

Warren Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101219
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	307614
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Glenda Paddle
Headteacher	Mr Gary Wilder
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Gordon Road Chadwell Heath Romford RM6 6DA
Telephone number	020 8270 4680
Fax number	020 8270 4681

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This above average sized school has an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with a mother tongue other than English has risen to double the national average. The proportion of pupils needing extra support with their learning is slightly below average, but the number with a statement for their special educational need is high including a small number who need help with their behaviour. The school has been part of the 'Testbed' project, which aims to enhance the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

The school has gained Investors in People status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

As its own self-evaluation suggests, Warren Junior is a good school. It has a high profile in the local community, which it serves well. Much of its success is a result of the vision and drive of the headteacher and the commitment of the staff to all pupils. As one parent so rightly put it, 'The staff work as hard as they can to make this a school they can be proud of.' Pupils enjoy school, try hard in lessons and contribute much to the sense of purpose that strikes the visitor immediately on arrival.

From their entry to school, pupils are set challenging targets and given the support to meet them. The headteacher has high expectations of what they can achieve and requires the same of his staff. Pupils achieve well from whatever their starting points because of effective teaching and their desire to do well. Standards are above average by Year 6; they are highest in science and lowest in writing. Strategies to improve writing are showing some success and pupils are making better progress. The school is looking to build on the enthusiasm now shown for writing, particularly from some reluctant writers.

Careful guidance for new teachers and the benefits of working in year teams have enabled the school to cope well with recent staff changes and maintain good features in teaching. Involvement in the 'Testbed' project has brought major benefits to pupils' learning. Teachers are skilled in using the resources to add interest to their lessons. A major priority now is for pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. However, they are not regularly involved in assessing their work and links between subjects are not consistently exploited to support the school's aim of making learning individual to each pupil. Music makes a major contribution to school life. Individual talents are fostered and productions such as 'High School Musical' remain vivid in the pupils' minds.

High levels of care and support are directed towards each pupil's needs both academic and personal. In praising all that the school has done for her child one parent wrote, 'My child has gone from shy to confident with the help and lots of understanding from her teachers'. Pupils behave well. A small number of parents have concerns about the behaviour of some individuals, although the school manages well any difficulties they present. Pupils feel safe because they say any problems are resolved quickly. They show concern for newcomers and help to introduce them into the ways of the school. Pupils fully appreciate how to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle. They are proud of their contribution to school life through their 'forum'.

