

Inspection of Market Field School

School Road, Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex CO7 7ET

Inspection dates: 16–17 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well cared for in this friendly and welcoming school. They attend school well and enjoy the many different experiences, such as day and residential trips. Parents are very positive about how effectively the school meets the individual needs of their child.

Around both school sites, there is a sense of calm and purpose to the school day. Adults set clear routines that pupils follow well. Pupils' behaviour in and out of class is good. Adults manage pupils' personal anxieties towards learning consistently, dealing swiftly with any potential disagreements or bullying. Exclusions are rare.

Leaders want pupils to achieve their best, personally and academically. Adults use and review pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans effectively. Pupils study a wide range of subjects across all key stages. Older pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education or employment.

Adults provide exceptionally well for pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Adults use a number of therapeutic approaches and resources to help pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils grow in confidence and develop positive relationships with adults and each other.

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

Leaders have organised the curriculum into different pathways. All pupils study a wide range of subjects throughout all key stages. The curriculum is well organised, particularly from the start of key stage 3 onwards. The teaching of English and mathematics is of a consistent quality, especially in key stages 3 and 4.

Individual pupil's needs are well considered. Teachers use the information from pupils' EHC plans effectively to plan learning that helps pupils achieve their best.

Teachers expect pupils to work hard and achieve. In key stage 4, some pupils have taken part in West Side Story as part of their drama lessons. Pupils respond well to adult's high expectations, and they persevere with their activities. In key stage 3, pupils are encouraged to write long stories. Teachers provide pupils with clear explanations and expectations of what they want pupils to achieve. Pupils' books show they are using the skills they are being taught.

In the primary phase, pupils enjoy reading to adults in the well-stocked library. They especially like reading to the therapy dog. Younger pupils have daily phonics lessons. However, the quality of support staff's subject knowledge varies too much. Some do not explain sounds and letters as well as they should. Pupils are learning to read words but are not building fluency and understanding as well as they could. This is mostly the case in key stage 2. Leaders have firm plans for additional training for

staff, but this has not yet taken place.

Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's curriculum. Phase leaders know that they have not been as successful with designing a curriculum in all subjects. In subjects such as food technology, there is not a logical progression across year groups. There is a greater need for leaders to consider how pupils deepen their knowledge and skills in each key stage in some subjects.

Pupils enjoy subjects such as physical education (PE) and art. These are often taught by specialist teachers who have a secure understanding of how to build pupils' knowledge and skills over a period of time. In one PE lesson, pupils were systematically shown how to perform lunges. Through precise explanation, pupils were successful in repeating the exercise. The quality of teaching in these subjects is consistent across both sites.

The quality of education in the sixth form is a strength of the school. Adults know students well. They identify students' interests and match these to meaningful work placements and courses of study. Students are becoming increasingly successful year-on-year, gaining a range of qualifications. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

Young pupils who receive their education in the autism pathway classes receive a highly structured approach that meets their needs effectively. There is clear progression for pupils who are pre-verbal, so they develop communication skills.

The head of school has an accurate view of where the school needs to improve further. The local governing body offers good support to leaders. Governors have an increasingly secure understanding of where they need to challenge leaders further to ensure that the quality of education continues to develop and improve.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They say that leaders consider workload and staff welfare when making decisions. They have more mixed views about how much training has been provided in the past. Teachers who are new to the profession are receiving appropriate support.

Parents are positive about the work of the school. They feel included as part of the school. Many parents commented on how well their children develop personal hygiene skills, socialisation and independent skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. They train staff appropriately. Staff are alert to the signs that show pupils with SEND may be at risk. Staff report concerns, using the school's systems. The team of safeguarding leaders are diligent and ensure that pupils and families are well supported. They work with external

agencies when necessary so that pupils receive the support that is needed.

Pupils who are looked after are very well cared for. Their safety and welfare are thoughtfully considered. Leaders often go above and beyond to ensure pupils are safe.

Pupils say that they are safe, and that staff listen to them. Older pupils have a well-designed curriculum to help them learn how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about the dangers of county lines drug dealing and keeping safe online.

The trust has not checked recruitment records as rigorously as they should. They have not kept fully up to date with changes in processes and procedures. However, the head of school ensures that new staff employment complies with government expectations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to provide precise training to teaching assistants in the primary key stage. This is to ensure that all staff can help pupils learn to read and develop the fluency they need.
- Subject leaders need to become more effective in ensuring that the curriculum in their area of responsibility is clear and progressive. This is to ensure that there is a logical approach to the teaching of all subjects and across all key stages.
- Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum for subjects such as food technology is based on what pupils need to know and do so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- The trust needs to ensure that processes and procedures for the recruitment and retention of staff always reflect good practice. They need to have clear systems in place for reviewing checks on long-serving members of staff.

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](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143589
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10124524
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	55
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Andrews
Executive headteacher	Gary Smith
Head of School	Ruth Whitehead
Website	www.marketfieldschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Market Field School converted to an academy in November 2016. The predecessor school was rated outstanding in February 2015.
- Market Field Learning Community opened in July 2017. The trust added a sixth form and also sponsored another local special school. They are due to open a free school in 2020. The school has grown significantly since 2016 and is currently oversubscribed.
- The executive headteacher is the chief executive officer of the trust. He has been a long-serving leader at Market Field School.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. The school provides specialist education for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. Some pupils have multiple needs.
- A few children start at Reception age. There are too few to make a judgement on

the quality of early years without identifying individual children.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, phase leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils.
- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were reading, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE), food technology and physical education. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, met leaders, and teachers, spoke with pupils, and looked at pupils' work and EHC plans.
- Inspectors took account of 80 responses to parent view and 46 responses to the questionnaire for staff. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents over the course of the inspection. Comments made on the free-text service were also considered.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including the school's summary of its own strengths and weaknesses, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school policies and procedures, together with statutory information on the school website.
- Inspectors considered a range of information to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding. They reviewed school policies, met with the designated safeguarding leader, and spoke with pupils, parents, teachers and support staff. Inspectors reviewed the school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and welfare was considered at different times of the school day. Inspectors observed pupils at the start and end of the school day, and during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Mullan	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector

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