

Kings Avenue School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133315
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	316076
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Rogers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	574
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Matthew Bryant
Headteacher	Mr Richard Thornhill (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Kings Avenue London SW4 8BQ
Telephone number	020 7622 1208
Fax number	020 7498 3332

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large and complex primary school. The school is situated on two sites, with the Foundation Stage unit being a five-minute walk from the main school buildings. Half the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is above average. Families move in and out of the area more frequently than is usual. This is a diverse multicultural community and ninety percent of the pupils are of minority ethnic origin. The majority of these pupils are Black Caribbean or Black African. Nearly a half of the pupils require extra support with English when they arrive, because they do not speak English at home. Over a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs. The largest proportion of these pupils require extra support with literacy, but there are also significantly high numbers of pupils with behavioural problems.

Both standards and behaviour deteriorated substantially in the years succeeding the last Ofsted inspection and the Local Authority took measures to arrest this decline. In 2007, the school was incorporated into a soft federation with Loughborough Primary School. The headteacher of Loughborough School is now the executive headteacher of Kings Avenue. The governance and the senior leadership of the school was completely reorganised and, in addition to the executive headteacher, there is now a Head of School who is supported by four vice-principals and a family link worker.

The school holds the Activemark for Physical Education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kings Avenue is a rapidly improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress both in their learning and in their personal development. The executive headteacher, well supported by the local authority, has been very successful in arresting the school's decline and improving pupils' progress. The rate of improvement since he has been in post has been impressive and the school is now well on track to becoming a good school. The vast majority of parents are very happy with their children's education and recognise the improvement. One wrote, for example, 'I am a parent who was very unhappy when my child first started school. He has improved so much since he has been here.'

The headteacher has built an effective management team, who have rightly concentrated on improving both behaviour and the quality of teaching. They have done well to improve both of these to satisfactory levels. There are pockets of good teaching and there is often good behaviour. However, both teaching and behaviour are still variable as staff are inconsistent in the implementation of the newly revised school policies.

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are weaker than those that would usually be expected of three- and four-year-olds. Their literacy and numeracy skills are especially weak, mainly because so many children do not speak English at home. Tests at the end of Year 6 show that learners have made satisfactory progress, taking into account their very low starting points. The standards reached are still well below those that would be expected nationally, but pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate as the quality of teaching improves. This is a result of good monitoring and training. Staff have worked hard to improve the quality of marking and as a result, academic guidance is now satisfactory. Learners with behavioural problems and vulnerable pupils are well supported. Those who need help with English because they have specific learning difficulties, or because they speak different languages at home, also achieve as well as others because of well-managed interventions.

The curriculum is currently being reviewed and is satisfactory. The school is working to develop links between subjects and make lessons more interesting. Pupils explain that they enjoy school, but would like some lessons to be more exciting. Attendance is below national averages, though the school works hard to encourage parents not to take children away for holidays and family celebrations. This is a very caring school and staff offer very good pastoral support. Learners appreciate this and say that they feel safe at school. Good role-modelling helps them to learn social values. Pupils do well in learning about health and in participating in physical exercise. Cultural education is also a strength and contributes to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school makes a good contribution to the community through a number of local visits and collections for charity, including making and selling a CD of pupils singing. Their satisfactory progress in basic skills and increasing ability to collaborate means that learners are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages in their education.

The leadership team utilise very effective systems and have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are able to share these with the governing body, thus ensuring that governors are knowledgeable about the school. Consequently, the governors are now satisfactory in their work of supporting the school. In addition to the local authority, the school works very well in partnership with other schools and agencies. The federation with Loughborough School, in particular, is working very well, with partners sharing staff and

expertise to the benefit of both schools. Its recent track record in improvement shows that the school has a good capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. From the outset, teachers and teaching assistants work towards developing good attitudes to learning and social and emotional skills. They work together very well to provide a stimulating environment, which encourages children to explore the world around them and helps them to develop their independence. The curriculum meets the needs of all children, challenges them and stimulates their interest. Teaching is good and there is a good balance between teacher-led and independent activities, although sometimes children are not given enough time to complete their tasks. Parents are invited to join helpful workshops to learn how to support their children with reading and writing. The new outdoor area is well designed and attractive, but has not yet been developed to allow children to benefit from the designated areas and clear signs and labels which are seen in the classrooms.

