

# Outstanding Primary Schools

## A Study of Successful Practice in Lambeth

Jessop Primary School

Kingswood Primary School

Vauxhall Primary School

Feyisa Demie  
Christabel McClean-Bacchus

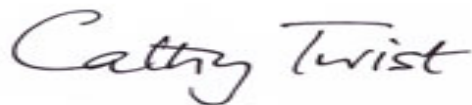
## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this research focusing on three 'Outstanding Primary Schools' in the London Borough of Lambeth. These schools have worked hard to raise the achievement of all pupils in their schools and have been recognised as providing an outstanding education. This research focuses on the successful strategies that the schools have used to raise achievement.

The case study schools in this report successfully challenge the association of poverty with low outcomes: they enable children from poorer backgrounds to succeed against the odds. The schools refuse to allow a child's background as an excuse for underachievement. Overall the case study schools' data shows that from their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards and achievement in the schools is outstanding.

Researchers highlight the reasons for the pupil progress and outstanding achievement in these schools. These include strong and inspirational leadership, high expectations for all pupils and teachers, effective use of data, effective use of a diversified workforce, excellent teaching and learning, an inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of all students, a strong link with the community, a clear commitment to parents' involvement and good and well-coordinated support. What is particularly special about the case study schools is they adopt a range of strategies and targeted support to challenge underachievement and poverty through extensive use of a diversified workforce including teaching assistants, EAL teachers and learning mentors.

This research celebrates the three schools that have achieved success for all their pupils ensuring that each one makes the best possible progress. It outlines the key characteristics of the schools and is intended to be a practical resource to support other schools in strengthening their work around pupil progression.



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**Director, Education, Learning and Skills**  
**London Borough of Lambeth**

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**Jessop Primary School  
Kingswood Primary School  
Vauxhall Primary School**

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## OUTSTANDING PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE IN LAMBETH

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## Section 1: Introduction

The core of this study is successful practice in raising achievement in outstanding schools. Over the last three decades considerable attention has been devoted to studying how successful practices have helped in raising achievement against the odds in British schools.

Raising achievement in schools requires, at the very least, an understanding of the factors influencing performance in schools. In recent years, the need for detailed case studies of schools that have been successful in raising the achievement of ethnic minority pupils has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. The body of available British research suggests that most previous studies have focussed on the reasons why ethnic minority children are underachieving. However, in recent years, the need for detailed case studies of successful schools that raise the achievement of all pupils has become apparent as a means of increasing our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement. For this reason a number of previous research projects looked at examples of schools that provide an environment in which pupils flourish. These identified the key characteristics of successful schools in raising achievement including strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, an ethos of respect with clear approach to racism and bad behaviour and parental involvement (see for details Demie 2005, DfES 2003, Demie, F and Lewis, K. 2010; Demie 2009, 2007, 2005; Demie, F. McLean, C. and Lewis, K. 2006). Demie (2005, 2009) and DfES (2003) argued that there is no 'pick and mix' option. An effective school will seek to develop all these characteristics underpinned by the practical use of data to monitor the achievement of particular groups of pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance. Much of the previous British research in this area again is on Black Caribbean pupils and there is little research into the factors which contribute to educational success and high attainment of all groups of pupils in schools.

Research into successful schools in the USA has also provided similar insights into common practices in high-performing schools serving high-poverty student populations. For example, Ron Edmonds (1982) uses high-performing schools to identify the common characteristics that could be the source of their success. The most recent body of research on school effectiveness has found that successful schools have: strong leadership; frequent monitoring of student progress; shared goals in the professional community; parental involvement and; a positive and academically focused school climate (e.g. Ellis et al. 2007; Williams et al. 2005). The findings of research into successful schools have increased our understanding of the ways in which schools can enhance pupils' academic achievement.

Recent studies by Ofsted in 2009 into twelve outstanding secondary schools also highlighted the prime contribution of leadership and management, together with a number of other features responsible for the success of each of the case study schools. The Ofsted review shows that the outstanding schools in the sample succeed for the following reasons:

- *They excel at what they do, not just occasionally but for a high proportion of the time.*
- *They prove constantly that disadvantage need not be a barrier to achievement; that speaking English as an additional language can support academic success and that schools really can be learning communities.*
- *They put students first, invest in their staff and nurture their communities.*
- *They have strong values and high expectations that are applied consistently and never relaxed.*
- *They fulfil individual potential through providing outstanding teaching, rich opportunities for learning, and encouragement and support for each student.*

- *They are highly inclusive, having complete regard for the educational progress, personal development and well-being of every student.*
- *Their achievements do not happen by chance, but by highly reflective, carefully planned and implemented strategies which serve these schools well in meeting the many challenges which obstruct the path to success.*
- *They operate with a very high degree of internal consistency.*
- *They are constantly looking for ways to improve further.*
- *They have outstanding and well-distributed leadership. (Ofsted 2009)*

Overall the literature review shows that policy makers and schools need more evidence on 'what works' and there is now a need to look more closely at why these outstanding schools do well against the odds. An increase in research of this type which focuses on what works and challenges perceived notions of underachievement in schools, will provide positive messages.

### The aim and objective of the research

The aim of the research was to investigate how schools have helped groups of pupils to achieve high standards and to identify significant common themes for success in raising achievement. It draws lessons from a good practice research carried out in inner city outstanding schools and asks the following four overarching questions:

- Why do some schools succeed against the odds?
- Why are they outstanding schools?
- What are the factors contributing to this success?
- What are the implications for school improvement?

This study provides evidence based answers to these questions, drawing on the practice, experience and ambitions of schools in challenging circumstances.

## Section 2: Methods

### Background to the case study Local Authority (LA)

This research paper considers evidence from Lambeth, an inner London Authority. Lambeth LA is one of the most ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse boroughs in Britain. About 83% of pupils are from black and ethnic minority groups. The 2008 census shows that there were 30,517 pupils in the LA's schools. Of these, African pupils formed the largest ethnic group with 24.3% followed by Black Caribbean 18.9%, White British 16.7%, White Other 6.7%, Portuguese 6%, Other Black 4.6%. The social and cultural diversity noted in the ethnic composition of the school is also reflected in the languages spoken. Around 150 languages are spoken in the LA's schools. 41% of students speak a language other than English as their main language. The most common being Yoruba, Portuguese, Spanish, Twi, French, Ibo, Ga, Krio, Tagalog and Luganda. The Local Authority therefore has a large proportion of bilingual pupils that need support in English as an additional language.

This diversity is a strength of the Local Authority to be celebrated and reflected in all aspects of schooling. These statistics also clearly demonstrate that in order to succeed in raising levels of educational attainment, we must raise attainment amongst all students in the Local Authority.



## Methodological framework of the study

Most previous research has focussed on the reasons why African heritage, Black Caribbean or ethnic minority children are underachieving. However this research looks at the success of all children in successful schools against the odds in outstanding schools. Two complementary methodological approaches were therefore adopted, each contributing a particular set of data to the study.

