



Market Field School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115473
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290235
Inspection dates 8–9 March 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Naylor

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

Type of school	Special	School address	School Road
School category	Community		Elmstead Market, Colchester
Age range of pupils	4–16		Essex CO7 7ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 825195
Number on roll (school)	146	Fax number	01206 825234
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Andrews
		Headteacher	Mr G R Smith
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Market Field School caters mainly for pupils with moderate learning difficulties but new admissions have increasingly complex learning needs. Pupils have a diverse range of challenges in their lives. There is an enhanced provision for pupils with autism, who make up half the total number on roll. There are slightly more pupils on roll than at the last inspection. There are nearly five times as many boys as girls. Pupils come from both rural and urban areas. Twenty per cent currently receive free school meals. The large majority of pupils are from White British heritages. Demand for places at the school from parents has doubled in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Market Field School is very effective and provides outstanding educational opportunities to pupils. The school has excellent provision for pupils with autism and ensures that they are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher has recently taken the school through an intense period of review and re-evaluation, which has seen it achieve excellence in many areas. There has been a widening of responsibilities to middle managers for teaching and learning and the curriculum. This has sharpened the focus on these areas.

Teaching is now outstanding. There is a consistent and lively approach to lessons by teachers. Lessons are very effective because of the sheer enthusiasm that teachers have in providing challenging activities and the very careful planning for each pupil's individual needs. Particularly good knowledge of managing pupils with autism is also a highly successful feature. As a result, pupils get huge enjoyment from their lessons and this promotes their excellent achievement and progress. Pupils achieve extremely well in nationally accredited courses and when compared with other similar schools locally. Pupils with visual impairment and other specific needs also make excellent progress. Provision and progress for the few pupils in the Foundation Stage are very good.

Learning is well supported by the wide range of interesting activities and opportunities of the good curricular provision. Pupils' welfare, guidance and support is outstanding. It enables all pupils to gain full access to the curriculum and to benefit from the high quality teaching. Spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is excellent. Pupils' personal development is also outstanding. Pupils feel safe in school, attend regularly and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils have a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles and they participate enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities. They are very helpful to one another and work hard to support others in the wider community. They learn to accept responsibility and to cooperate with others. Pupils have the basic literacy, numeracy and life skills to help them make a smooth transition to adult life but there are not enough opportunities to develop enterprise and financial skills.

The school is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. Parents express very high opinions about the quality of leadership, teaching and pupil welfare. They regret that the school's accommodation is too small and has many inadequate areas, although they recognise that the staff do the best they can with what they have. Parents are consulted and involved well in the life of the school and are appreciative of this.

