgrounds and draw on these in order to extend pupils' understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have very good social skills and are confident and communicative. They respond very well to all that the school offers them in increasing and developing their social and cultural skills. As such, they are very good ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils are full of pride when talking about their learning and take their lessons seriously. Discussions indicated that they maintain their focus and do not want to waste any time.
- Pupils are aspirational. This has been engendered by the work of the school. For example, in discussions, several pupils told inspectors that they wanted to go on to university to further their studies. One pupil stated that he wanted to become an archaeologist because 'we can learn a lot from the past'.
- Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of concentration and maintain a very sharp focus on their learning. They are not easily deterred from working. They demonstrate persistence and a thirst for learning which makes them eager to learn and want to come to school. As a result, rates of attendance at the school are above the national averages, and rates of persistent absence have reduced sharply.
- In lessons and during social times, pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other. They spoke feelingly about helping each other if they are stuck in lessons or if they are in difficulties on the playground.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including social bullying and e-safety, racist behaviour, religious prejudice and name-calling. They are taught how to oppose these unacceptable behaviours, such as in assemblies and during personal and social education sessions.
- The older pupils show maturity and take responsibility. They model the values of the school and show respect for others. Pupils told inspectors that they help to ensure that there are no problems around the school of any kind.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Exemplary behaviour for learning is the norm at Marks Gate Junior School.
- Staff are highly effective in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff communicate high expectations of behaviour across the school. Pupils are taught how to manage their feelings and apply themselves to their learning. They line up and enter the building quietly and, while moving around the site, they maintain good self-control. Exceptionally good behaviour means that pupils are ready to learn.
- Pupils feel safe in school, trust the adults who work with them and know they can turn to someone if they have worries or concerns. They know that adults are always around and that their teachers assess possible risks linked to activities before they take them out of the school building. Parents, like their children, are assured that the school is a

very safe place.

- There are a few pupils at the school who exhibit challenging behaviours at times. However, it is notable how quickly and positively these pupils respond to the instructions of adults. This is because adults apply consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They immediately settle and return to their learning and do not affect the others in class.
- Occasionally, pupils lose concentration when the teacher does not notice that they have completed a task and are ready to move on to something new.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Attainment at the school has risen. Standards reached were broadly in line with national results in 2017 and 2018. Although standards have risen, the school accepts that there is still more to do to improve pupils' progress and standards.
- Pupils' skills and needs on entry to the school vary. Many pupils enter Year 3 with skills and knowledge below what would normally be expected for their age. However, the impact of the school's work ensures that by the time pupils transfer to secondary school, almost all have caught up, with good proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards.
- A good example of this was seen in the improvements in reading, which have risen strongly. In 2017, 64% reached the standard expected or above, but in 2018, the provisional information shows that 73% reached that standard, which was in line with national figures.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is improving. Although still behind their peers, the gap is closing quickly.
- The good progress made by pupils is evident in their well-presented books, in which they take great pride. Pupils' oral responses also show their good understanding in carefully considered explanations of their work. This was seen, for example, in one group in Year 6, where pupils could explain why a character in a story reacted the way they did.
- Pupils make good progress in extending their writing skills. Many are supported well by broadening their vocabulary through class discussions and sharing ideas. As a result, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard and the higher standard in writing in 2018 were similar to those seen nationally.
- Pupils respond well to improved teaching in mathematics. They say they enjoy mathematics and demonstrate a range of skills and knowledge with confidence. This was evident in Year 6, for example, where pupils' thoughtful responses to the teacher's questions showed their good understanding of fractions and decimal fractions.
- Although the standards in mathematics at the school have been consistently good for some years, not enough pupils reach the higher standard.
- The work in pupils' books and visits to lessons showed that there is some variation in the progress made by lower-attaining pupils. Some of these pupils make good progress towards their targets but others do not. Sometimes, these pupils are not supported well and this limits their progress. This is more evident in the lower part of the school

where there is less adult assistance available.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive well-planned support. Staff work closely with parents and external specialists to increase pupils' self-confidence and promote good progress.



## School details

Unique reference number	101224
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10047594

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Turner
Executive headteacher	Jacqui Barnard
Head of school	Karen Taylor
Telephone number	020 8270 4438
Website	<a href="http://www.marksgate-j.bardaglea.org.uk/">www.marksgate-j.bardaglea.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@marksgate-j.bardaglea.org.uk">office@marksgate-j.bardaglea.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2014

## Information about this school

- Marks Gate is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- 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.
- Just over one third of pupils are from a White British heritage. Other pupils are from a variety of other ethnic heritages, including Black British African.
- Nearly half the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a much higher proportion than average.
- Nearly half the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, including some joint observations with school leaders. They also spent time looking through pupils' books and listening to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority. Discussions were also held with senior and middle leaders, and newly qualified staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents before and after the school day. They also considered the responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, as well as other conversations with pupils in school and on the playground. Views from 21 staff questionnaires were also considered. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records related to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. Inspectors also examined the school's records of checks on the quality of teaching.

## Inspection team

Martin Roberts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Lack	Ofsted Inspector
Rani Karim	Ofsted Inspector

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