### Case Studies:

A detailed case study research was carried out to illuminate how the complex interactions of context, organisation, policy and practice help generate effective practice in raising the attainment of all pupils. Three primary schools that serve disadvantaged communities in Lambeth were selected for case studies. The case study schools' KS2 results were exceptionally good and the schools as a whole covered a range of ethnic groups, community languages spoken, free school meals, EAL. A higher than average proportion of students in these schools comes from poor home backgrounds. Key criteria for the selection of schools were as follows:

- an above-average proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals
- outstanding grades in the most recent Ofsted inspection
- exceptionally good results, high standards and a sustained KS2 improvement
- a pattern of high value added scores from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

Each of the case study schools were visited for a day between October and November in 2013. A structured questionnaire was used to interview headteachers, staff, governors, parents and pupils to gather evidence on how well all pupils are achieving and the factors contributing to their achievement. These included: the school curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, how the school monitors pupils performance, how it supports and guides pupils, school links with parents, parents' and pupils' views about the school and its support systems, race and ethnicity in the curriculum, quality of school leadership and management, competence and materials to use the existing flexibility within the curriculum to make subjects more relevant to pupils' own experiences and to reflect their cultural heritage.

The case study schools studied in this report defy the association of poverty and low outcomes and they enable such young people to succeed against the odds. Overall the case study schools' data shows that from their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards. The key challenge is to find out what outstanding schools are doing and why their strategies are proving to be effective in raising the achievement of all pupils. For this reason Ofsted has looked at examples of schools that are excelling against the odds in raising achievement (OFSTED 2009, Demie and Lewis 2010). All these reports agreed on the key areas: Leadership and ethos, relationship in schools, expectation and commitment, parental engagement, monitoring and curriculum enrichment and good quality teaching and learning.

**Focus groups:** Parent, pupil, teacher, support staff and headteacher focus group sessions were carried out to ascertain their views.

## SECTION 3: CASE STUDIES OF SCHOOLS

### JESSOP PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### Background

Jessop is a large primary school with 472 pupils. The school is an inclusive community school and prides itself on the diversity of its workforce. The school has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflects the languages, culture, and ethnic background of the pupils. The school population is ethnically and linguistically diverse. About 91% of the pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups. 37% have English as an additional language and 30% of the pupils are not fluent in English. This includes a significant number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Many ethnic groups are represented in the school. The majorities are Black Caribbean (24%), Black African (23%), Mixed Race (13%), White British (9%), Portuguese (6%), Black Other (6%), White Other (9 %) and a small number of Bangladeshi, Chinese, Turkish, White Irish, and Pakistani.

The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is 34% and much higher than the national average. There is also a high mobility of pupils in the school.

The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs is very high. Overall attainment on entry to the school is below average. Despite very low attainment at entry, evidence from the school performance suggests that pupils make good progress between key stages and this has placed the school in the top league in value added nationally (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The key stage data also shows that the school has had an impressive improvement rate in the last five years. The Ofsted Inspection confirms that: *'The achievement of pupils is outstanding.'* (Ofsted 2012)

Central to Jessop School's success in raising achievement and progressing pupils well are:

- An outstanding headteacher and head of school
- Effective teaching and learning
- Effective Governing Body
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support
- Effective inclusion policy and practice
- An innovative curriculum
- Effective use of data
- Effective use of pupil voice

The evidence used for this report included interviews with senior managers and pupils and scrutiny of relevant published, current and, where applicable, previous inspection reports and surveys involving the school, and performance data, including RAISEonline<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Details of KS1 and KS2 performance and value-added from:

- Jessop Primary School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-18.
- Jessop Primary School, *KS1 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2013; p.1-4.
- Jessop Primary School, *KS2 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
- Jessop Primary School, *FSP contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.

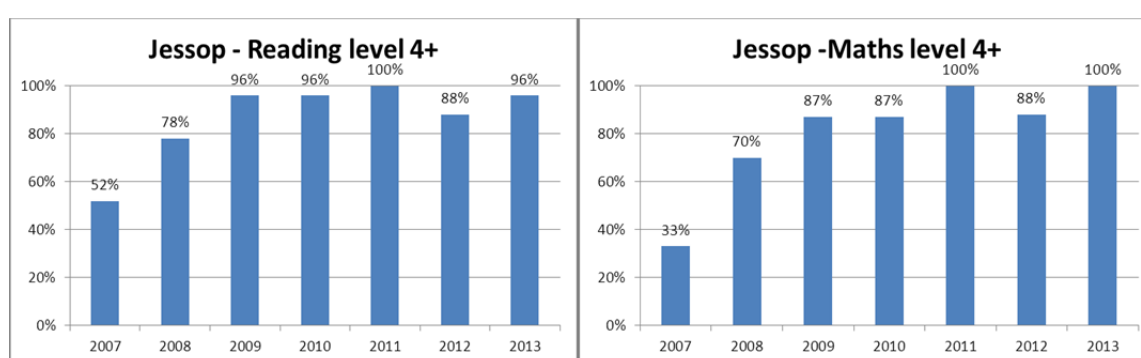
The school was asked to identify the features it considered central to its success in becoming and remaining outstanding. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community.

During the day spent at the school for the case study, the following members of staff were interviewed: the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteacher (inclusion), 2 class teachers and 2 governors including the chair and a parent governor, 3 teaching assistants, one learning mentor, together with 5 pupils.

The following report considers the evidence collected from those interactions and draws conclusions from these and more informal observations, conversations and discussions made during the day.

## Achievement and Standards

**Figure 1: KS2 Writing, Reading and Maths Results (combined) 2013**



The school provides an excellent education and achievement is outstanding. Pupils achieve exceptionally well as they move through the school. Excellent teaching, very effective teaching assistants, and very well managed support programmes contribute significantly to this. Despite challenging circumstances and low attainment at entry, results for all pupils at KS2 have improved consistently over the past five years under the leadership of the headteacher and the Head of School. The most recent Ofsted inspection also reported that:

*'When children start school their skills and abilities are well below the levels expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach above average levels by the time they reach Year 1. The well-organised environment provides many exciting learning opportunities, which enables them to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills highly effectively and thus achieve extremely well. School data show that pupils make consistently rapid and sustained progress in every year group and this has been maintained for the last three years. The current Year 6 is on track to reach above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics which represents outstanding progress from their starting points. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average.'* (Ofsted 2012)

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- Jessop Primary School, *KS1 to KS2 Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
  - Ofsted (2012). Jessop Primary School Inspection Report, Ofsted, November.
  - Ofsted (2013). Jessop Primary School RAISEonline report, Ofsted.

