

Manor Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101193
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	307609
Inspection date	7 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Drain
Headteacher	Mrs Thelma McGorrighan
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Sandringham Road Barking IG11 9AG
Telephone number	020 8270 6630
Fax number	020 8270 6627

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: what the school is doing to raise the standards in mathematics to those in reading and writing; creativity within the curriculum and the effectiveness of subject leaders in monitoring and influencing their areas of responsibility. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, governors and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This very large urban school with a Nursery is extremely popular and draws pupils from a mixed residential area. Over three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the main group being Pakistani. Almost two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, and this proportion is increasing. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is also below average. Of these, most have speech and language difficulties. The school has awards for promoting sport and healthy lifestyles.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides an excellent education for all its pupils. It is heavily over-subscribed, because parents recognise its considerable strengths. One summed up the views of many when stating, 'My child loves school, hates holidays, and the headteacher and staff are all fabulous!' From starting points on entry to the Nursery that are below those normally expected, pupils attain exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing. This has been the case for many years, representing outstanding achievement. In 2007, although standards in mathematics were well above average, there was a slight dip on previous years when they were also exceptionally high. The school has analysed why this was the case and has put in place measures to bring standards in mathematics up higher, with a greater emphasis on practical problem solving and speaking and listening. Year 1 pupils use innovative boxes of resources successfully, which encourage them to become more independent in their learning.

The school's success is due largely to the visionary leadership of the headteacher, who communicates her passion for education highly effectively. She has formed a strong, committed team of teachers and support staff, who put the pupils at the forefront of all they do. There are excellent procedures for monitoring the work of the school. These are systematic and rigorous and give leaders a full picture of where strengths lie and those areas which require improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously to ensure early support is provided where any are at risk of falling behind. The school generates large amounts of data and staff spend considerable amounts of time compiling tables of information. It is not always easy to present the data in ways that are readily accessible, especially for lay people such as governors or parents. The school accepts that its systems, whilst extremely useful, could be streamlined and presented in more user-friendly ways.

Pupils make outstanding progress because the teaching is of a consistently high quality and the creative curriculum is tailored exactly to their needs. The school uses data projectors and visualisers extremely well to display information, such as children's work, so that the class can look at it together and discuss particular features. Teachers take every opportunity to promote speaking and listening through partner work, skilful questioning and drama and role-play in lessons. As a pupil put it, 'We do lots of fun stuff!' Another said, 'We get to do hard work'. The school's high expectations are reflected in challenging activities and an emphasis on learning that fully involves and includes every pupil. Target books, for example, show pupils where they need to improve. They analyse their own and others' work, judging how well it meets specific criteria, such as using interesting adjectives to describe a character from a story. Pupils have numerous opportunities to use and apply their basic skills across different subjects, an area that has improved greatly since the last inspection. Year 2 pupils were designing posters on the computers to advertise the school bookshop as part of a Book Week activity. The curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' excellent personal development through providing rich and enjoyable experiences. On the day of the inspection, a well-known children's author was visiting the school, reading to pupils and explaining how books are made.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They work and play together harmoniously, respecting one another, and enjoying excellent relationships with staff. They have very positive attitudes to learning, and are keen to take part in lessons, doing their best and consequently making rapid progress. Attendance is very high for an infant school and promoted extremely effectively through individual and class rewards. The school also employs its own dedicated attendance officer, and undertakes detailed analysis of trends, such as

considering the absence rates of different ethnic groups. The school council is influential in 'making the school healthier' by securing play leaders, more playground equipment, and healthier meals. Pupils have a close link with an orphanage in Zambia and raise funds to support its work. They have a particularly good understanding of healthy choices and staying safe, feeling able to approach an adult if they have a concern. Pupils develop exceptionally high basic skills and are extremely well equipped for their move to junior school.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding, with each one treated as an individual, and the school managing to cultivate a friendly family atmosphere, despite its large size. Highly effective teams support pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Excellent links with outside agencies help pupils receive the support they need. Regular visits by a speech and language therapist and by an advisory teacher help the school to meet the needs of pupils with communication difficulties particularly effectively. Support staff play a valuable role in working with individuals and groups to help them to make outstanding progress, whatever their level of need. Because pupils are fully involved in their learning they know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve. Marking consistently shows them the next steps in their learning.

Subject leaders have an excellent understanding of their areas and undertake regular and thorough audits of standards and achievement, monitoring the provision and producing detailed reports for staff and governors. They write effective plans for development and have a considerable impact in ensuring that standards continue to rise. A new emphasis on linking sounds and letters in the Foundation Stage is helping children to develop the early reading and writing skills they need more quickly. Governors immerse themselves in the life of the school, attending development days to increase their knowledge and monitoring closely progress towards targets in the school's development plan. The school has come on in leaps and bounds since its last inspection and has an excellent capacity to continue to perform at the highest level.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, settling in very quickly and loving the variety and richness of the many activities they experience. The Foundation Stage develops their independence particularly well, giving them many opportunities to make choices and encouraging them to work with sustained concentration. Recordable postcards, which explain the learning behind an independent activity, enable children to hear again the instructions without interrupting the teacher. There is outstanding leadership and management, with a very strong team of practitioners who share an excellent understanding of how young children learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Streamline tracking systems so that they are more efficient to run and able to present information in more accessible ways, especially for parents and governors.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

18 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manor Infants' School, Barking, IG11 9AG

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I did enjoy my visit and think that yours is an outstanding school. Here are some of the things I particularly like about it.

- You reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You make excellent progress in your learning because the teaching is excellent.
- You thoroughly enjoy your lessons because the work makes you think and there are lots of fun things for you to do.
- Your behaviour is outstanding as you work and play together so nicely.
- The school looks after you particularly well and makes sure you have all the help you need.
- You know how well you are doing in your work and what you have to do to get even better.
- The headteacher and her staff run the school really well.

The teachers go to a lot of trouble to find out how well you are doing and spend lots of time looking at all the information. I have suggested they might like to think of ways of doing this more quickly, and set it out so that it is easy for everybody to follow. I know they are always pleased to hear your views about your progress.

Thank you once again for your help. My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. N. Butt

Lead Inspector