



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Vauxhall Primary School**

**Lambeth Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 12 and 13 October 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	Vauxhall Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs S Wilson
Address of school:	Vauxhall Street London SE11 5LG
Telephone:	020 7735 4535
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr S Hoare
Local education authority area:	Lambeth
Unique reference number:	100588
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr A Watters HMI
Dates of inspection:	12 and 13 October 2004

## Introduction

1. Vauxhall Primary School is situated in an area of south London with high levels of social and economic deprivation. There are 183 pupils on roll, including 25 pupils in the nursery class. The school's population contains pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds, representing over 20 different languages. Sixty per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language and 71 per cent are eligible for free school meals; these figures are well above the local education authority (LEA) average of 43 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 21.5 per cent, which is almost twice the LEA average of 11 per cent. The inward rate of pupil mobility is 18.6 per cent, which is also very high and above the LEA average of 11 per cent.
2. The school was inspected in October 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of October 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on five occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In October 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
    - in each key stage the results of the 2004 national tests showed some improvement from the previous year; nevertheless standards overall remained below the levels that 7 and 11-year-olds are expected to reach. In reading and writing at Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment was very low and it was low in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2;
    - while levels of attainment are still not high enough, more pupils are making better progress and achieving higher standards than previously. The gap between the pupils' current attainment and what is expected for their age is closing, although much remains to be done to lift standards further, particularly in reading, writing and speaking;
    - the pupils' behaviour and attitudes were consistently satisfactory or better in all lessons and are strengths of the school; the pupils behave well, are diligent, courteous and good humoured and are becoming increasingly proud of their achievements and their school;
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- the provision for the pupils' personal development is good; for example, two assemblies made a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
  - the pupils' attendance is 90.6 per cent, which is very low. It is below the Lambeth average of 93.8 per cent and the national average for primary schools of 94.1 per cent;
  - the quality of teaching was very good in 2 lessons, good in 5 and satisfactory in 13; none of the teaching was unsatisfactory although in two of the satisfactory lessons strengths in the teaching just outweighed the weaknesses. While the quality of teaching has improved considerably there was a minority of lessons where inconsistencies in the teaching impeded the pupils' progress;
  - the curriculum is generally broad and balanced with a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The procedures to assess the pupils' attainment and to track their progress are developing well, although there is still more to be done to strengthen the use of assessment to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning;
  - the quality of education in the Foundation Stage has improved considerably; it is satisfactory with many good features. The deputy headteacher has provided good leadership in this important area of the school's work, including the induction of two newly qualified teachers;
  - the provision for the pupils who speak English as an additional language and for the pupils who have special educational needs is good; the work in these areas is well led and managed;
  - the headteacher provides good leadership and management; she has a clear vision for the school, which is centred on raising standards for all pupils. She receives effective support from the deputy headteacher and has continued to build on the good progress made on implementing the school's action plan. Staff morale is high and there is a good team spirit;
  - during a period of considerable change the previous headteacher and the federation headteacher maintained a vigorous and determined focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning; they tackled weaknesses rigorously and successfully established a strong foundation for further improvement;
  - there is a comprehensive and systematic programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Strategic planning is satisfactory and the school has the capacity to make further improvements;
  - the curriculum co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science are making an increasingly important contribution to raising standards. They understand the link between good teaching and effective learning and are developing good systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions on increasing the rate of the pupils' progress;
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- the work of the governing body continues to improve. Governors' committees meet regularly to monitor progress against the action plan. The chair of governors recognises the need to hold the school to account and is committed to working with the senior managers to bring about the necessary improvements;
  - the LEA provides a good range of support in many areas of the school's work, including improving the quality of leadership and management and the quality of teaching and learning.

## Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- raise standards in all subjects, particularly in reading, speaking, writing and mathematics;
- increase the proportion of good and very good teaching by eliminating remaining inconsistencies and continuing to strengthen the use of assessment information to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning;
- improve the pupils' attendance.

## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. In each key stage the results of the 2004 national tests showed some improvement from the previous year; at Key Stage 1 in mathematics and at Key Stage 2 in English and science there was an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. At Key Stage 1 there was a seven per cent rise in mathematics; at Key Stage 2 there was a considerable rise of 19 per cent in English and 10 per cent in science. At Key Stage 2 the school's test results were close to the Lambeth average. The proportion of the pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 in mathematics at Key Stage 1 increased by three per cent. At Key Stage 2 there was a steady rise in the proportion of the pupils who achieved a Level 5, which is above what is expected for their age; it rose by 4 per cent in English, 10 per cent in mathematics and 14 per cent in science.

