

Marks Gate Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101210
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	276469
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2006
Reporting inspector	Andrew Howe

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev R Gayler Mrs A Vinters
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lawn Farm Grove Chadwell Heath Romford RM6 5LL
Telephone number	020 8270 4448
Fax number	020 8270 4449

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized Infant and Nursery school in a deprived area of outer East London. About two fifths of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but around a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is around the national average. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- In partnership with parents and outside agencies, make a determined and uncompromising effort to improve attendance.
- Improve target setting and marking so pupils receive consistently helpful guidance in English and mathematics.
- Improve teachers' classroom management skills so that bad behaviour doesn't interrupt learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers use a variety of strategies to help pupils remain interested in their work. Resources, such as digital presenters, hold pupils' attention well and help to enliven teaching. In the best lessons, the time pupils spend listening to teachers is well balanced with opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. For example, in a science lesson, children in the Reception year were asked to sort plastic animals into various groups. This engaged their interest as well as promoting their knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan activities for pupils working in pairs which help them interact successfully with each other and develop confidence. In some lessons, teachers spend too much time talking, often about behaviour problems, which slows down the pace of learning. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English effectively. Teachers monitor pupils' progress conscientiously and use assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Marking is regular and supportive but few comments indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers are working hard to make further improvements in all areas of the curriculum and develop links between subjects. However, there is currently no overview of the curriculum which ensures rigorous planning of whole school themes, such as health. As a consequence pupils are not guaranteed some important experiences. Themed weeks enhance the activities planned in the different areas of learning and involve all pupils. Pupils benefit from a range of visits to local places of interest. Visitors come into school to discuss topical issues with the pupils and provide a variety of enriching experiences. Opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community include fund raising for local charities. Pupils with learning difficulties are included well in all

activities. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English receive well-organised and effective support.

There is an adequate number of extra-curricular clubs. In particular, pupils are given opportunities to take part in sporting activities which promote a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have opportunities to attend a breakfast club at the neighbouring junior school, and the school has funding in place to improve the out of school curriculum further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. Child protection procedures are secure and staff have had recent training. Health and safety procedures are effective. The great majority of parents and carers agree that their children are well cared for and safe at school. All staff are highly committed to ensuring that all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are fully supported. Pupils who are vulnerable, or who do not speak English at home are also looked after particularly well. The school works effectively with a number of outside agencies to support pupils. The school has a thorough knowledge of individuals because assessment arrangements are robust and systematic. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked. Useful targets are set, which are helping pupils make good progress in writing. However, assessment information is not yet used to set targets in other subjects, where progress is only satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you, and we promised to let you know what we decided after our visit.

Yours is a satisfactory school. These are some of the best things about it: * The school looks after you well. Teachers keep a good check on how well you are learning and set useful targets for you that help you to improve your writing. * You make satisfactory progress and enjoy school. * Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting, and use computers and other technology well to help you. * Your teaching assistants give you lots of help, especially those of you who find learning hard or who do not speak English at home. * The headteacher and the other staff work hard together to make the school better. The governors are good: they know exactly what goes on in school and work hard to make sure everyone does their best.

There are some things that could be better, though: * Too many pupils miss school for no good reason. This means some of you miss important learning. We are asking your parents and the school to work together to make sure you go to school every day. * Although your teachers set you helpful targets in writing, we think you would find these useful in other subjects as well. You also need some more guidance when teachers mark your work. * Most pupils behave sensibly, but a few of you are silly and unhelpful in lessons. This needs to stop. Teachers need to find more ways to help you concentrate and work together. Marks Gate Infants' School is a satisfactory school. If you work really hard, come to school every day and behave well, it could become even better.

Good wishes for the future,

Andrew Howe

Lead Inspector