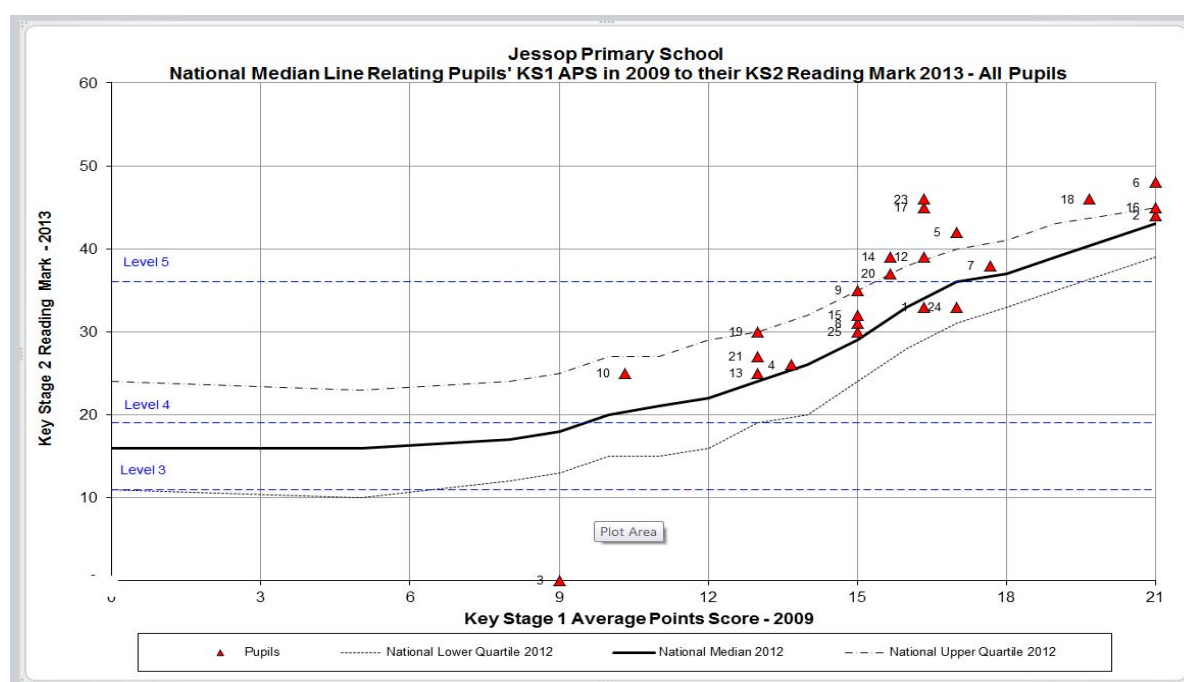
Recent data also shows that pupils reach well above average levels in writing, reading and maths and SEN, EAL, the major ethnic groups make rapid and sustained progress year on year from the starting point (See Jessop School Profile and RAISEonline 2013). The school's achievement at KS2 maths improved from 64% in 2009 to 95% in 2013. Similarly the reading test result is well above national average.

**Table 1: Key Stage 2 Results 2009 - 2013**

<b>KS2 Tests (Level 4+)</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>National 2013</b>
English	82%	81%	100%	100%		
Reading	86%	90%	96%	100%	95%	85%
Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar					86%	74%
Maths	64%	86%	100%	100%	95%	84%
Writing, Reading & Maths combined	64%	71%	100%	100%	95%	84%
Average (Reading & Maths)	73%	83%	100%	100%	95%	85%
Overall Value-Added	-	-	102.5	101.9	n/a	n/a

The value-added by the school is also very impressive. KS1 to KS2 value-added data in the graphs overleaf, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in Jessop School with the progress made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress in terms of value-added. About 36% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in reading compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. The interquartile range performance is 64% compared to 50% nationally suggesting the pupils progressed more than expected. No children are in the lower quartile range making less progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence recorded between KS1 and KS2 for the school for maths is 41% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile and interquartile range, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS1 and KS2.

**Figure 2: Jessop KS1 to KS2 Reading Value Added Scatterplot**



Evidence from the school and LA data is further supported by FFT and RAISEonline national data and was used by SMT, teachers, staff and governors to ask questions such as, which pupils have made significantly better or less progress than others and to identify the reasons for this. The FFT and RAISEonline for the school confirm that progress is well above national expectations for FSM, EAL and SEN pupils. The largest ethnic group such as Black Caribbean, Black African, Mixed Race and White British also progress well above the national average between KS1 and KS2. Progress is outstanding for all groups.

### Leadership and Management

Dynamic and inspirational leadership at all levels, but particularly from the headteacher and governing body, have driven the school forward in its relentless quest for excellence. It has made such phenomenal and sustained progress over the last few years that it begs the question, what are the factors that have led to its success?

Jessop was inspected by Ofsted in May 2012 and the following quote sums up inspectors' views of the school: *'This is an outstanding school. Achievement is outstanding because the motivational leadership of the executive headteacher and senior leaders and managers has secured outstanding teaching. Parents and carers highly value the progress that their children are making. Pupils enjoy lessons and make outstanding progress because they are inspired by the interesting variety of activities offered to them.'*

Since the Ofsted inspection the headteacher has become acting executive headteacher of the federation partnership with Stockwell Primary School, and her time is now divided between the two schools. Excellent teamwork and shared vision has enabled the deputy head of Jessop to step into her role as the ambitious and dedicated head of school, with the confidence of governors, parents and staff that the school is in first-rate hands! The school continues to build on the achievements made so far and is dedicated to sustaining its outstanding reputation as a National Support School. The acting executive headteacher, Lillian Umekwe, who is a National Leader of Education (NLE) recalls the time of her arrival at Jessop in April 2007. Firstly she had been seconded as acting head

of school from her role as deputy head of Stockwell Primary School. She had been closely involved in the transformation of Stockwell as a school with 'serious weaknesses' to becoming an outstanding school, and was already experienced in the process of school improvement. Shortly afterwards she was appointed as head of school at Jessop with the then headteacher of Stockwell as executive headteacher of the federation.

Jessop had been a 'cause of concern' to the local authority for many years, despite being graded as satisfactory by Ofsted in 2004 and 2006. Lillian was dismayed to find that: *'The quality of teaching was not satisfactory it was mostly inadequate. There were 186 children in the school. 'I started to change the culture and I used the words 'our children'....'our children will achieve!'*

With the enormous challenge and plethora of issues to address, the leadership decided to change the playground first, as the acting executive headteacher recalls:

*'We applied to NatWest/Royal Bank of Scotland for funding. We persuaded them to come and see our playground and they awarded us £100,000 saying it was the worst they had seen in the country! Parents were asked to help us to design the best playground for their children. The parents and children formed a working party with the governors. We all visited schools with really good playgrounds and this focussed them on what was possible. The children felt valued and the parents felt that something was being done about the school.'*

Next an intensive programme of monitoring teaching and learning ensued: *'The programme involved classroom observation, work scrutiny and 'drop-ins'. 80% of lessons were inadequate. We recruited some new teachers from Stockwell including an AST (Advanced Skills Teachers) and we started the process of change. I modelled lessons together with the AST to share good practice with the teachers.'*

In September 2008 the school was monitored by HMI who noted that positive changes were taking place. Subject leaders had been appointed but were new to their roles and teaching was mainly good with only three lessons judged to be inadequate.

