

Marion Richardson Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100911
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	323375
Inspection date	20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	437
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Everest
Headteacher	Mr John Ridgley
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Senrab Street Stepney London E1 0QF
Telephone number	020 7790 1441
Fax number	020 7702 7330

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- How creative the curriculum is and the extent of links across subjects.
- The effectiveness of governors at monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, a governor and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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 large over-subscribed school has a 30-place Nursery as part of its EYFS. Almost two thirds of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a very high proportion. The vast majority of pupils come from a minority ethnic background, by far the largest group being Bangladeshi. Almost nine out of ten pupils speak English as an additional language, which is very high. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These include speech and language communication difficulties. The school has many awards including Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold. The school is used as a training centre for gymnastics by the local authority and British Gymnastics. It has won awards for its commitment to out-of-hours learning and study support, including the Quality in Study Support (QiSS) advanced award. The school has close links with the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, who sponsor aspects of its enrichment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Marion Richardson Primary is an outstanding school that provides an excellent level of education for all its pupils. Under the inspirational leadership of its headteacher, very ably supported by his deputy, the school has maintained its reputation for high standards and outstanding achievement over many years. Pupils make very rapid progress because of the excellent teaching and a vibrant and creative curriculum that excites and engages them. A wealth of extra-curricular clubs offers pupils many opportunities to grow in confidence and contributes extremely effectively to their outstanding personal development and well-being. The pastoral care of pupils is a particular strength, ensuring that every need is met and that each pupil is treated as an individual.

From very low starting points, pupils achieve outstandingly well to reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 6. They particularly excel in English and science. The school has focused on improving mental arithmetic and is trialling a new approach to teaching mathematics, which encourages more discussion about learning and a very practical approach. These developments are having a positive impact on standards in mathematics, improving them from above average to exceptionally high. All pupils do extremely well, including those with speech and language difficulties. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding, particularly in the way the school sets child-friendly targets presented in an attractive format to appeal to pupils. These motivate the children to work hard to meet the targets. Pupils at the early stages of learning English achieve extremely well because the curriculum is adapted successfully to include them and to promote their learning.

Parents are delighted with all that the school gives their children. Typical comments included, 'I am proud that my child attends Marion Richardson school', and 'They are committed to the child at school and after school'. It is a very friendly school with a caring ethos and a family atmosphere, despite its large size. The headteacher says, 'The children are our best ambassadors', as they take considerable responsibility within school and are much in demand outside. The 'flying squad' of talented young gymnasts performs at other schools, special events and for the media. Pupils are very proud of their school, and love attending. They come in early three times per week to take part in gymnastics club, vaulting with great enthusiasm and finesse. Through all the sport and physical education they enjoy, pupils are extremely fit and have excellent knowledge about staying healthy. They feel safe at school and say they are free from bullying. All Year 6 pupils undertake a course in first aid, and have an extremely good understanding about what to do in an emergency. Pupils are very keen to learn, and their behaviour is outstanding. They are extremely considerate towards one another, acting as playground buddies and lunchtime volunteers. Attendance is good for the vast majority of pupils, and the school takes a robust approach to requests for term-time holidays, ensuring that more pupils are in school. Pupils leave the school with an excellent set of basic skills and as rounded and confident individuals, extremely well-prepared for secondary education.

A pupil said, 'The teachers try to make the lessons as fun as possible and easy to understand. Anything you can't do they help you to get through it'. The outstanding teaching includes very high expectations of pupils and matches work precisely to their levels of attainment. Through using a wide range of methods, teachers make learning enjoyable and interesting. They use information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to stimulate pupils. The learning focuses on speaking and listening, as this is something many pupils struggle with when they first join the school. In an outstanding drama lesson, Year 6 pupils had to act out a scene

using only three words, relying on body language and tone to convey meaning. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and evaluated one another's work in a very constructive way. This activity gave confidence to the pupils, and meant those with little grasp of the English language were at no disadvantage.

