

Eveline Lowe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100817
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	323353
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Robin Hammerton HMI

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)	321
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	61
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Gilda Chambers
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Hills
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marlborough Grove London SE1 5JT
Telephone number	020 7237 3207
Fax number	020 7252 0283

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large urban primary school serves an area of rich cultural diversity. The largest single ethnic group is White British. Nearly a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, though most are fully bilingual. A high proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. About twice the average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils can start the school in the Nursery at the age of three and then have two years in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is currently on two sites, across the road from each other, but a new single-site building is in the advanced planning stage. Eveline Lowe is in hard federation with a nearby school, sharing the governing body and executive headteacher. At its last full inspection, the school was found to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has been on a long and, at times, difficult journey through special measures. It took some time for appropriate leadership structures to become fully established through the federation and for the necessary change of culture, with higher expectations, to be embedded. In the current academic year, the school has begun to be transformed, much for the better. Parents have seen this, one saying typically to an inspector that the school is 'definitely on the up in a big way'. It provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Significant focus is placed on improving the quality of teaching, through mentoring schemes, for example. This is effective. Lessons are now consistently satisfactory and many are better, when only a year ago around half of lessons were inadequate. In turn, this has improved pupils' academic progress, which is also satisfactory and improving. By the end of Year 6, standards are now much closer to the national average. One particularly successful aspect of teaching is the way in which talk is used well in many lessons to enhance pupils' thinking and make them actively involved. This helps all pupils, with particular benefits for those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' progress is assessed rigorously, regularly and accurately. However, work in lessons, including English at Key Stage 2 and mathematics throughout the school, is often not explicitly or closely enough matched to the assessed needs of pupils, so pupils are not always challenged appropriately. This inhibits faster progress.

The curriculum for English, mathematics and science covers all the necessary ground, but is weaker across other subjects. The school is ready now to improve the quality, excitement and depth of the curriculum. The middle leaders, who are hard-working, could take much responsibility for this, but their role is currently underdeveloped. School self-evaluation is satisfactory; it is accurate, and middle leaders, rather than just senior staff, are beginning to contribute to it. It is, however, clearer and more precise in some areas than in others. For these reasons, although senior leaders are effective and committed, promoting change well, the school's capacity to continue improving is satisfactory rather than good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with several good aspects. Pupils enjoy school, are friendly and mainly behave well. Bullying was not identified to inspectors as a significant problem for pupils or their parents. However, despite some improvement, attendance is too low. A key cause is pupils taking long holidays in term time.

All schools have a duty to promote community cohesion. This involves the school in analysing its own community context in some detail and then planning and evaluating actions to meet the needs identified. The school has not fulfilled any of these requirements adequately. This means that pupils are missing out on opportunities that would be particularly relevant to their and the community's needs.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Nursery and Reception classes are a clear example of how the school is changing for the better. For the past year, an expert and experienced phase leader has been in post, well supported by senior school leaders. She knows precisely what is needed and how to bring about improvement quickly from a low point at the time of her appointment. She is highly astute in

her management of staff, setting very high expectations and clearly timed goals, while also providing very knowledgeable, highly respected and sensitive support advice. Shrewd recent staff appointments have built the capacity within the Early Years Foundation Stage team.

This means that all the children in Nursery and Reception now enjoy a securely satisfactory education which is improving rapidly. They are well cared for and develop many good personal qualities, such as the ability to take turns, be independent and show respect for each other. Their learning is always satisfactory and, for an increasing proportion of them, good. However, a below-average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception, though well-kept school tracking data indicate this is improving.

Children join in a range of interesting activities across all six areas of learning. Their needs and interests are known and observed by staff and taken into account appropriately in much-improved planning systems. For example, Reception pupils liked a theme on transport where they were able to issue their own tickets and chose to role-play an aeroplane journey. This helped them to develop a number of skills, including in communication and language. Nursery children enjoy a broad curriculum, including good access to a well-organised outdoor area, whereas the Reception outdoor environment is too small, which restricts opportunities. Many parents feel very involved but, rightly, the school plans to increase their engagement in the children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work set in lessons, especially in English in Key Stage 2 and mathematics throughout the school, is explicitly matched to the assessed needs of pupils, so that it is more challenging and pupils' progress increases further
- Ensure that the school complies with its duty to promote community cohesion
- Improve attendance, particularly by working with parents to reduce unauthorised holiday absence
- Use the skills of middle leaders increasingly to improve the depth, range and excitement of the school curriculum.