The decisive leadership of the acting executive headteacher is based on a vision sharply focused on high achievement for each pupil. In order to accomplish this, there is a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Morale is high and teamwork strong at all levels. The acting executive headteacher acknowledges that the most significant factor in the schools success has been the rigour with which they monitor the quality of teaching: *'When we observe lessons we always give teachers steps to improve, even if they are outstanding. We still observe all our outstanding teachers.'* Despite there being several newly qualified classroom teachers at Jessop, the leadership have no qualms about the school's capacity to sustain its outstanding provision. All of them have been paired with outstanding teachers. She concludes: *'I have seen the potential in our NQTS who have to be at least good first of all and then we build on that.'*

The forensic analysis of data and other evidence enables the acting executive headteacher to focus action when potential underachievement emerges or to take action if gaps appear in the performance of different groups. The leadership is distributed with a strong tier of team leaders for EYFS, Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6 who play an active role in pupil progress meetings which are attended by class teachers, the inclusion manager, head of school and the acting executive headteacher. *'We review progress every 6-10 weeks and if children are progressing and we think they are now on track, we move on to target others. We have now started looking at children who are exceeding age related expectations exploring ways to support them to make sure*

*that they also make outstanding progress, by for example, enabling a Year 3 child to be set Year 4 or Year 5 work.'*

Interventions are led by high quality teaching assistants. The acting executive headteacher explains the rationale for this: *'We employ graduates as much as possible and adults with a competent level of numeracy and literacy. We set targets for the TAs, linked to teachers' targets and to the pupils' targets. We observe them working with groups. We have the highest expectations of teaching assistants and they are valuable members of the school team. Our TAs attend a weekly whole school INSET along with teachers. Many of our TAs go on to become teachers and when they have trained we ask them to come back.'*

Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that everyone is clear about the high expectations of the school. The head of school explains the process: *'Each term staff are given a monitoring schedule so they are well aware of what the focus for monitoring will be each term, i.e. lesson observations for teachers and TAs, planning, monitoring of children's workbooks, including the 'effective marking' system'.*

When asked why the school has succeeded against the odds? The acting executive headteacher reflects:

*'I just believe that every child is good at something and it is our job to tap into this and extend it. Our belief is every child can achieve but it is up to us to find out how to bring it about. Some achieve through music, sport, reading or maths, wherever their interests lie.'*

During the Ofsted inspection last year, inspectors recognised the excellence of the leadership and management they reported:

*'The executive headteacher, together with senior leaders and managers provide outstanding leadership. They are very well supported by leaders and managers at all levels and by members of the cohesive staff team. An ambitious vision and accurate evaluation have resulted in rapid and sustained improvements in achievement, attendance, teaching, behaviour and the curriculum since the previous inspection and demonstrate the school's secure capacity to improve further.'*

The SMT team includes the business manager, premises manager, three assistant heads, the head of school and the acting executive headteacher. The contribution of the school's SIP, Ken Brown is acknowledged as making a great difference to the development of the SMT, as he was instrumental in their training. The acting executive headteacher recalls: *'We meet at least termly as a SMT and the leadership team on a weekly basis. Every one of us has as their target 'to raise pupils' achievement', everything is linked to this. Everyone plays a role in this.'*

Rigorous performance management and high quality professional development for staff, including coaching and whole school training have contributed to the school gaining a CPD Award from the Institute of Education. CPD runs across all levels, TAs, office staff and teachers. The acting executive headteacher believes that this has empowered staff to 'step up' when she is not in the school: *'They can operate without me being here. They are confident in doing so.'*

The role of the acting executive headteacher has changed and this term - she has a wider role across the federation, she speaks with confidence about the head of school who joined Jessop three years ago as an assistant head: *'She is an outstanding teacher and models teaching. Having the right leadership is so important. We share the vision... she is the drive .. Flying the flag as I step back to spend more time at Stockwell. Getting outstanding is one thing but maintaining it is harder, but I*

*would say we are now more outstanding than we were when we were inspected. We have had to get the children's behaviour from good to outstanding.'*

The head of school has been a significant figure in the development of the school and her confidence in its capacity to sustain improvement is unshakeable: *'To improve our capacity we have three assistant headteachers. We have a cohort of outstanding teachers here. The support and induction that we provide for our new teachers and NQTs ensures that they also become outstanding teachers. We are a team and we support each other to provide the best possible education for our children.'*

How did the federation partnership with Stockwell contribute to the school's success? The acting executive headteacher was in no doubt that this was the key to improving the school, which had been the cause of concern for at least a decade, to where it is now:

*'The federation helped enormously. Jessop got me from Stockwell. Not only did I come over but an AST and an excellent Year 6 teacher came too. Sharing staff, joint INSETs, planning .. It was all fantastic. I also had the former executive headteacher who supported me and worked with me. The federation was for me, the key to our success.'* The acting executive headteacher views the federation as a partnership, an opportunity to draw on each school's strengths, to support each other... *'We share the best practice from each school'.... 'Individual schools are vulnerable in this climate of change so working in partnership with other schools is the way forward.'* However she believes strongly that each school in the federation needs to have its own identity: *'because each school has a different cohort of pupils and parents, that's what makes it special and it's what parents want from a school – why would you want to change that?'*

The staff are proud of the school and share the drive for further improvement. Training is provided to share best practice in a range of subject areas across the federation partnership and with other schools in the Brixton Learning Collaborative, (a group of schools working together to offer a range of services for children, families and other members of the community).

The acting executive headteacher has positioned the school at the heart of its community by forging very productive partnerships with many outside organisations that enrich the pupils' lives and have a direct impact on their outstanding achievement.

### **The Effectiveness of the Governing Body in Challenging and Supporting the School**

The highly effective governing body makes a very significant contribution to the school's pursuit of excellence, giving invaluable support and strategic leadership. It keeps itself well informed and able to challenge the school's performance through robust monitoring systems, while supporting its development. The chair of governors explains: *'We used the FFT tracking data to look at what children had achieved in EYFS and at KS1 and we looked at the difference between those pupils who had been at the school from the start against those that joined the school later (75 pupils joined the school at times other than in the Reception class last year). As a result of this the school has developed a new strategy for when pupils come into the school and to look at what we do to enable them to catch up.'*

The expertise on the governing body is a key feature of its effectiveness in holding the school to account for the standards pupils achieve. The chair of governors is highly skilled at interpreting data and was concerned when it appeared that only she and the leadership team had a good understanding of data: *'I wanted a wider group of people on the governing body to have an understanding of data. Now there are about five governors who have this. We have built capacity.'* Also as the chair of the Achievement Committee, her knowledge of pupils' progress is impressive: *'We now look at tracking data and what specific strategies are being put in place. The school doesn't*



*tell us who the pupils are but they are able to give us reasons why they may not be doing so well. We have set up clubs after school which are aimed at those children who are not doing so well. The governing body evaluate the strategies to make sure they are working. We looked last week at boys writing – they are not doing well nationally but we are looking at what we are doing and the things we are going to do differently. We are tracking boys in EYFS who are doing better than girls in writing and we want to see if this continues, year on year as they go through the school.'*

The chair of governors believes that the single most important aspect of the governing body's work in terms of raising achievement is their focus on data. The Achievement Committee also looks into the detail of teaching and learning.

The governing body rigorously fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding by establishing robust systems to protect pupils and their impact is frequently monitored, reviewed and updated to reflect changing conditions and requirements.