8. The overall standards attained by the pupils in the national tests, however, remained below the levels that 7 and 11-year-olds are expected to reach. At Key Stage 1 less than two thirds of the pupils attained the level expected for their age in reading and only 42 per cent achieved a higher Level 2 and above in writing. At Key Stage 2, 69 per cent of the 11-year-olds attained a Level 4 or above, the level expected for their age, in English and mathematics; 85 per cent of the pupils did so in science.

9. While levels of attainment are still far too low, more pupils are making better progress and achieving higher standards than previously. The gap between the pupils' current

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attainment and what is expected for their age is closing, although much remains to be done to lift standards further, particularly in reading, writing and speaking.

10. The rate of progress and improvement for the pupils who have enrolled at the school since the beginning of the autumn term 2003 are at least satisfactory and sometimes good; in the previous year some of these pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding, such as in science in Key Stages 1 and 2 and in mathematics and writing in Key Stage 2.

11. Standards in English at the end of both key stages are below average but rising, with more of the higher-ability pupils achieving standards closer to those expected for their age. Although many of the pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, have significant gaps in their literacy skills, the progress they make in lessons and over time is accelerating as a result of the improvements in the quality of teaching.

12. The pupils' listening skills are generally good. In lessons and whole-school assemblies the pupils were attentive to their teachers and their peers. The pupils' speaking skills are more varied and are below average overall. Many of the pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and are often reluctant to answer questions and express their own ideas. In the best lessons, the teachers introduced new vocabulary they wanted the pupils to learn and used strategies, such as 'talking partners', to enable the pupils to rehearse their ideas.

13. Standards in reading are below average but rising, as a result of the more systematic way that skills are taught, particularly the introduction of phonic skills and the structure and content of the guided reading sessions. The pupils enjoy books, they are developing a wider knowledge of different authors, and many talk confidently about the stories they have read. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils have developed the more advanced reading skills and their limited range of vocabulary impedes their understanding of some texts.

14. Although standards in writing are generally below average, there are signs of improvement; teachers are giving more time in lessons to extended and creative writing and the pupils have greater opportunities to develop their writing skills through the work in different subjects. Nevertheless, weaknesses in the quality of writing remain, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In lessons, the pupils made the best progress when links were made between reading and writing, and lists of key words and a variety of writing frameworks were used to help the pupils to draft their ideas. Increasingly, the school is making good use of enrichment activities, such as visits to places of interest, to extend the pupils' experiences and give them a clear focus for their writing. The quality of presentation is improving. Handwriting is practised regularly, but the pupils in Key Stage 2 are not taught cursive script early enough, and throughout the school the pupils do not readily transfer the skills they have learnt during the handwriting lessons to the rest of their work.

15. While in mathematics the pupils' attainment remains too low and below the levels expected for their ages, standards are rising as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching. In the reception class the pupils made good progress when counting from zero to five and in improving their understanding of the concept of one more than a given number. Resources were used effectively to support the quality of learning and to teach important counting skills. At Key Stage 1 most of the pupils in a Year 2 lesson understood how to represent time on a digital and analogue clock, and Year 1 pupils were learning how to group



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some two-dimensional shapes by the number of their sides. At Key Stage 2 the rate of the pupils' progress is increasing rapidly because their work is matched well to tackling the many gaps in their knowledge and understanding. In Year 3 the pupils made very good progress when counting forwards and backwards in groups of 4 to 40 and could classify a range of two-dimensional shapes by their properties. In Year 5 the higher attaining pupils were taught to calculate the perimeter of regular polygons using a simple formula and most made good progress. The mathematics co-ordinator is continuing to maintain a sharp focus on raising standards and tackling the legacy of underachievement.

16. Standards in science are improving and based on the figures for previous years, the school's 2004 test results are likely to be in line with or above the national figures. The co-ordinator recognises that investigative and experimental science remains an area for further development, and this is supported by the school's assessment data. In Year 6 the pupils made satisfactory to good progress when setting up a fair test to investigate how solids dissolve and how best to record their findings; they understood the concepts of independent, dependent and controlled variables.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes were consistently satisfactory or better in all lessons; this is a very strong feature of the quality of education provided by the school. In almost two thirds of the lessons the pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning ranged from excellent to good, and in most of these lessons they were very good.