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

Throughout the school, pupils of all groups achieve satisfactorily, and their progress is improving well. There are some variations between classes and year groups, of which the school is aware and which it is taking steps to rectify. In spite of this, there is clear evidence that, as a result of actions taken to raise standards, pupils are now learning more quickly. The school's various intervention and support activities are effective in helping pupils who fall behind to recover ground. Pupils with learning difficulties make suitable progress and there are no marked differences in the achievement of different ethnic or other groups.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with low speaking, listening and communication skills. They make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in Nursery and Reception. However, by the time they enter Year 1, many have not reached the expected levels for their age. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in mathematics and English. However, the rate of progress is improving and this continues in Key Stage 2. For several years, standards by age 11

have been notably below average, with few attaining above expected levels. However, the data collected by the school indicate that, for the present Year 6, the national test outcomes in English, mathematics and science will be closer to average and that there will be more pupils attaining higher levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are friendly and enthusiastic and enjoy learning. One infant pupil volunteered unexpectedly, but confidently and aptly, in a lesson, 'I like this school very much!' They are sure that any unacceptable behaviour, which is rare, will be dealt with quickly and fairly. In some lessons, however, particularly if pupils lose interest, silly behaviour can interrupt learning for brief periods, though this is generally well managed by teachers. Attendance, while improving, is unsatisfactory, falling below the national average. This is largely because some families continue to take unauthorised holidays in term time. Attendance by older pupils is higher than that of younger pupils.

Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy learning about world faiths, when opportunities arise; for example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils were very engrossed in learning about Buddhist philosophy and discussing what affects happiness. However, the school is aware that pupils' understanding of other cultures, including those within their own community, should be extended. This is part of the community cohesion agenda.

Pupils have good awareness of being safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Lunch choices are healthy, though parents point out that sometimes not all options remain available. Pupils show confidence and pride in the duties they undertake in class and around the school. The school council is relatively new but pupils feel their views are recognised and valued. Pupils' good personal development and the progress they make ensure that they are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education, although their experience with computers is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's focus on improving teaching and learning, combined with pupils' positive attitudes, promotes an effective atmosphere in most lessons. Relationships are good and pupils work with enthusiasm. They enjoy discussions and sharing ideas with their talking partner or with all their classmates. Discussions are mostly managed well by teachers but, in some lessons, opportunities are missed to explore ideas further with pupils to extend their learning. Some parents are concerned that children's progress in classes has been reduced where teachers have been temporary, or where the teacher has changed; inspection evidence confirms that such classes often make less progress than others. Most teachers plan lessons carefully. They explain learning objectives, so pupils know how they can be successful. In most lessons, activities are structured for different ability groups but activities are often not finely tuned to the assessed needs of pupils, which limits progress. Marking has improved and pupils enjoy the praise they receive for their work. However, specific guidance on how pupils might improve their work is given inconsistently. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers and are efficiently deployed in class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of the majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Recently, successful emphasis has been placed, correctly, on improving writing, which has been a weaker aspect of pupils' work.

Provision for English, mathematics and science is balanced, carefully structured and wide-ranging, and has promoted improvement. However, the range of activities in other subjects is limited, can be unchallenging and is insufficiently modified to meet individual needs. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their computer skills in different subjects. There are some missed opportunities to make learning more enticing and relevant for pupils, through, for example, developing more effective links between subjects. The school acknowledges this and is in the early stages of looking at the structure of the curriculum in order to increase its depth and excitement.

A satisfactory range of visits, visitors, special activity weeks, as well as sports, are included within the curriculum. The profile of music has been raised, as heard during an assembly when all children present sang an African song in harmony in a very well-controlled and pleasing way. The school has recently achieved Healthy School Status and the Activemark.