In the past, attendance rates were well below average but are now above average. The chair of governors explained how this was achieved: *'We take a tough approach -governors sit on attendance panels and are very clear about expectations. We also use penalty charge notices e.g. when children do not return to school on the first day of a new term – we have zero tolerance. We are now focusing on punctuality.'*

In terms of the impact of the federation partnership on the success of Jessop, the chair of governors comments: *'It is not the federation itself that drives the improvement it is the capacity that it brings. A federation can be a very positive thing.'*

The governing body shares in the school's vision that every child can achieve and they also have the highest expectations, as the chair of governors explains: *'We expect many children to make three levels of progress, and all to make at least two levels of progress. We are especially interested in those capable of making Levels 5 or 6 as well as traditionally those children who need to make progress at lower levels. This vision is strongly held by the governing body and the school.'*

### Effective Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching is outstanding as exemplified in the school's Ofsted report:

*'The quality of teaching is outstanding because it leads to above average outcomes and fosters determination to succeed. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, very high expectations and plan a range of activities that inspire and enthuse pupils in lessons. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are well taught and pupils say that teaching is good. As one parent said, Jessop is a fun, safe school where children come first and really learn. Teachers make excellent links across subjects providing practical experiences to make learning more relevant to pupils and to develop curiosity. For example, a nature walk for Year 1 linked mathematical work on shapes with the identification of parts of a flower in science and with a story they were reading about an enormous turnip. Every opportunity is taken to promote learning, develop reflective thinking and independent skills and to teach collaborative skills. Very effective use of resources, including information and communication technology, along with excellent pace in lessons, ensures that learning is enjoyable.'*

We asked teachers from Year 4 and EYFS why their school was special and they responded: *'Because of its very high expectations. EYFS children come in and we know they can achieve...we want them to achieve.'*

Teachers view the diversity of their pupils as a real strength: *'The diversity of pupils is what makes this school special – they come from all over the world. They feel welcomed from the start and settle*

*straight away because they feel valued. It's such a community school – parents are involved and they want to be part of the school. We celebrate diversity here, in class assemblies, the language of the month and international day. Children learn from each other and we make use of other teachers who might follow that religion or have the same language as our children. We draw on that and our pupils to support our teaching. We celebrate festivals so children and parents feel included.'*

The school's 'values' programme is another feature which teachers identify as something that is 'special' about Jessop. It is now in its third year and promotes the following values:

Friendship, appreciation, joy, hope, peace, love, unity, respect, humility, caring and co-operation.

Teachers believe that the values programme has improved behaviour significantly. Each value is introduced by the headteacher or head of school at assemblies, reinforced in circle times, SEAL and through homework.

Teachers work extremely well together, sharing ideas on approaches to teaching topics and resources. Guidance is provided for staff in various ways, a comprehensive induction programme which includes: EAL strategies, behaviour management strategies, child protection and supporting pupils with SEN. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent support for planning for differentiation from the inclusion manager who monitors their plans. Weekly staff meetings focus on developing aspects of the curriculum, teaching and assessment. The impact of this professional development is evidenced by the outstanding teaching pupils receive.

Typically, teachers plan activities that excite pupils and gain their interest and curiosity. They model very effectively what pupils are expected to do. Cross-curricular links helps to make the learning coherent.

Teaching assistants make a highly valuable contribution to pupils' learning through the very effective support they offer to pupils in a wide range of intervention groups.

Teachers set ambitious targets for each pupil's achievement which are shared with the children and with their parents. They are given detailed feedback on their work through the meticulous 'effective marking' system.

### **Effective Guidance and Targeted Support**

A particular strength of the school is the excellent care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and they are clear about how to improve their work.

*Ofsted praised the support pupils receive: 'Teachers plan exceptionally well for different groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Activities and resources match their needs and consequently they make excellent progress. The 'Steps to Success', which identify precisely what pupils need to do in lessons, help pupils to understand what level of work they should complete. Teaching assistants skilfully support them in lessons and encourage them to think for themselves.'*

Pupils' great enjoyment and appreciation of the school is reflected in high attendance and very good behaviour and the 'Going for Gold' reward system has had a very positive impact in these areas. Pupils treat each other with respect and communicate respectfully with adults and with each other. They describe their teachers as 'caring' and say that teachers help them, that they are kind and are approachable if they have a problem. Whilst some pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, early identification of their needs and highly effective provision, together with skilful

behaviour management by staff, ensure that these pupils make great progress in improving their behaviour.

Exemplary teaching standards ensure that teachers have the tools to meet the needs of all the children; they are trained to know how to support EAL pupils in the classroom. The inclusion manager explains how this works: *'Our termly provision mapping meetings for each child guarantees that they all have access to adequate resources to meet their learning needs. The provision maps indicate EAL stages, SEN, able and talented, vulnerable children and the support they will receive.'* In order to meet the individual needs of pupils, the school has developed exceptionally strong, committed teaching assistants and learning mentors, and draws on a wide range of external multi-agency professionals.

As speech and language therapist support is scarce the therapist models teaching strategies for the TAs to observe and they then implement them with groups of pupils. A specialist literacy teacher visits the school once per week and again models specific strategies for TAs to use with pupils. Various other specialists advise the school on targets and resources that teachers can use to support pupils' needs.

Rigorous pupil progress meetings are held frequently. At the beginning of every academic year, updated pupil performance data and the class provision map are discussed with the receiving teacher. The inclusion manager, the head of school, team leader and class teacher are present. Targets are set for the year and reviewed termly. Pupils not making expected progress are immediately targeted with specific interventions. For example, Year 2 is itself the focus for intensive group work support in phonics, Lexia, word work, comprehension booster groups as well as Level 3 booster sessions for children of above average attainment. Teachers and support staff lead these groups.

The impact of the wide-ranging and carefully monitored interventions is significant and children of all abilities make exceptional progress.

## Inclusion

The welcoming environment, starting in the entrance area and continuing through all classrooms, coupled with the pupils' exemplary behaviour leads to an outstanding climate for learning. The pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance levels.

The school has two skilled and experienced learning mentors that support pupils learning in the classroom and at playtimes. Through pupil progress meetings with class teachers, pupils who are not progressing and have a barrier to learning are identified. The inclusion manager then detects the barrier and a learning mentor is assigned to support the child and family to overcome their learning barriers. An intervention programme is then arranged for a minimum of six weeks. One of the learning mentors specialises in sports, providing support for pupils with low self-esteem and behavioural problems. The school works closely to support these pupils in many ways, including support for payment of breakfast club and after school clubs. The learning mentors co-ordinate the peer mediators, friendship buddies and prefects.

The attendance learning mentor also works closely with the attendance officer to support parents and families with punctuality concerns. Families are offered an inclusive approach to meet their individual needs including a 'wake up' phone call in the morning, to a collection reminder at the end of the day. This solidifies the connections between home and school to get pupils to school on time. Rigorous and stringent procedures are in place to secure above average attendance and punctuality as explained by the attendance learning mentor: *'I look at registers weekly and if I see a child has*

*been late on more than one occasion I send out a letter to parents. We do not allow parents to take children out on holiday. There are special discretionary reasons but this happens rarely. It is very clear what our expectations are as a school.'*

The learning mentors play an invaluable role in developing pupils' reasoning, social/teamwork and behavioural skills through a wide range of sports and clubs as described: *'They are learning how to communicate with each other positively through circle times, discussions and we link them with peers who can show them more positive ways of interacting. We have quite a big pupil voice, so they have their peers to look up to.'* The contribution of 'Going for Gold' in improving behaviour has been noteworthy: *'The whole emphasis is on encouraging the positive... certificates are presented at the end of term, gold, silver and bronze, e.g. for 100% attendance, for helping other children in the playground; for completing homework projects. Children are recognised at a whole school assembly.'*

In their excellent work with intervention groups, learning mentors submit information to their line manager about the progress pupils are making: *'We action plan for each child for a six week period and we have to produce a report of how the child has progressed.'* The learning mentors value opportunities they are given to show initiative: *'The good thing is the school will allow us to use our own initiative with the approval of the line manager. It's about being creative and if we see happier children, we know we are making a difference.'* They also value the training opportunities the school provides to extend their skills, for example, on a counselling course, behaviour management, phonics and lots of curriculum training. They also attend staff meetings after school.