The curriculum is tailored extremely successfully to meet the full range of pupils' learning needs, and is under constant review. Pupils have every opportunity to extend their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. For example, the day before the inspection, a group of Zulu warriors visited the school, and the pupils filmed and interviewed them in preparation for publishing illustrated articles covering the event. They did this with great skill and professionalism. The school has adopted an advanced ICT curriculum because pupils are so far ahead in their learning. The school excels at physical education, with particular expertise in gymnastics and dance, and has won many awards for its teams. There is outstanding enrichment that brings pupils' learning alive through visits and taking part in extra-curricular events. Recent trips have included St Paul's Cathedral, the Ragged School Museum, the Tower of London and Canary Wharf. The school has very close links with several large businesses that provide staff to hear pupils read, and with the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers. The school's outstanding reputation means that people come from far and wide to see its work, including a delegation of Asian foreign ministers, and visitors from Brunei and Cameroon. There are excellent links with parents, who benefit from a wide range of courses, social events and seminars. The school has a Somali parents' support group, a multicultural group, English classes, storytelling, parenting skills, a volunteers' course and a fathers' group. There are visiting speakers, and surgeries for families facing difficulties. Large numbers of parents and children go on special visits organised by the school at weekends, and the impact of all this is to unite the school community and to reach out more widely.

As well as its excellent pastoral care, the school provides good academic guidance and support, so that pupils know what their targets are for improvement. The marking policy has recently been reviewed and updated and leaders are beginning to monitor the impact of its implementation. Middle managers are committed and knowledgeable, with clear roles and responsibilities that have a positive impact on standards and achievement in their areas. The headteacher and deputy headteacher run the school extremely effectively, combining their different strengths and drawing on their considerable experience and expertise. Their vision of continued excellence is being realised because they have highly effective systems in place to measure the effectiveness of the school's work and to track pupils' progress. This means they have an outstanding understanding of the school's many strengths and know where they want to take its development further. Governors provide good support and are involved in evaluating the school's work. However, they do not have sufficient input to influence the early stages of drawing up strategic plans. The school has made excellent progress since its last inspection, and continues to have an outstanding capacity to improve, based on its superb track record.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children have skills and abilities that are very low when they start Nursery, especially in personal and social development and in language and communication. They achieve extremely well in the EYFS because of consistently excellent teaching and a curriculum that inspires and motivates them. Planning takes full account of government changes in the EYFS and ensures children have the right mix of adult-led activities and those that are initiated by the children themselves.

An extremely well- equipped outdoor area ensures children can develop very well their climbing and balancing skills and enjoy all the other areas of learning. There is great emphasis on developing children's awareness of different sounds and how they link together to form words, and on giving them many opportunities for speaking and listening. Excellent assessment by the children's key staff members ensures progress is measured carefully, and children are encouraged to discuss their work in an 'All About Me' book. A pupil who had succeeded in writing his name for the first time said, 'My name is the best name in the whole wide world!' Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding, ensuring that children's welfare is paramount, and that the provision makes a very valuable contribution to children's personal and social development. Staff are innovative and reflective. There is a focus on boys' mark-making in the Nursery and a pilot study on different approaches to teaching reading in Reception. Because starting points are so low, few children reach the expected early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class, but they make considerable progress in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine existing good practice to ensure the revised marking policy is fully implemented and monitored.
- Involve governors at an earlier stage when considering strategic priorities for improvement.

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Annex A

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marion Richardson Primary School, London, E1 0QF

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We agree that your school is outstanding and here are some of the reasons why.

- You make excellent progress and reach very high standards in your work.
- The teaching is outstanding and you find lessons highly enjoyable.
- Your behaviour is exceptionally good; you are very caring towards one another.
- You keep extremely fit, especially through gymnastics and dance.
- You know all about keeping safe and what to do in an emergency.
- There are lots of clubs for you to enjoy and visits for you to go on.
- The adults care for you extremely well, especially when you have a problem.
- Your parents have many opportunities to get involved in school life and to meet together.
- The leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are outstanding.

We know that you all have targets for improvement and that you know what they are. The school has recently agreed how your books will be marked to help you even more, and we have asked leaders to check how this is going. The governors support the school well. We feel they should have a say at an earlier stage about what the school could do next to get even better.

Thank you once again for making us so welcome. We did enjoy our visit.

Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector