

Market Field School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115473
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338589
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Andrews
Headteacher	Mr G R Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
School address	School Road Elmstead Market Colchester
Telephone number	01206 825195
Fax number	01206 825234
Email address	admin@marketfield.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's data on pupils' performance, school policies and procedures, school development plans and 64 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the first hand evidence of pupils' progress and the school's analysis of their performance are sufficiently in agreement to say that achievement is outstanding
- the extent to which the development of the school's provision and its leadership and management since the last inspection demonstrate an increased capacity for improvement
- whether the school has taken all the appropriate steps to promote community cohesion

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils have an autism spectrum disorder and for a minority this is severe, accompanied by complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour. A very few have disabilities such as a visual or hearing impairment. The extent of pupils' special educational needs and disabilities varies considerably with the result that the attainment of pupils ranges from exceptionally low for most, to near the level expected for their age for a very few. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Nearly all are White British and they can be admitted to the school at any time in their school career. The number on roll has grown over several years to meet increased demand for places and the school has reached capacity.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Market Field School was judged to be an outstanding school when it was last inspected and it remains outstanding. It goes from strength to strength and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has developed a unique grasp of the very complex task of meeting all of its pupils' special educational needs. It has a very high reputation in the local authority and particularly among its parents. There continues to be a heavy demand for places although the school is over-subscribed. The number now on roll takes the school's current accommodation to its absolute limit; there is not a single space inside or out that is not utilised for an educational purpose. The fact the school is full and that its resources are deployed to the maximum is a reflection of the continued hard work and commitment of leaders and staff.

The school flourishes on an enduring vision embodied in the headteacher's drive to have a school which works most effectively and comprehensively for its pupils, their parents and the community. Senior leaders, all staff and governors function with clear and common purpose. Staff resolutely develop their expertise, qualifications and practice, to the extent that there is no part of their work that is not highly effective. This is a well-established and settled team who have taken on new challenges, such as working with severely autistic and visually impaired pupils, with immense success. Extending the work of the school into other schools, the community and developing further family projects is well underway. Teachers' knowledge and the school's educational provision are kept fully up-to-date through rigorous monitoring, performance management and professional development. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

Teaching is outstanding because the knowledge and skills of staff are brought very effectively to bear on planning lessons. Excellent teamwork draws upon thorough assessment and gives a very sharp focus to learning. This nearly always brings exceptional precision to the planning of every pupil's work. Expectations are high in lessons and pupils are very often extremely well challenged by their work. As a result, their enjoyment and achievement in lessons and their personal development, particularly spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Attendance is high. Across the school, pupils make excellent progress in the areas of learning most essential to their needs, particularly in communication, social interaction and independence for those with the most complex learning difficulties. More able pupils find great success on GCSE and other accredited courses. The curriculum is outstanding because it is so well adapted to pupils' very different capabilities and special educational needs. It is extensively enriched by clubs, residential and cultural experiences and sports. While the school has a great many strengths, a key force is its care, guidance and support of pupils. This leaves them as well prepared as they can be for leaving school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons to 80% by the end of the academic year in 2011 by:
 - ensuring pupils' work is always matched to their needs with the close precision found in outstanding lessons.
- Firmly establish extended school provision by:
 - embedding a programme of support for neighbouring schools
 - expanding the opportunities to support families and for them to become better equipped to support their children at home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

All pupils benefit enormously from high quality learning in the classroom and the extent to which all of their needs are met. This is greatest in providing for pupils with severe autism and very challenging behaviour. It is also excellent in relation to the few pupils who have sensory impairments. For the pupils who can attain the most, GCSE results have improved each year over the last three years. The pass rate on Entry Level Certificates has been consistently high. In the classroom, pupils make very substantial progress in developing communication skills, whether that is through speaking and listening, signing, using symbols or pictures. Progress is as good in improving literacy and numeracy skills in the classroom as well as in the vocational, creative, expressive areas of learning. Rapid progress is being made in lessons and this is also seen in pupils' work, particularly in reading and writing. Progress on enterprise and financial skills has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Pupils achieve outstandingly in developing independence through increased self-awareness, self-confidence, social skills and a strong moral framework. They know how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. All of this helps them to form good relationships, behave positively and engage very effectively with the demands of everyday living. They contribute actively in school, as this is considered central to their personal development. The work of the school council has a high profile; close community links means pupils contribute in many local events and celebrations. When it is time to leave school, they all take up educational, training and other opportunities setting them on good pathways for their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is done expertly, planned in great detail, challenging and sharply focused on learning. As a result of thorough assessment, teachers and their teams of classroom assistants know their pupils exceptionally well. They use this in conjunction with well-honed skills for meeting pupils' needs to plan with precision. Learning objectives are very clear, work and activities in lessons are highly organised. Staff in classrooms work collaboratively to promote good learning opportunities. Planning ensures that the learning taking place is broad, typically encompassing communication, social skills, behaviour, literacy and numeracy. Pupils have as much independence as possible in learning, taking responsibility for organising activities and assessing the success of their own and others' work.