A weekly coffee morning, drop-ins for parents, meeting and greeting parents in the playground, 'dads' football sessions and a dads and toddlers group are all features of the learning mentors' valuable roles in engaging parents and carers.

### **Innovative Curriculum**

The school has continued to develop its own rich and diverse, creative curriculum over the last three years; it has been a work in progress as the Head of school describes: *'One of the first things we did to improve the curriculum was to work hard to develop our subject leaders. We decided to do away with QCA schemes because they are too restrictive and now plan using the National Curriculum documents. We bring the whole school together with a particular theme or topic. We teach Maths, English, Science and ICT separately but use the themes to support those subjects too. As much as possible, we link the teaching and learning of subjects together through a common theme or topic. We look at our children and we ask what do our children need to learn about?' How can we encourage girls and boys? Our creative curriculum changes each year because we evaluate and see how effective our curriculum is. This way of working allows teachers to become more creative. We also link our homework to the whole school theme so families become involved.'*

Teachers are enthusiastic about its impact on the children: *'The curriculum offers so much flexibility in what I can do in the classroom. I can ask the children what we could do and because they are involved they take so much enjoyment from it. I can see evidence of their achievement.'*

The school's website states that *'the aim of all those at Jessop is to ensure that the curriculum offered to the children is not only fun and enjoyable but also leads to children achieving their full academic potential.'* The school logo says 'Excellence together with our community' in the belief that it is with the 'partnership between parents and staff' that the children will be able to develop into 'well rounded individuals'. Parents can access 'curriculum guides' each term for each class from EYFS to Year 6, which outline the creative curriculum and homework projects. The school's innovative and exciting partnership with London Music Masters, through The Bridge Project (which

has spanned six years) has contributed to the excellence of the school's curriculum. The Bridge Project is an educational initiative which identifies and nurtures young children who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage in classical music. The Project encourages children, their families and communities to develop a life-long appreciation for classical music in all its varied forms. Pupils at Jessop have therefore had a range of unique opportunities and experiences including performing at the Royal Festival Hall. They receive music tuition and participate in various musical workshops and performances throughout the school year.

The rich and diverse curriculum provides many memorable experiences and brings learning to life by linking topic themes creatively between subjects. Boys' writing has greatly improved by developing their skills in contexts they find engaging. Whole school topics cover EYFS to Year 6 which the EYFS team leader views as being a very positive feature. She says: *'The EYFS in many schools are in their own little bubble... here we feel more included in the whole school and so do the children. It motivates them. From my point of view it really makes a difference.'*

The creative curriculum was praised in the school's Ofsted report: *'The creative curriculum offers a very broad range of themed activities which are developed extremely well with contributions from pupils. Consequently, the school provides rich and memorable experiences for pupils that prepare them exceptionally well for their next steps in learning. There are many excellent opportunities through the curriculum and in assemblies to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The diversity of the school is celebrated and pupils are encouraged to consider other faiths and cultures through projects such as Our Heritage.... A very wide range of well-attended after-school clubs provides many opportunities for sports, arts and music activities.'*

Black History Month is built reflectively into the curriculum in the autumn term and covers influential people and groups, e.g. in Nursery there are Stories from Africa, Reception: Stories from America – The Obamas, Year 1: Ride to Freedom - Rosa Parks, Year 2: Amazing Adventures of Mary Seacole, Year 3: Blast from the past Second World War (children's viewpoints), Year 4: Aboriginal Australia - artists, Year 5: Windrush - influential people and Year 6: From Apartheid to Peace – Nelson Mandela.

There is an exhibition of children's work twice per year to which parents are invited. Classes are timetabled to view each year group's work in the exhibition and this helps them to understand what is expected of them as they progress through the school. Homework is also included in the exhibition which later goes on display at the local Library.

### Parental and Community Engagement

*'Engagement with parents and carers is very effective. Almost all who responded to the questionnaire say that the school helps them to support their children's learning. They attend music and mathematics workshops, parents' forums and consultation days. Parents and carers also effectively contribute to the curriculum provision. For example, they attend lessons on 'people who help us' to describe the jobs they do.'* (Ofsted)

Parents and carers are delighted with how well the headteacher and staff know their children. This mirrors the teachers' view that knowing each child and building firm foundations for the relationship with home is a key to the school's success. The pupils feel secure and greatly valued and so grow academically and socially in a warm family atmosphere, where each is known for their individual characteristics. This generates great confidence in the pupils when facing new experiences and enables the school to very rapidly pinpoint resources and actions to meet their needs.

A 'parent's forum' has long been established as the school is committed to listening and responding to the views and opinions of parents. They meet every half-term. The parents' forum is a platform

for parents to make suggestions and express ideas for improvements at the school and their views are taken seriously.

A parent governor (who now has a grandchild at the school) recalls when the school was not doing well. *'Parents had stopped believing in the place, it was not a school of choice. When the new management took over a lot of teachers left.'* She goes on to describe the challenge which was presented to the new leadership and some significant actions which the new headteacher put in place to start to transform the school: *'When Lillian Umekwe took over she dealt with the nitty-gritty. When she started you could see she had a vision for where she wanted the school to go. Then because she worked so hard the teachers started to work hard – she brought in the idea of teachers learning from other teachers, she brought in reward systems which made the children aspire. She did so much. Getting the parents involved no matter how much they moaned. She came back to the next meeting and told them how she had dealt with things they had concerns about. Bit by bit it started to turn around.'*

To help governors understand what was going on the headteacher asked teachers to come to governing body meetings to explain what they were doing: *'Teaching and learning grades were shared with governors and we discussed where they could be helped and set targets to improve.'* *Now our governing body has learned how to ask searching questions.'*

The learning mentors play a significant role in involving families within the community in the wide range of events. For example they hold regular coffee mornings with parents to discuss any issues or concerns and offer them the support that they need. Throughout the year several other events are held to bring the local community together including football competitions, carnival and a picnic in the park.

### Use of Data

Use of performance data for school improvement is a strength of Jessop School. Data is used as a driver for raising achievement and central for school self-evaluation and to draw up action plans.

The school has a well-developed pupil tracking system and it has detailed phonics, FSP, KS1 and KS2 and non-statutory assessment data followed by background data such as ethnic background, language spoken at home, EAL stage of fluency, SEN, mobility rate, free school meals, class attended, attendance rate and type of support. In addition the school also uses a wide range of data including LA data, RAISEonline and FFT for monitoring performance and setting challenging targets.