The range of clubs and activities provided out of school hours is limited, though pupils enjoy what is offered. The school brass band is of an exceptionally high standard.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a caring and safe place for pupils. One said, 'We do feel safe and everyone here looks after you and you can go to them for help anytime.' Requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. Prudent use is made of an extensive range of agencies and external support to extend the care and guidance provided for pupils in school. The use of targets for pupils to help them know how to improve their work is developing well in that it raises aspirations for staff and pupils. Pupils like having targets in literacy and numeracy and feel that they set goals for them in their work, but they do not always find them helpful on a day-to-day basis. This is because targets are often too general and do not identify sharply for pupils the precise next steps they must tackle in their learning. One pupil said, 'Targets don't always fit well with the lesson and so they are not always helpful.' Guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, is carefully organised and monitored.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The executive headteacher, working across the two federated schools, provides strong leadership and direction. In this, she is well supported by the head and deputy head of school, who are both rigorous in their work. Each has well-defined and appropriate responsibilities. They work closely with their counterparts in the other school in the federation, which brings further useful support to Eveline Lowe. Since this structure became firmly established, consistent improvement has followed. One parent commented, 'It's been much better since the two heads were here. It's lifted.'

The school has a hard-working and enthusiastic group of middle leaders who also link productively with the other federated school. Resources are shared helpfully across both schools. With the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, however, their roles are underdeveloped and their influence in the school restricted. This is a key reason why the curriculum has not developed as quickly as other aspects of the school. There is much potential and talent in this group waiting to be realised.

The school's self-evaluation is honest and generally accurate. Recently, the coordination and collation of self-evaluation information has improved. This information is linked suitably to the school improvement plan. The most detailed and helpful parts of school self-evaluation are, understandably, in teaching and learning and in monitoring progress and standards in English and mathematics. Long-term targets for pupils' progress are ambitious, and are carefully checked and evaluated, which has helped promote the improved standards well. Other aspects of self-evaluation are not always as well focused or clear. A key example of this is the school's contribution to community cohesion. This is not properly evaluated or planned for.

Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors works very hard across the federation and is a knowledgeable and influential figure, working well with the executive headteacher on strategic issues. The governing body is appropriately structured and provides a suitable level of challenge to the school, asking some robust questions. However, it is not sufficiently involved in the school improvement planning and evaluation process and has not adequately fulfilled its legal duty in respect of community cohesion. Some governors find it hard to be actively involved in the school, though there has been a recent, positive, step to try to improve this by linking governors to year groups.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
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

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

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eveline Lowe Primary School, London, SE1 5JT

It was good to meet you again when I came with two other inspectors to your school recently. This was the sixth time I had visited Eveline Lowe because I have been working with the school throughout the time it has been in special measures. So I have come to know it well. I am very pleased to say that this time we decided that the school no longer needs special measures. It now provides you all with a satisfactory education. This is a really good moment for the school, to be celebrated, and you have all played your part. Well done!

We found that the teaching you receive is now much improved and so you are learning faster and doing better in tests and assessments. Well done for that too. Mrs Hills and the other school leaders are working really hard to make things better, and so are all the staff. It's a real team effort. There are some things about the school which are really good. One of these is your behaviour. It is lovely to see how polite, responsible and helpful you all are and how well you work and play together. That definitely deserves a third 'well done'! Your singing in assembly was absolutely fantastic - a very high standard indeed. And the brass band is really excellent.

The school still has plenty to do to become better still. Staff know this and are determined to keep up the improvement, which is great. We made four main recommendations to help the school to improve, which are to:

- make the work in lessons more closely matched to each of your exact needs; some of you told us this could be even better than it is and you were right
- understand the school's community more closely and plan what this might mean the school should do to help everyone in your community
- improve school attendance; you can help with this one!
- make all the subjects more exciting and interesting for you by involving the subject and phase leaders in planning and checking things are going well.

I wish you all well for the future, especially when you move into your new building. Good luck too to all those moving to secondary school this year.

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector