

Vauxhall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100588
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	335562
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	David Whatson

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 of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Kearn
Headteacher	Shirley Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
School address	Vauxhall Street London SE11 5LG
Telephone number	0207 735 4535
Fax number	
Email address	Admin@vauxhall.lambeth.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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, data on pupil performance, development plans, minutes of governors' meetings, curriculum plans and school policies covering pupil safety as well as 48 pupil questionnaires and 28 parent questionnaires.

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

- How well pupils in Year 6 performed in 2009 and how well the current Year 6 are performing, especially those from different minority ethnic groups and pupils of different abilities.
- Whether teachers' expectations and level of challenge were high enough, especially in mathematics and science.
- How well pupils respond to the school's provision to promote their safety, health, contribution to the community and preparation for the future.
- The reasons for the school having had more success in raising standards in English than in mathematics and science.

Information about the school

Vauxhall Primary School is slightly smaller than most other primary schools. In the Nursery, seven children attend part time and 20 attend full time. There are 28 children in Reception. These two classes make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The school is ethnically diverse. Most pupils are of a Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. The third largest ethnic group comprises pupils of a White British background. There is a much greater proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language than is found at most other schools. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is twice the national average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is far higher than usual. Many of these pupils have either emotional and behavioural or moderate learning difficulties. The rate at which pupils join or leave the school is greater than at most other schools. There is a Children's Centre on site managed by the Governing Body but this was not part of this inspection.

Over the last few years the school has been extensively refurbished. There have been several changes of deputy headteacher and this September five out of the eight class teachers are either new to the profession or new to the school.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school has many sound systems and procedures in place and there have, since the last inspection, been some improvements in standards, especially in English, in attendance and the fabric of the building. However, the turbulence of the last year and the huge change in staffing have weakened some of these improvements and undermined the school's provision. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been low and although there are signs this is starting to be addressed there is little sign of strong improvement, particularly in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is inadequate, too often the behaviour of the younger pupils disturbs learning, and the school's leaders fail to provide a clear sense of direction or plan effectively for school improvement. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a poor start to children's education.

While some good or better teaching leads to good learning, a significant minority of pupils make unsatisfactory progress because of inadequate teaching. In these and a few other lessons the management of pupils' behaviour becomes the focus of the lesson rather than what pupils are learning. Teachers are not always making explicit their expectations or enforcing these and therefore the pace of learning slows and becomes less engaging. Knowledge of pupils' prior attainment is not being used well enough to challenge them and extend their learning. Although there is high-quality marking in English books, in mathematics and science there were few, if any, suggestions about how pupils could improve their work. Most pupils remember their English targets about what they have to improve, but few could remember those in mathematics. English skills are developed well across a range of other subjects, and this is a key reason for standards being higher in this subject; however, this is not true of mathematics or science. Unlike English, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical and scientific knowledge.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the outdoor area, unlike the indoor space, is not attractive or well used. There is not enough structure or guidance to ensure that the youngest children, many of whom have recently joined the school, have a positive first experience of school. In the setting there is also too much emphasis on play so that opportunities to extend children's learning are missed.

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The school's leaders are conscious of how the recent changes, particularly in staffing, have had an impact on the school's effectiveness. They have been over-generous in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. The monitoring of teaching has been successful in the past but its effectiveness has slipped because it is not rigorous or frequent enough. The school states that it is focused on raising standards, but there are many different development plans, and vision statements do not succinctly communicate this ambition. The various subject development plans have not been highly effective because, although there are some good strategies, they and the milestones against which their success is to be measured are not clearly identified and staff training is not focused on these specific areas. The governing body has assisted the school in its strategic development but has not yet challenged it sufficiently on its standards, communicated widely with parents or evaluated the effectiveness of its policies.

The school's history indicates that in spite of some improvements, it has not been able to sustain improvements and significant weaknesses remain. Because of this and the school's fragile position in the face of challenging circumstances its capacity to improve is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics and science across the school so that at least 80% of pupils make good or better progress each academic year through:
 - improving the quality of teaching as soon as possible so that 80% of it is good or better, particularly with reference to pace and challenge and providing clearer direction to pupils on how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to talk about and use and apply their mathematics skills, knowledge and understanding
 - improving behaviour so that it makes a positive contribution to pupils' good learning, ensuring teachers make their expectations explicit and enforce these consistently.
- Improve the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that the principles of good provision in this area are understood, there is a sharp focus on learning, a balance between free choice and teacher-focused activities, and that the outdoor area is enhanced to provide good opportunities for children to learn outdoors.
- Increase the effectiveness of the school's leaders and governors in driving through school improvement by ensuring:
 - that the school development plan gives a clear sense of direction, identifies exactly what steps are to be taken and has identified points at which its impact can be measured
 - school self-evaluation is more frequent, rigorous and realistic
 - governors play an active role in challenging the school regarding pupil outcomes, routinely evaluate its policies and communicate with parents

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- the quality of teaching is monitored more rigorously and frequently, and that staff training is targeted on particular areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

In the past, progress has been satisfactory, although for a few pupils it has been better, particularly in English. Where teaching is good or better this is mirrored in pupils' current good learning and progress. But because of the significant and recent changes in staffing, the weak attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils and their poor behaviour, too many pupils are not learning as well as they could and their progress is limited. There is no pattern of underperformance between different groups of pupils as achievement for all pupils, including those from different ethnic groups and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is inadequate.

Standards over the last three years have been significantly below the national average. Science has been particularly weak, and in 2009 standards fell in both science and mathematics. The most able pupils did not do as well in these two subjects as they did in English, a pattern that has occurred before.

The view of one pupil echoed that of many, but not all, when she said 'I like to learn at school and care for everyone'. Both pupils and parents also expressed concerns about poor behaviour. Pupils respond well to the school's promotion of living healthily. They know that healthy food and exercise will keep them fit. However, they are not as knowledgeable about the dangers to their health posed by smoking, drinking or drugs. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help others in school. Although they raise money for international charities, their contribution to the local community is less well developed, as is their understanding of the wider community in which they live. As a result of this and their poor behaviour, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.

The school's attendance levels are broadly satisfactory and although persistent absenteeism has, along with punctuality, improved, these figures remain too high. This, coupled with pupils' limited basic skills and knowledge of the world of work, means that pupils are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

How effective is the provision?

In the few good and outstanding lessons observed, such as that on visualising shapes, pupils were fully engaged by the pace, challenge and enthusiasm of the teaching. In most lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is good but because routines and high expectations, even at this early stage of the year, have not been well established, time is wasted moving between activities and pupils do not settle quickly to tasks. Because behaviour management is the focus of many lessons, teachers struggle to use questions to assess pupils' learning or provide full explanations. Assessment is not being used well enough to provide the appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities. Teaching assistants were used well on occasions, as in the case of modelling how to share or to support the learning of an individual or group of pupils, but this is not common.

The curriculum is enriched and pupils' learning extended with visits to central London, such as a walk down Albert Embankment, and visits from musicians and dancers. Awards such as Healthy School and the Artsmark have had a positive impact on pupils' personal development and the school's attractiveness. Although there is an appropriate range of clubs, only a minority of pupils attend them. The school has restructured the curriculum to raise standards and increase pupils' enjoyment. This was evident in the lesson where pupils learnt about instructions by making fairy cakes. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to contribute fully to their community or deepen their understanding of the national communities.

The school's recent refurbishment provides a clean, bright, warm and stimulating place to learn, although key areas, such as a library, have yet to be reopened. The school is a caring place and is acutely aware of the needs of all its pupils, particularly the most

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vulnerable and those who start at different times of the year. Its procedures and use of outside agencies to support the specific needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are often good, particularly for those with challenging behaviour, but these pupils and many others are not always adequately managed in lessons. Small group work, especially in English, has been successful in promoting pupils' learning. The school's breakfast club provides a satisfactory start to the day for those few pupils who attend.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Improving relationships and communication with many parents have helped the school embed itself into the community and involve parents more closely in supporting their child's learning. Partnerships with local companies and organisations are having a positive impact, for example on pupils' reading. Nevertheless, a clear sense of driving improvement is not sufficiently established across the school. The inequalities in provision that have resulted in some pupils making better progress than others have not been adequately addressed and pupils do not therefore receive equality of opportunity. The governors comply with all their statutory duties, including those focused on promoting pupils' safety. The school does not sufficiently plan or evaluate its contribution to community cohesion beyond the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with standards that are well below the expected level for their age in all areas of learning. They have in the past made good progress and attainment at the end of Reception has been below the national average, although weaker in calculation. The Early Years Foundation Stage has recently moved into a renovated teaching space that is bright and welcoming. Adults are caring and provide a warm welcome to the youngest children, many of whom are very new to the setting, but do not provide sufficient guidance and support to ease them into their new routines. Children's learning does not have a high enough priority. For example, initially there were no musical instruments for children to use but when they became available there was no suggestion, and therefore little conversation, about which made the loudest/biggest or quietest/smallest sound. Assessment is not being well used to inform children's next steps in learning. The leadership of the setting is beginning to deal with the challenges posed by recent changes, including those to staffing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was small. They were mostly positive but the inspection team found that when evaluated against national benchmarks many aspects of the school are not as good as parents believe. Most notably, pupils do not make good progress and teaching is not good. Although there were questionnaires that were wholly positive, a minority expressed concerns about how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team found that the school's procedures for dealing with this are secure but they are not always executed firmly or consistently.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Vauxhall Primary 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	46	14	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	32	17	61	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	57	11	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	43	14	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	39	17	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	50	13	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	25	20	71	0	0	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)	9	32	15	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	18	22	79	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	7	12	43	7	25	4	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	32	12	43	4	14	3	17
The school is led and managed effectively	10	36	16	57	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	36	18	64	0	0	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.



7 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Vauxhall Primary School, London, SE11 5LG

You may remember that a few weeks ago we came to visit your school. Thank you for your welcome. We found out a lot about your school by talking to you and watching you while you worked and played.

I am writing to tell you that although inspectors think that the school has improved in the last few years these improvements have not been very secure and because your school has had so many changes of late it is not working as well as it could be and it needs some extra support to help it on its way again. We call this 'special measures'. Inspectors will be visiting you quite often in the future to check if the school is making enough progress. This does not mean all parts of your school are in difficulty. You should be pleased with your success in English and proud that you go to a bright and well-equipped school. I also saw how much you enjoyed having a pianist in assembly to teach you songs about fish and sharks.

Before I left it was agreed with your headteacher that there are some key areas that the school must focus on in order to raise standards in mathematics and science across the school. We have asked that your teachers help you make good or even better progress. It was also decided that teaching had to improve so much more of it is good, and that children in Nursery and Reception should have a better start to their education.

Although some of the older pupils behave well, when we visited we were concerned about the behaviour of the younger pupils. In the future teachers are going to explain more clearly how they expect you to behave and praise those who do.

In order to raise standards quickly it has also been agreed that the plans that the school makes to improve itself must be simpler, understood by all, and be clear about what it is going to achieve and how.

Yours sincerely

David Whatson

Lead Inspector

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