The successful use of data owes much to the headteacher and head of school. They are both responsible for monitoring trends, results and analysis of how the school performed in relation to similar schools and the national average. Comparisons are made in all curriculum areas and by groups of pupils. The senior management team supports and challenges teachers to raise the performance of every pupil. Teachers are held accountable for the results and progress of every pupil and this helps to sharpen the focus to raise achievement (see Table 2). They are expected to identify and monitor progress of individual pupils who are underachieving. The school is particularly proud of its approach in monitoring the performance of all groups of pupils and this is widely discussed at the achievement committee and the governing body meetings. It uses the data to identify individual strengths and areas of development. This was clearly noted during the interview with the chair of governors, the headteacher and the head of school and in discussion with teachers, the inclusion manager and TAs:

*'High quality assessment data, tracking and target setting procedures for individuals and groups of pupils are the key feature in our school.'* (head of school)



*'We look at the LA data, RAISEOnline, FFT and school produced data very carefully to track individual pupil's performance and progress. Data leads us to the type of questions we need to ask. It has also helped us to set targets and plan strategies.'* (chair of governors)

*'We have high expectations. We want most of the children to achieve 3 levels of progress. We also have children who can make 4 levels of progress.'* (headteacher)

*'Progress of groups of pupils is carefully tracked and almost all groups make outstanding progress overall in this highly inclusive school.'* (Ofsted 2012, p.8)

The chair of governors also gave a detailed picture of school achievement and how the data is used in the school. She confirmed that:-

- *'The school data shows a strong picture of achievement at Jessop, including bucking the national trends around the achievement of boys, summer born children, FSM and pupil premium pupils and BME pupils in some year groups.'*
- *'At KS2 girls do better than boys in reading and writing, all ethnic groups do well and no gap exists between FSM and non FSM. FSM pupils do better than non-FSM.'* (chair of governors)

We would argue that this school is somewhat unique and has a chair of governors who is forensic in the use and analysis of data, with excellent knowledge of national education policy development and issues with first-hand experience working in the area. The school performance has been thoroughly discussed at the achievement committee and with the headteacher and teachers. Our observations suggest that the governing body are excellent in challenging and supporting the headteacher, the head of school and SMT. They carefully monitor the impact of the school's work in raising achievement and rigorously hold the school leaders and managers to account through effective use of data. The GB discuss extensively what the data says about the school performance including the interventions strategies and the impact of the strategies the school has put in place to improve performance of particular groups listed above. The discussion has led to some new challenging targets for the school. What is remarkable in this school are the words of the chair of governors; *'The data is read and used in the context and focuses on where the school could look to make further improvements. The school endeavours to go beyond outstanding.'*

Interviews with the headteacher, the head of school, classroom teachers, inclusion managers, TAs and learning mentors also suggested that the school is rigorous in assessing all pupils and teachers look at the data carefully. The school uses data to track pupil progress, set targets, identify underachieving pupils for further support and inform teaching.

*'Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate quality of provision and to identify and support for differentiated groups of pupils.'* (head of school)

*'There are excellent systems for monitoring the work of the pupils, identifying those who need additional help or extra challenge and then providing them with appropriate additional support.'* (inclusion manager)

*'Careful use of data, rigorous monitoring in lessons and regular tracking ensure that any variance in progress is tackled quickly.'* (Ofsted 2012)

Table 2: Sample of Writing Tracking and Monitoring Spreadsheet

Group Name: Year 4

Surname Forename	Unauth Absences	SEN Status	EAL	First Language	SEN Need	Writing Assessment Y2 Sum TP Year 2 Summer Term	Writing Assessment Y3 Sum TP Year 3 Summer Term	FFT D Write Est KS2 Level TP Year 6 Summer Term	Target TP Year 4 Writing End of Y4 Summer Term	Writing Assessment Aut TP Year 4 Autumn Term	Writing Assessment Spr TP Year 4 Spring Term	Writing Assessment Sum TP Year 4 Summer Term	Writing Progress TP Year 4 Summer Term
Pupil 1	0	P	N	English	MLD	1c	1a	3b	2b	2c	2c	2b	=
Pupil 2	0		Y	Polish		2b	3b	4b	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 3	14		N	English							2c	2b	
Pupil 4	1	N	N	French		2b	2a	4b	3b	3c	3b	3b	=
Pupil 5	2		Y	Chinese		2b	3b	4b	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 6	0		N	English		2b	2a	4b	3a	3c	3b	3a	=
Pupil 7	11		N	English		2b	3c	4b	3a	3b	3a	3a	=
Pupil 8	2		Y	Tigrinya		3c	3b	5c	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 9	4		Y	Somali			2c		3c	2b	2a	3c	=
Pupil 10	2		N	English		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 11	0		Y	Somali		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 12	7		Y	Portuguese					3c	2a	2a	3c	=
Pupil 13	2		Y	English		2c	2b	4c	3c	2a	3c	3b	+
Pupil 14	0	P	N	English	BESD	1c	2c	3b	2a	2c	2b	2a	=
Pupil 15	6		Y	Portuguese		2a	3b	5c	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 16	2			Spanish								1b	
Pupil 17	6	P	N	English	BESD				3c	2a	3c	3a	+
Pupil 18	0		Y	English		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 19	2		N	English		3c	3b	5c	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 20	0		Y	Luganda							3c	3a	
Pupil 21	0	P	N	English	MLD	2c	2b	4c	3c	2b	2a	3c	=
Pupil 22	2		Y	Akan/Twi-Fante		2a	3b	5c	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 23	0		Y	Arabic						Wa	Wa	1c	
Pupil 24	2		N	English					3c	2a	3c	3b	+
Pupil 25	1			English			3c		3a	3b	3b	3a	=
Pupil 26	0		Y	Hungarian		2a	3a	5c	4b	4c	4c	4b	=
Pupil 27	0		N	English							Wb	1c	
Pupil 28	3	A	Y	Somali	BESD	2b	2a	4b	3b	3c	3b	3b	=
Pupil 29	0		N	English		2a	3a	5c	4c	4c	4c	4b	+
Pupil 30	0		Y	Hungarian					3a	3a	4c	4c	+
Pupil 31	4	N	Y	French		2c	2a	4b	3b	3c	3b	3b	=
Pupil 32	0		Y	Akan/Twi-Fante		2a	3c	4a	3a	3b	3a	4c	+
Pupil 33	0		N	English		2b	3c	4b	3a	3b	3b	3a	=
Pupil 34	1		N	English		2b	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 35	7		Y	Lithuanian						1a	2c	2a	
Pupil 36	0		Y	Arabic									
Pupil 37	0	P	N	English	BESD	2c	2b	4c	3c	2a	2a	3c	=
Pupil 38	9		N	English		2a	3b	4a	4c	3b	3a	4c	=
Pupil 39	6		N	English		3c	3a	5c	4b	3a	4c	4b	=
Pupil 40	1		N	English		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4b	+
Pupil 41	1		N	English		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 42	0		Y	Dutch/Flemish								2a	
Pupil 43	0		N	English		2a	3b	4b	4c	3a	4c	4c	=
Pupil 44	2		Y	Polish		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 45	0		Y	Spanish		2b	3c	4b	3a	3b	3b	3a	=
Pupil 46	0		Y	Somali		2a	3b	4a	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 47	0		Y	Akan/Twi-Fante		2a	3b	4b	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 48	0			Akan/Twi-Fante								2a	
Pupil 49	2		Y	Yoruba		2b	3b	4b	4c	3b	3b	4c	=
Pupil 50	0		Y	Akan/Twi-Fante		3c	3a	5b	4b	4c	4c	4b	=
Pupil 51	8			English		2a	3b	5c	4c	3a	3a	4c	=
Pupil 52	6		N	Igbo		3c	3a		4b	4c	4c	4b	=
Pupil 53	0		N	English		2c	2a	4c	3b	3c	3b	3b	=
Pupil 54	3	P	N	English	MLD					1a	1a	1a	
Pupil 55	4		Y	Spanish		2b	3b	4b	4c	3a	3a	4c	=

The extent to which they make progress is evident not only in the data shown above, but also in a number of discussions we had with the assistant headteacher (inclusion), teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors and the leadership team. The impact of targeted support in raising achievement can be clearly seen from the examples of outstanding practice and case study overleaf:



**Child A Case Study:** A Year 6 pupil with statement for dyslexia, returned back to the school in Year 2 following a period of time in another country without any schooling. Their phonics and spelling attainment were low and writing was at a mark making stage. SATs results: achieved level 4 in numeracy and made excellent progress in literacy to write in paragraphs. The following targeted support was given to Child A.

