



Inspection report

Marks Gate Junior School

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 101224
LEA Barking and Dagenham

Inspection number 269325
Inspection dates 6 – 7 October 2004
Reporting inspector Cathie Munt HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the school Inspectors Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act.

Type of School	Junior	School address	Rose Lane
School category	Community		Chadwell Heath
Age range of pupils	7 - 11		Romford
			Essex RM6 5NJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8270 4438
Number on roll	275	Fax number	020 8270 4454
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs L Foster
Date of previous inspection	July 1999	Headteacher	Mrs S Hitchen

Age group	Published	Reference no.
7 - 11	November 2004	269325

Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Marks Gate Junior School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Marks Gate Junior is a larger than average school of 275 pupils serving a disadvantaged area in the north of Barking and Dagenham. Just under half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is well above average. Almost 14 per cent of the pupils speak English as their second or third language; this is a higher proportion than that generally found in primary schools. A significant number of the pupils join the school after the usual starting time. Many of these pupils live some distance from the school and leave when places become available closer to home. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is considerably above the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is low. In 2002 the school gained Investors in People status and a School Achievement Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school where pupils learn well and are happy. The headteacher and staff know their pupils well and are open to seeking ways to improve. They have accurately judged progress and learning, teaching and the level of care for the pupils to be good. Leadership and management are good overall because of the strong leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team. This has resulted in effective teamwork and a strong commitment among all of the staff, which serves the pupils' needs well. Worthwhile and well-targeted staff development maintains the good quality of teaching, and other provision, for the pupils. The Governing Body is not functioning effectively enough but appropriate actions are in place to bring about improvement.

Good teaching results in the pupils making better than expected progress in their learning. Assessment information is used well to improve the pupils' learning, but could be analysed further to provide additional information for the management team. Attendance is unsatisfactory because it is well below the national average. Pupils' personal development is very good and they all get along together extremely well. Standards are rising and all of the pupils make good progress in their learning. The pupils are proud of their school. They find learning rewarding and participate eagerly in the range of activities provided for them. Marks Gate is an inclusive school where every child matters. It gives good value for money.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Improvement since the 1999 inspection has been good and the key issues identified have been addressed well. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and writing have risen to expected levels. Lessons plans are clear and meet pupils' needs. Information for parents is good and almost all statutory requirements are met. Standards are higher than at the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall. Teaching remains good. Pupils' personal development is now a strength of the school.

Grade:2

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to make further improvement. It has accurately diagnosed its strengths and weaknesses, but could make more effective use of assessment information to identify the factors that promote or hinder pupils' progress. Leadership provides clear direction for the work of the school and is committed to high standards. Teaching is good and promotes better than expected progress.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body.
- Make more effective use of assessment data.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Standards are rising steadily and are in line with the national average. The progress made by the pupils in their learning is good. It is better than that made by pupils in similar schools and is better than expected given the standards achieved by the pupils on entry to the school. The school has been particularly effective in improving the pupils' writing, and the current focus on speaking and listening is developing the pupils' thinking skills well.

The targets set for the Year 6 pupils are challenging and are mainly met. Lower attaining pupils, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning because of careful planning and well-focussed support from teachers and other adults. A greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in English and science than in similar schools. In 2004 more pupils achieved Level 5 in English and mathematics than in the previous year.

Factors contributing to this improvement are the well-ordered systems that have been established over the years by the headteacher; the consistent quality of the teaching; the effective support provided by the staff; and a calm and orderly atmosphere that is conducive to developing good learning habits.

Pupils' personal development is very good and is a strength of the school. The school successfully provides an environment where pupils develop as well-rounded individuals. Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are polite and helpful to staff, visitors and to each other. They are proud of their school. The school council provides pupils with opportunities to contribute practically to the school community and to grow as young citizens. Their discussions have led to a "friendship" bench where pupils can give a little time to those who feel lonely at break-time.

Social and moral development is strong. Pupils show high levels of understanding of what makes a happy, safe and honest community. Spiritual development is satisfactory. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to think about personal responses to such situations as breaking a friendship. The potential of collective worship to promote spiritual development further is not always realised. Although the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, with strengths in music, art and visits to places of interest, the cultural diversity of society is not celebrated or promoted sufficiently.

Attendance is unsatisfactory. This is due to a relatively small number of pupils who do not attend regularly. The school's strategies to promote attendance are satisfactory.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is good and is a key factor in the good progress that pupils make.

Teaching and learning are consistently good, with examples of very good practice. This is because teachers know the curriculum well, plan carefully and make secure assessments of pupils' progress. The best lessons ensure that pupils are clear about what they are to learn, involve them in presenting ideas and challenge their thinking. In a lesson on story beginnings, these factors were used to good effect when pupils critically analysed their own writing against that of a published author. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils and help them to achieve well.

There is a wealth of assessment information and it is used proficiently at pupil level, informing teachers' planning. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and support is provided for those pupils, including those with additional learning needs, whose progress is not as good as expected. Good use is also made of the data to determine whole school priorities, such as the current focus on improving speaking and listening skills. The school is not using the data well enough to identify possible causes of less or better than expected progress.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as a Samba class and a computer club. It meets the needs of the pupils well. After-school clubs are well attended. The police provide an input on road safety and drug awareness, and the school nurse contributes to pupils' understanding of staying healthy. The new adventure trail has increased the opportunities for the pupils to exercise safely. An annual residential trip and visits to places of interest extend the pupils' learning effectively. The programme for personal, social and health education teaches the pupils about relationships and economic awareness in the world of work. Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection with the installation of a computer suite and a detailed programme of study. The potential of ICT to support other subjects is not fully realised. However, the school is making good use of external support to develop this area of the curriculum.

Pupils are looked-after admirably. They receive good support to help them achieve well and to grow as happy and confident individuals. They feel safe in a community where bullying is unacceptable and any incidents are dealt with promptly. Pupils enjoy their experiences in school and value the variety of provision. They know that they matter and as one pupil noted, "nobody is left out here".

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides the school with a clear vision which is shared by the staff, the governors and the pupils. The senior management team and the headteacher monitor and evaluate teaching effectively. The school provides high quality staff training and this has been a significant factor in helping to maintain the good quality of provision for all of the pupils. A high level of teamwork and a strong commitment to

the school from the staff reflect the good leadership of the headteacher and serve the pupils well. The assistant headteachers are effective in promoting good teaching practices and they provide a good model for all staff in their own management practices. The teachers and the support staff know the pupils very well and provide all of them with a high level of care and attention.

These strengths outweigh weaknesses in governance. Whilst the Governing Body fulfils its statutory responsibilities it is weak and it is not discharging its functions effectively enough. Last year the Governing Body had difficulty recruiting members and insufficient training was undertaken. Appropriate actions are in place to improve matters, including providing appropriate training to increase the governors' understanding of their role and develop the Governing Body's monitoring procedures.

The school is very well staffed, suitably resourced and great use is made of what there is. Recent grants have been used most effectively to improve the outdoor facilities. Value for money is good.

Grade: 2

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about HMI-led Ofsted inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004. This document may be freely reproduced in whole or in part, for non-commercial purposes, provided the source and the date are acknowledged.**