18. The pupils behave well, try hard to do their best and form positive relationships with each other and the adults with whom they work. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils has improved considerably and is very good. In some classes and year groups, such as in Year 3, the quality of relationships is excellent. The pupils are diligent, courteous and good humoured; many are eager to talk about their work and are becoming increasingly proud of their achievements and their school, which is a very welcoming community. The pupils respond extremely well to tasks that are interesting and challenging and when they are given the support and tools to help them succeed.

19. The pupils behave well when they move around the school. They appreciate the positive changes that have been made to the school environment and the care that is being taken to display their work. They enjoy being given responsibility and working independently, as well as in groups and pairs. In nearly all the lessons there was a quiet and industrious approach to completing tasks, except in a small minority where the noisy and enthusiastic behaviour of some pupils made it difficult for their classmates to concentrate on their work.

20. Two assemblies made a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the themes of tolerance and justice were used to share important social and moral values in the context of the pupils' daily life, in the community and at school. The pupils' self-esteem is being improved by recognising their achievements and celebrating their increasing success; a whole-school focus on people from many different cultural backgrounds who have made an important contribution to their communities and to the wider world is reflected in displays and in the pupils' work.

21. The pupils' attendance is 90.6 per cent, which is very low. It is below the Lambeth average of 93.8 per cent and the national average for primary schools of 94.1 per cent.

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Despite implementing a range of useful strategies to improve the pupils' attendance there is still much to do to ensure that more pupils attend school regularly.

### **The quality of education**

22. The quality of teaching has improved considerably; it was very good in 2 lessons, good in 5 and satisfactory in 13. None of the teaching was unsatisfactory, although in two of the satisfactory lessons strengths in the teaching just outweighed the weaknesses and in a minority of other lessons inconsistencies in the teaching impeded the pupils' progress.

23. In the best lessons, the pupils' work was matched well to their different learning needs, the teachers' subject knowledge was good and their clear instructions and explanations helped the pupils understand how to improve their work. Expectations were high, both of the pupils' behaviour and their attainment; there was a brisk pace of learning and lessons were very well planned and structured. No time was wasted and there was a very good balance between whole-class discussion, independent tasks and group activities. The pupils worked hard and made good progress, acquiring new skills and vocabulary.

24. In a small minority of lessons some relative weaknesses emerged: the pupils' enthusiastic and noisy behaviour was not checked sufficiently, there were some errors and inaccuracies in the information which pupils received, and not enough use was made of assessment information to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning.

25. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, with a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented well and, in science, national planning materials are used to support the teachers' medium and short-term plans. In each key stage there is a consistent approach to lesson planning; there is a good focus on teaching subject vocabulary and improving the pupils' spoken and written English across the curriculum.

26. The provision for the pupils in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly and is satisfactory with many good features. As a result, the progress the pupils make is accelerating and, by the end of the reception year, most are likely to reach the nationally determined Early Learning Goals. The pupils' personal, social and emotional development is good. They understand the class routines, concentrate well on their work and co-operate with others on a range of activities. The resources are well organised and easily accessible and this helps the pupils to develop greater independence, for example when they select appropriate equipment to use. Many of the pupils enter the nursery with limited communication, language and literacy skills. The improvements in the teaching, particularly the way the staff work in a focused way with small groups of pupils, is having a positive impact on the pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. In the reception class, the pupils are developing a secure knowledge of phonics. They understand that print carries meaning and recount features from their favourite stories using drawings and some early stages of independent writing. In mathematics, they recognise numbers and count accurately using everyday objects. A good range of practical activities is used to consolidate the pupils' understanding of concepts, such as one more than a given number up to five.

27. The introduction of an intensive support programme throughout the school is a positive development. As part of its implementation, the staff are receiving well-focused training that is helping them to track the pupils' progress, identify underachievement and set targets for improvement. The programme builds successfully on the work the school had

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already done in collecting and analysing assessment data. Throughout the school, there is greater consistency in the way the pupils' work is planned to meet the different levels of attainment; however there is more still to be done to ensure that all the teachers are secure in their knowledge of the National Curriculum levels and use this information to identify what the pupils need to do next to improve their work.