Warren Junior's strengths are the result of the headteacher's strong leadership supported by an effective senior staff team and challenging governors. This has enabled the school to make good progress since its last inspection. The role of middle leaders is more limited because they do not focus sufficiently on how they make a difference to pupils' achievement. In spite of this, there is a shared understanding of the school's qualities and priorities for improvement, so that it is well placed to meet the aim of becoming even better in all that it does.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they focus sharply on the impact of their work on the pupil's learning and achievement.
- Give pupils more opportunity to take greater ownership of their learning by involving them more in the assessment of their work and exploiting links between subjects more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards on entry are at least average, and higher than this in most year groups. Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. Year 6 test results in 2007, were significantly above the national average in English and mathematics, and were very high in science. All but a very few pupils reached the standards expected of eleven-year-olds in all subjects. Many exceeded this level particularly in science. Pupils continue to achieve well in science because teaching through investigation and experiments sharpens their understanding and enquiry skills well. Pupils' writing, a previously weaker element to their achievement is improving because of the opportunities now provided for them to develop their skills in contexts they find more interesting. Good support helps pupils who need help particularly with literacy or who are new to speaking English to make good progress towards their individual goals.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen learners, behave well and demonstrate good relationships, respect and consideration for others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are thoughtful, caring and debate well the reasons for eating healthy food. Pupils understand the importance of personal and internet safety and the need for regular exercise. 'School Forum' members are proactive and very proud they 'have helped a lot of people and made the school a better place' by introducing a healthy tuck shop, and golden rules for the lunchtime staff including rules for smiling! Pupils understand and accept the clear structure of rewards and sanctions and help those struggling to conform to get their behaviour back on track. Significant efforts have improved attendance, which is now satisfactory. The emphasis on developing ICT, literacy and numeracy skills makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' confidence and levels of independence. The pupils' academic and personal qualities give them firm foundations for success in secondary school and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Recent ICT developments help teachers to share expertise in planning carefully structured lessons. Teachers use stimulating resources in a range of media very effectively to boost interest, focus attention and involve pupils during instruction. As a result, pupils find learning interesting and enjoy participating. They are attentive and have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. Questioning is generally skilful, prompting thoughtful extended answers. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of small groups, and particularly in helping younger pupils who find reading difficult. Marking and end-of-lesson reviews are generally used well to praise success. However, pupils are not always given opportunities to assess their own work and that of others, or given time to reflect on how to improve on their weaknesses.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides well-balanced and interesting teaching programmes, with a strong emphasis on basic skills. For instance, a booster programme for weaker readers has proved very effective in helping their learning in all subjects. A practical approach is taken wherever possible, notably in science where the emphasis on investigations boosts the pupils' interest and achievement. However, planning does not consistently link subjects to make learning more relevant to pupils and to support its aims for making learning programmes personal to each pupil. The use of specialist teachers broadens the pupils' experiences in music, physical and religious education. Educational visits, activity days, summer schools and involvement in sports and arts events enable children to learn from first-hand experiences. The wide range of popular out-of-school activities is used well to develop the skills of gifted and talented pupils. The choir is extremely popular. It performs to a high standard and pupils take pride in their shared achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The very secure procedures for safeguarding children and ensuring their health and safety reflect the commitment of all staff and governors to the welfare of the pupils. Arrangements to help pupils settle into Year 3 smooth their start and help them feel quickly at home. The support for pupils who find learning difficult starts here and focuses sharply on meeting their carefully identified needs. The school uses its close links with other specialists to extend staff expertise and to bring in specific help where it is needed to support the achievement of pupils with more complex learning difficulties. The school is adapting its support well to meet the needs of the growing number of pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils know their targets and they generally have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, through his strong leadership, demonstrates a realistic vision for the school focused on continuous improvement and increasing pupil achievement further. The senior staff team ensures pupils' care and progress is regularly reviewed and very good support is deployed to those needing additional help. Regular and rigorous checking on how well pupils are doing enables the school to focus additional resources effectively so that any who have fallen behind their targets can catch up. The new 'ECM Guardians', in their innovative role, are firmly committed to ensure 'every child matters'. Several middle managers are newly in post and approach their roles enthusiastically, although they are at an early stage in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work. Good staff training is supporting their growing development as part of a cohesive staff team. All staff put pupils at the heart of their work; they are committed to ensuring they do their best. A small core of governors know the school well and play a major role in strengthening community links, policy development and supporting the school at a time of change.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

30 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Warren Junior School, Romford, RM6 6DA

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome. We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite. Through our discussions with you, it was great to hear how much you enjoy school. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried.

We found several impressive things about Warren Junior School. Teachers and other staff make learning challenging and fun; this helps you to achieve well. Most of you reach the standards expected of you by the time you leave and many of you do better than this, particularly in science. The way in which the school cares and supports you is excellent. We were impressed with your behaviour, your enthusiasm, how you know so much about keeping healthy and the way that you make a difference in school through the school forum. You clearly enjoy the wide range of opportunities to show how good you are at music.

Even a good school like yours can improve. We have asked your teachers to help you further to improve your learning by providing opportunities to develop your skills in different subjects and assess your own work more regularly. We have also asked them to help your headteacher more, by making sure any new developments make the maximum difference to you and your learning.

Mr Wilder, the staff and governors want the school to continue to be successful and we know you will play your part by continuing to behave well, attending regularly and working hard. We wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead Inspector