Very good governance gives further support to the leadership and management of the school. The leadership has addressed the issues of the last inspection and has developed excellent procedures for self-evaluation. There is a very good capacity for improvement and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out the plans to extend the opportunities for pupils to develop enterprise and financial skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Pupils make particularly good progress in language, literacy and general communication skills and in numeracy. Progress in science is rapidly increasing due to very good teaching, especially in Key Stage 3 and 4. Teachers' records and assessment systems show that eight out of every ten pupils make significant progress across the subjects as measured by the 'P-scales'. This compares very favourably with pupils in other similar schools within the county. In Year 11, pupils are very successful and achieve significant grades in GCSE drama and art. They achieve Entry Level passes in a number of subjects including English, mathematics and science. Pupils make very good progress in physical education and swimming. Pupils with autism make exceptional progress in their communication, social and relationship skills. Feedback from parents shows that they are very happy with their child's excellent achievements and progress. Pupils in Year 11 make particularly good progress in their work experience placements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly enjoy school and know about keeping themselves safe. Pupils are extremely positive about all aspects of their school life. They consider their school to be 'excellent'. They behave very well and help one another in the classroom and on the playground, as is seen by the playground leadership scheme. Pupils have excellent relationships with staff and with one another. Attendance is good with only a very small amount of unauthorised absence. Pupils are very aware of the need for healthy exercise and take every opportunity to participate in the many physical activities provided. They have a very good attitude towards and understanding of healthy eating as is seen by the healthy snacks at break times. There is extensive involvement in local community activities, including fund raising. Pupils accept responsibility, such as monitors or messengers about the school or as members of the school council. They develop teamwork, self-reliance and independence skills during the many residential activities. Through drama and art, pupils develop outstanding social skills and cultural awareness. Pupils achieve very well in basic literacy and numeracy skills together with other more specific work-related learning skills through work experience and careers lessons. This means they are well prepared for the next phase of their education or training. School surveys show that former pupils enjoy good success on further education courses. Parents are emphatic about the very considerable progress their child makes in their self-esteem and confidence and that their child is very happy and safe whilst in school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are often exceptionally well planned in identifying work closely matched to pupils' capabilities. Classroom activities are carefully set out to meet very effectively the range of pupils' needs. Lessons are lively, the pace of learning is very good and pupils thoroughly enjoy their work as a result. An example is a drama lesson in Year 10, when boys with autism and behaviour difficulties got enormous pleasure and success from performing 'Oliver Twist'. Very good planning is the outcome of very good assessment which gains a detailed picture of each pupil's progress and is used very well in establishing what exactly pupils need to learn. It stands out particularly in the teaching of groups of autistic pupils and is a strong feature in Key Stages 1 and 2, where most pupils with complex needs are to be found. Learning support assistants are an active part of extremely good teams in classrooms. They work very effectively to support individuals and small groups of pupils. When they take a leading role in teaching they are invariably good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because there is a broad range of interesting and challenging learning opportunities. The communication needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties are catered for with effective use of signs and symbols. Information and communication technology is good and is enhanced by the frequent use of high quality resources throughout the school. The provision for autistic pupils is particularly strong. There are particular strengths also in art and drama, which contribute significantly to pupils' cultural development and to their success in examinations. There are good opportunities for pupils to study nationally accredited courses and participate in work experience. While pupils are prepared well for the future, opportunities for them to improve their enterprise and financial skills are limited. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of additional activities such as clubs and residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' welfare is given very high priority and is therefore of exceptional quality. Pupils' sense of security and their self-confidence are nurtured extremely effectively. The strong, trusting relationship between staff and pupils develops from the high level of concern for pupils' well-being. A great deal of attention is given to ensuring that pupils stay safe and happy. Pupil self-help skills, independence, exercising choice and voicing their views are very effectively encouraged by staff. Pupils' behaviour is managed very consistently and sensitively. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including staff checking systems, are securely in place. Staff have the specific expertise to meet the complex needs of a number of pupils. There are extensive links with many support

agencies. Pupils' progress in their personal development and in their work and activities is carefully monitored. The thorough assessment firmly in place ensures they are exceptionally well supported in making progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has a superb vision for the school and is inspirational in his leadership. This is a view endorsed by parents and staff. The deputy headteacher gives very good support. Together, they provide excellent role models and lead by example. They are always seeking to improve provision and to provide the best of opportunities for pupils to achieve and learn. They instil a pride and a passion amongst staff and pupils for the school. Through careful monitoring and evaluation they have continued to raise the quality of teaching and learning. They have established a strong team of curriculum managers who have very good expertise, especially in developing and adapting the curriculum to the needs of pupils. The school improvement plan is the product of wide consultation and gives a good steer to improvement. There are robust systems for school self-evaluation that help to sustain the good quality of the curriculum and excellent welfare provision. All staff work very effectively as a team. This provides pupils with excellent levels of support and results in their outstanding achievement and excellent personal development. Governors are experienced and give exceptional levels of service and support to the staff team. They have good systems for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, financial controls and management of personnel.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

10 March 2007

Dear Pupils,

Market Field School, School Lane, Elmstead Market, Colchester, CO7 7ET

Thank you very much for the way you made Mr Lemon and myself welcome in your school this week. We enjoyed being with you and seeing your work in school.

We were delighted with all that we saw. You are lucky to be pupils at such an excellent school. We think that your teachers and learning support staff are excellent and they make your lessons interesting and fun and they help you to learn a lot. Staff give you the best help and support so that you can work hard in your lessons. This is why you all make such very good progress in all that you do.

You all know how to keep yourselves safe. You take lots of exercise and eat sensible foods to keep you healthy. You help one another and also people who live near to you in the local and wider community.

We were especially impressed by your very good behaviour and good attendance. Keep this up!

Also we would like to thank the Year 10 boys who gave a rehearsal of Oliver Twist in their drama lesson - what stars you are!

We think that your headteacher is brilliant and we know that you and your parents think so too!

We have asked the headteacher to give older pupils more chances to learn how to manage money in work situations in the way that adults are expected to do.

We wish you all continued success for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Naylor Lead Inspector