



Marsh Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101211
Local Authority Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number 285994
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Mary Summers

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	South Close
School category	Community		Dagenham
Age range of pupils	3–11		RM10 9NJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8270 4984
Number on roll (school)	231	Fax number	020 8270 4983
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Street
		Headteacher	Miss Susie Davison
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws pupils from the local area. It has a much higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than found in most schools, including a significant number from Black African families. The percentage of children with learning difficulties is high as is the number with English as an additional language. There is an extremely high turnover of pupils from year to year. Staff recruitment is difficult and there have been significant changes in staff recently.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6, having reached nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement considering their initially low starting points and the many barriers to learning which they face. Pupils are well behaved. They are proud of their school and of their accomplishments. They develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem which help them to get the most out of their education.

There has been substantial improvement in recent years because of the calm and considered leadership of the headteacher, which has fostered effective teamwork and commitment amongst staff. These improvements are having a real impact on pupils' learning, especially in the older year groups. Senior staff have helped teachers to embrace these innovations, regularly checking how well they are working to identify where further support and advice are necessary.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are presented well and engage pupils' interest successfully. Expectations are high and pupils respond well to the challenges offered. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a good range of exciting opportunities which help them settle into school quickly and begin to learn. They are nurtured well during the early days, when positive relationships are built with parents. 'The staff are so friendly, my child really enjoys nursery.' noted one parent on her questionnaire. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is outstanding and helps pupils progress rapidly. Pupils in these classes respond well to the levels of challenge and personal responsibility offered. Occasionally, teachers' expectations in Years 1 and 2 are unrealistic, and do not take enough account of pupils' existing skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils' progress, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as in other parts of the school. This is borne out by the results of national tests which show well below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Attendance has been poor in recent years, but over the last two terms it has improved and is now broadly average. Most pupils attend regularly. New pupils are supported well and quickly begin to take an active part in school life. All enjoy the wide range of experiences offered, including the educational visits arranged to make learning exciting and relevant. They look forward eagerly to the weekly 'activities afternoon' when they can participate in dance, drama and sports. They know how to keep safe and healthy, and develop a strong sense of citizenship through their work as playground buddies and members of the school council.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school at levels which are well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes but, by the time they start in Year 1, only a few reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. Pupils make reasonable progress in Years 1 and 2 but standards at the end of Year 2 remain well below average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils' achievement improves as they become older, more responsible and develop confidence in English. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average and reflect significant progress since they began. Provisional data for the most recent national tests shows some outstanding achievement, especially in English and science. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond with great enthusiasm to the challenging targets set by their teachers. Those with learning difficulties, English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds receive effective support and all make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are proud of their successes. They enjoy their lessons, responding eagerly to teachers' questions, listening carefully to one another's ideas and working in pairs to complete a task. These skills help them to prepare for life beyond school. They are well behaved. They help one another readily, and quickly befriend new pupils.

Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and take their roles as monitors and buddies seriously, keen to make a difference within the school community. They appreciate the school council, noting the improvements they have been able to make, for example, to lunchtime arrangements. They feel safe, confident in the knowledge that problems are dealt with quickly. In developing good healthy lifestyles, most choose healthy options in school and are keen to take part in sports. Attendance rates have improved significantly but there are still a few pupils who do not attend regularly enough and this affects their progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children get a good grounding in the Foundation Stage, where activities are planned well and good levels of support improve their confidence. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers present lessons carefully but sometimes the work they plan is too difficult for many of the pupils, who then struggle and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Teachers manage pupils sensitively yet firmly, setting out clear boundaries. They use overhead projectors and interactive whiteboards confidently to illustrate different teaching points. Pupils learn especially well in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is outstanding. Here, teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In a literacy lesson, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to improve the simple sentence 'The rain fell.' Pupils eagerly set to work, using the information displayed on the wall to help them complete the task. They extended their vocabulary, improved their sentence structure and included complex punctuation to arrive at an opening paragraph for a story. One boy started his story, 'The rain spattered like a catapult on the pavement!' All made excellent progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is good. It enables pupils to develop their academic and personal skills through stimulating, relevant learning experiences. English (Years 2 to 6) and mathematics (Years 3 to 6) are taught in sets according to ability and this works well because teachers are able to provide different levels of challenge. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to play a musical instrument, taking part in local festivals and school performances. An afternoon a week is devoted to physical activities and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs on offer.

There are useful opportunities planned to enable pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different subjects. The same cannot be said of literacy planning, however, where opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to write about their work in, for example, history and science.

The school nurse and road safety officer visit regularly to teach pupils how to keep safe and healthy. Class fundraising and team activities contribute to pupils' confidence, self-esteem and growing sense of citizenship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils say school is 'a safe and happy place to be'. Exclusions, which have been high in the past, have reduced significantly as a result of the consistent application of the behaviour policy. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that pupils remain safe. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through offering wholesome school meals. However, there is still some work to be done with parents to ensure that packed lunches contain healthy options. The house system and Class Enterprise Award are designed to build pupils' confidence and prepare them well for the future.

Pupils' progress is tracked carefully to highlight any underachievement. Last year for instance, booster groups helped some of the Year 6 pupils catch up and achieve good standards. Pupils are generally well supported in lessons, especially in English and mathematics, where individual targets are set. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 know their targets

and what they have to do to achieve them, but those in younger classes are not so aware of how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has built a strong team of senior staff and together, they have maintained the focus on school improvement, despite the recent significant changes in staff. Pupils face many barriers to their learning but they achieve success because of the school's strong commitment towards raising academic and personal standards.

Good teamwork exists at all levels and ensures a consistent approach and high expectations. Governors are knowledgeable, support the school well and monitor and evaluate its work effectively. Good systems have been developed to check the effectiveness of the teaching and how well innovations are being implemented. The positive relationships between staff enable these checks to be carried out in a supportive and non-judgemental way, so that everyone feels valued and part of the team. These systems mean that the school gains an accurate view of its performance and is able to identify where it needs to improve.

School improvement planning is satisfactory but is not always focused sharply enough on how actions will improve pupils' learning with measurable indicators to evaluate success. Despite this, the school's past record, its good commitment and teamwork stand it in good stead to continue to improve in the future.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We want to say a big thank you to you all for your warm welcome and for sharing with us your views about the school. The other inspector and I thoroughly enjoyed being with you in lessons and chatting with you in the dining room and around the school. Everything we saw and heard convinced us that you go to a good school.

Your school has several strengths.

- You are growing up as confident, well-behaved young people who enjoy learning and know how to keep safe and healthy.
- You work hard in class and achieve well by the time you leave the school.
- Teachers and other adults take good care of you and give you help if you need it.
- Adults listen to your ideas so you can help to make school a better place for everybody.
- The people in charge of your school know what they need to do to make it even better.

We have asked your headteacher and teacher to improve one thing about your school.

- Help the pupils in Years 1 and 2 do better in reading, writing and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Mary SummersLead inspector