This improving provision, which is very effectively managed by the Foundation Stage vice-principal, results in children making good progress. However, standards are still well below average when children leave the Reception Class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Improve pupils' behaviour so that it is consistently good.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

School leaders have introduced very effective assessment systems that ensure that the progress made by all groups of learners is tracked, and challenging targets are set. Consequently, all groups of pupils, including those who struggle with literacy and numeracy, are making satisfactory progress. Standards in Year 6 are well below national averages in English, mathematics and science, but there is clear evidence that standards are improving and some younger pupils are now working at levels that are in line with national expectations. Pupils who enter not being able to speak English do as well as other pupils by the time they reach Year 6. The school knows that results in writing are weaker than those in reading and has correctly identified the need to be clearer with learners about expectations for English grammar and the features of different styles of writing. Progress in mathematics has improved the most, but there is still a little variation between classes and problem-solving skills are not yet well enough developed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most learners come to school eagerly and enjoy learning, especially when motivated by interesting lessons. The majority of pupils behave well, but some still exhibit challenging

behaviour at times. Learners have clear guidelines for good behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate actions as a result of the new behaviour policy. However, these sanctions are not consistently applied and on occasion learning is disrupted for a short while. Holidays in term time, weddings and long family reunions abroad, result in a number of pupils missing valuable learning time. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on moral and social issues in assembly and do well in learning about other faiths and cultures in lessons. Pupils have good knowledge about what constitutes a healthy life style and this is reflected in the school's Active Mark award. Through concerts and out-of-school projects, pupils make a valuable contribution to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers' planning is clear and effective, matching work effectively to the needs of different groups of pupils. In some lessons, teachers have high expectations and the pace of learning is brisk. Pupils collaborate well and they have a clear idea of what they need to do to achieve good results. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and most respond with good behaviour and concentration. This is not always the case, for example, when teachers' questioning does not include all learners or they spend too long on explanations. At times, there is not enough discussion with pupils about what they are expected to learn and this slows progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all groups of learners receive the correct level of support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has revised the curriculum and it now meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum vice-principal is working with subject leaders to try to ensure that the new curriculum is innovative and supports creative thinking, meeting the needs of all learners. Pupils enjoy using computers in the information communications technology (ICT) suite, but they do not have enough opportunities to practise ICT skills in the classrooms. The school makes good use of the local area for interesting visits to places such as museums, theatres and galleries. Themed events such as Black History Month and Refugee Week, and mathematics and science days inspire learners and help to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. One pupil said, 'Everyone in the school is positive'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Learners receive very good pastoral support. Staff work hard in supporting pupils' personal development and fulfil a valuable role in liaising with families in order to resolve any problems. Arrangements for health and safety, risk assessment and safeguarding procedures, are robust and promote a safe and supportive learning environment. Learners with more complex social, emotional and behavioural needs are well supported as a result of good relationships with staff. The school works in close partnership with outside agencies in order to provide swift support as necessary. Learners feel safe and confident that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. New pupils settle quickly and happily into the school, irrespective of which time of the year they arrive.

Academic guidance and support is satisfactory, but is inconsistent. Where it is stronger, learners receive regular advice and good marking to motivate them and help them understand what they have achieved. However, learners are not always clear enough about what they need to do in order to progress to the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Because self-evaluation is outstanding the relatively new leadership team is already beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, following a period of difficulty. Together they have rigorously and accurately identified areas for development. There is a relentless drive on improving classroom practice through analysis of progress, regular observation and guidance for teachers, several of whom are relatively new to the school and to teaching. Subject leaders have equally good knowledge of their subjects and have established clear targets through the well-organised school improvement plan.

The recently re-constituted governing body is playing an increasingly important part in shaping the developments for the school, and ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Governors support the school well and are developing their independent monitoring role, in order to challenge and hold the school to account.

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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?	3
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

16 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kings Avenue School, London, SW4 8BQ

Thank you very much for making us welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching you learning and talking to some groups of pupils.

We think that your school is a satisfactory school. This means that some things about it are good and others could be better. However, we think that your school is improving very rapidly and is well on track to becoming a good school. The school has been through a period when learners did not do as well as they should do in their work and behaviour was not very good. Now pupils are making satisfactory progress and behaviour is satisfactory too. Some of you behave very well and some of you already make good progress in your work. You do particularly well in learning about how to live a healthy life and in learning about people from a variety of countries and religions.

Your teachers and other helpers all work very hard to look after you and you told us that you like school and feel well cared for. You thought that, at times, the lessons were not exciting enough and we agree with you. Your attendance rates are not very good as some of you go on holiday or attend other family celebrations in term time.

We think that your school is improving so well because your headteachers and staff are doing a good job in managing the school. We have asked them to carry on the improvement by trying to make sure that:

- teaching in all classes is good
- behaviour is good
- attendance improves.

You can play your part in improving your own learning and helping others at school by making sure that you come to school every day, unless you are ill, and by behaving well all the time.

Yours sincerely

Sue Rogers

Lead Inspector