28. The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has a well-informed understanding of what needs to be done and is working effectively with the teachers and support staff to ensure that the pupils receive the targeted help they need. The pupils' individual education plans are well structured; their targets and the success criteria are appropriately few in number and are written in a way that is helpful to the staff who plan the work. In lessons, the quality of the support provided was at least satisfactory and often good. Some of the teaching assistants are becoming skilled in way they give targeted help to the pupils during whole-class sessions and group work.

29. The provision for the pupils who speak English as an additional language continues to improve and is good. The co-ordinator has established effective systems to track the pupils' progress and as a result has a clear picture of their rate of improvement. He has targeted individual pupils who have made limited progress and provides good support for them in lessons. There is a programme of intensive support in some year groups, matched well to the pupils' learning needs. These initiatives, together with plans to revise the pupils' stages of fluency in English and introduce partnership teaching alongside the teachers, are very positive developments. The quality of provision has also been improved by the creation of a resource area and teaching base. The co-ordinator recognises the opportunity to extend the school's involvement in the community by providing family literacy support. There are currently few bilingual support assistants employed by the school, although good use is made of parents and older pupils to help with translations. The co-ordinator works effectively with the special educational needs co-ordinator and both teachers provide a consistent approach and good leadership in these important areas of the school's work.

### **Leadership and management**

30. The headteacher provides good leadership and management. In the relatively short time since her appointment at the beginning of September 2004 she has communicated a vision for the school which is centred on raising standards for all pupils. There is a clear sense of educational direction and purpose and a strong determination to further improve the quality of education for all pupils. The headteacher receives effective support from the deputy headteacher and has continued to build on the good progress made in implementing the school's action plan. The deputy headteacher is providing good leadership in the Foundation Stage, including the induction of two newly qualified teachers.

31. Since the inspection in October 2002 the school has been through a very turbulent period. During a time of considerable change the previous headteacher and the federation headteacher maintained a vigorous and determined focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. They tackled weaknesses rigorously, and with a sense of urgency; they successfully established a strong foundation for further improvement.

32. There is a comprehensive and systematic programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning; this includes checking the teachers' planning, observing lessons and scrutinising the pupils' written work. Teachers and teaching assistants are held

accountable for the standards achieved by the pupils and are given feedback about the quality of their work; where necessary they are set targets for improvement which are followed up within a clear timescale, although this is not yet a consistent feature in all year groups.

33. The core subject leaders set a good role model for others to follow. They are enthusiastic about their work and are successfully using their individual action plans to guide what they have to do. These senior staff are focused on raising standards and are developing a sound understanding of the strengths and weakness in the pupils' attainment; they are putting in place a range of whole-school strategies that is helping to improve the consistency in the way the curriculum is planned and the pupils' progress is tracked.

34. The work of the governing body continues to improve. Governors' committees meet regularly to monitor progress against the action plan and members of the governing body have been fully involved in the recruitment of the substantive headteacher and other teachers. The chair of governors recognises the need to hold the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils and is committed to working with the senior managers to make further improvements to the quality of education. The school's finances are secure and there is expected to be a budget surplus of approximately £15,000 at the end of March 2005.

35. The LEA provides a good range of support in many areas of the school's work, including improving the quality of leadership and management, recruiting new staff and improving the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. The school's attached adviser has made an important contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning and monitoring the school's progress. There are good plans to continue working with the school and maintain a sharply focused programme of support and intervention.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

36. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address four key issues. These principally related to: improving the quality of leadership and management; eliminating weaknesses in teaching; making more effective use of assessment data; and improving subject management. Good progress has been made to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and learning and subject management; reasonable progress has been made to use assessment data to set curricular targets.

37. The school's leadership and management have improved significantly and are good. Nearly all the weaknesses in teaching have been eliminated and there is a vigorous focus on raising standards. Assessment information is being used more consistently to set targets for classes, groups and individual pupils; subject leaders are making a positive contribution to raising the pupils' achievements through increasingly rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation of standards and progress.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected by HMI in October 2002. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, June and December 2003, and in January and June 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

In October 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty lessons or parts of lessons, three assemblies and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors, and the school's LEA link adviser; and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.