The curriculum is exceptionally well matched to pupils' special educational needs and capabilities. It successfully provides work and activities which are interesting, relevant, challenging and enjoyable for pupils. The very effective adaptation of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in Years 1 and 2 enables activities to focus on the most essential areas of learning for the youngest pupils. Distinctive programmes of study across the school reflect pupils' different needs, in particular for pupils with severe autism. For the more able, there are accredited courses and work-related learning in Key Stage 4. Frequent opportunities are made for pupils to apply skills and to learn in the community through shopping, bus journeys and work experience. A project named 'mini My Juice', managed by pupils, promotes financial and enterprise skills very effectively. The curriculum is hugely enriched by visits and residential experiences. A high calibre of care, guidance and support for pupils and their families has the utmost

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priority. Help for parents and training for them is well-established. Very close attention is paid to planning for, and meeting, every pupil's special educational needs. The school's own speech and language therapist and nurse work closely with staff providing essential expertise and support for planning individual programmes. The links with external agencies, schools and colleges are strong, ensuring in particular that transition arrangements are very well managed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has benefited over the long term from strong, stable leadership and governance which has provided clear direction and high expectations. Governors stay very well informed and very closely involved in the work of the school. They appreciate fully the exceptional strength of the leadership team but nevertheless challenge them strongly on their evaluations of the school's work and the proposed priorities for development. This has provided the drive for continuous improvement and, as a result, the school is at the forefront of practice in similar special schools. The responsiveness of provision to pupils' needs means equality of opportunity in the school is outstanding. The recent and very successful expansion of the senior leadership has led to sharpening the spotlight further on tracking and analysing pupils' progress and this is contributing to more refinement in planning provision. In addition, an extremely good start has been made on extending provision to other schools and co-ordinating the projects of several community agencies to add strength and a sharper focus to family work. This fits into the school's plans for community cohesion and it is already making a significant contribution such as through programmes focusing on developing 'resilience in families'. The initiative reflects the exceptional strength of links with parents and partnerships with other professionals. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are extremely robust. Senior staff and governors are very effective in ensuring safeguarding retains a high priority, particularly in seeing that all of the requirements around safer recruitment are strictly adhered to. Staff awareness is kept at a high level through regular training and updates in staff meetings.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents responding to the parental questionnaire express a high level of satisfaction with the school. Inspection findings confirm parental views are well founded. Parents who added written comments to their questionnaires were often concerned that the school's accommodation is inadequate. Inspectors found that the amount of accommodation in the main building was too small for the population of pupils. However, the several additional demountable buildings make up for the shortfall in classroom space. Overall, while the school's premises and accommodation are far from ideal, the school has maximised what is available. Some parents were also concerned about the lack of post-16 provision at school for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Market Field School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	78	13	20	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	86	9	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	80	9	14	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	75	14	22	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	80	13	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	73	14	22	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	78	13	20	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	70	14	22	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	86	7	11	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	75	14	22	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	80	11	17	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	52	81	11	17	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	88	7	11	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Market Field School, Elmstead Market CO7 7ET

We enjoyed our visit to your school very much and we were made to feel very welcome.

We were delighted and very impressed with everything we saw. Your school is outstanding and gets top marks because you attend every day, work hard, make excellent progress, behave really well and enjoy school so much.

Your teachers, and all of the staff who help you, are outstanding as well. In all of the lessons we visited your work was interesting and challenging. You often worked well without help and took a great deal of care with your work. We were impressed by the quality of the writing in your books. Other things like the mini 'My Juice' enterprise and cookery were just as exciting.

Your headteacher and all of the staff are doing an exceptional job in making your school so good. Everyone who knows your school thinks very highly of it and you and all of the staff have a lot to be proud of.

The lessons we visited were mostly outstanding. Your school could make even more lessons outstanding and we have asked the headteacher to do this. We have also said your school should use all of its experience and skills to help parents, other schools and groups in the community.

By doing so well in school, you are being really well prepared for leaving school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector

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