- Clear differentiation and monitoring by SMT
- Supportive resourcing in class, e.g. word mats, number lines and squares, whiteboard and pen to record ideas visually, visual resourcing, variety of ways to record ideas including photographs
- Intervention groups; Speech and language, Literacy booster group 3 times per week
- THRASS programme daily with adult support
- Lexia booster group daily to develop phonics
- Reading with volunteer reader 3 times per week
- Learning mentor support for confidence and learning
- Clear tracking of progress and moderation by inclusion manager with additional support revised if slower progress made than expected.
- Monitoring of interventions effectiveness via provisions mapping and pupil progress meetings

**Child B Case Study:** Child B is an EAL child arriving into Jessop in Year 1 with little English; Portuguese speaking. Parents also had developed little English. SATs results: maths level 5, reading level and grammar, punctuation and spelling level 4. The following targeted support was provided to the EAL child which was effective to raise achievement:

- New arrivals policy adhered to with settling in phase and learning mentor support
- In class EAL support program and resourcing, such as dual language dictionaries
- Differentiation from class teachers monitored by SMT
- Teachers working with inclusion manager to develop differentiated resources and planning to support learning
- Visual resources to support learning
- Talk for writing
- Clear tracking of progress and monitoring via provisions mapping

**Child C Case Study:** Child C is a more able pupil and was at Jessop from reception, achieving level 5 in all areas. The child was supported with the following additional targeted support:

- Challenge area in foundation stage
- Challenge boxes in all classes
- Extension of learning via effective marking policy and Green Pen Questions
- Peer learning and sharing ideas
- Differentiation on planning and monitoring from SMT
- Master classes at linked secondary school
- Booster from deputy head for more able
- Booster from class teacher to 'close the gap'
- Additional homework targeting level 5

To conclude, the school sees data as important to raise achievement. The use of data raised the expectation of staff, pupils and governors. Every pupil is expected and encouraged to achieve their full potential by teachers. These high expectations are underpinned by effective use of data to pinpoint underachievement and target additional support.

### **Pupil Voice**

As part of the pupil voice focus group we asked 5 pupils from Years 5 and 6, what do you like best about the school? What is special about your school? Why? What are the reasons why your school is an outstanding school? They pointed out during the interview and focus group discussion how much they enjoy coming to school and also expressed how proud they are about how well they are doing at the school. They also gave a number of reasons why the school is a special school and outstanding including:-

*'You always learn new things'*

*'Because you get to know each other better'*

*'Everyone at playtime and during lessons they are always happy'*

*'We work as a team'*

*'Our school is special because we have someone to play with – we have friendship buddies'*

*'They ask us how we feel about stuff because everyone in the school is different'*

*'Our school is special because everyone is diverse. It is a multicultural school and we love it'*

*'Our school is special because we respect the environment'*

*'We have a team meeting'*

*'Our school is special because they always encourage us with outstanding behaviour'*

*'The school is welcoming'*

When asked what they like best about their school, they gave the following positive view about their school.

*'I like the school because you get educated better'*

*'I like the school because you get caring teachers. They help us and they are kind.'*

*'You can go to the teachers if you have a problem.'*

*'We have Going for Gold'*

*'The size of the school is big'*

*'I like teachers in our school'*

*'I like this school because children respect teachers'*

*'I like the school because we learn different subjects' music, arts, maths, history, literacy, PE and science'*

*'It is different from the school I went to before in India because they have a different way of teaching. Here they are always telling us we can do well – they are positive with us'*

*'I like it because people communicate, they are well behaved, respect each other, respect teachers and do as they are told'*

*'We have good music and I play the violin'*

*'Every Thursday we have a music teacher come in and have a music assembly. We have violin, flute, drum kits, xylophones, and a school band that play at concerts'*

*'We have values of the month and this month is caring and children are rewarded for showing they have cared for others'*

Finally we asked the pupils who helps you at home with your homework. The pupils reported that:-

*'My parent helps me with my homework'*

*'My parents will explain it to me and sometimes they give me another question so I can practice'*

*'Embarrassingly my little brother helps me. He is smart in Numeracy'*

*'My mum and dad help me sometimes'*

*'My big sister helps me with maths'*

The pupils interviewed were articulate and really impressive. They expressed very positive views about learning and progress across the school. Pupils spoke with confidence and pride about their education. The children were clearly very happy with their experience in the school. They felt valued and treated equally.

## Conclusions

This is an outstanding school. One of the key success factors at Jessop is the strong leadership. The acting executive headteacher and the head of school have strong and clear sighted leadership which has been the main driving force behind the school's continued success. All groups of pupils make rapid progress whatever their backgrounds and KS2 results are well above average and a rising trend. Their high ambitions for the pupils are shared by senior leaders, staff and a highly effective governing body.

There are a number of other factors for outstanding performance:

- Morale is high because teachers feel treated as professionals. They do not accept anything but the best from themselves and the pupils.
- Teachers are continually encouraged to take responsibility for improving their teaching. The high investment in their on-going training is paying huge dividends, as seen by the high quality of many lessons as observed by Ofsted. Teachers capture the pupils' enthusiasm and make pupils want to succeed because they show how much they enjoy their teaching.

- The school is very successful in its support for EAL and those with special educational needs because it quickly and accurately identifies their needs before putting in place carefully targeted and effective support.
- Parents and carers highly value the progress that their children are making. Pupils enjoy lessons and make outstanding progress because they are inspired by the interesting variety of activities offered to them. (Ofsted)
- Pupils greatly value not only how teachers show them what they can aspire to but also the effort they put into helping them to get there. Pupils interviewed as focus groups respond by showing immense commitment to learning by trying their utmost in lessons.
- The use of data is exemplary and a strength of the school. High quality assessment, tracking and target setting procedures, for individual and groups, are the features of effective management, which support teaching and learning.
- The governing body is outstanding in challenging and supporting the school. They contribute to improvement by knowing the school well and asking questions.

## KINGSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Background

Kingswood Primary School is a larger than average four-form entry, inner city school. The school is part of the Gypsy Hill Federation. It now consists of a family of five federated schools which is designated as a national Support School by the National College for School leadership. In 2013 there were 747 pupils on roll at Kingswood. Currently 50% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average of 26%. The school also has a high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language. About 38% had English as a second language; 19% of pupils were not fluent in English. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is very high. These are mainly low language and literacy skills.

The pupils are from a very wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area the school serves. The majority of its pupils are from a ward in which there are a significantly higher percentage of overcrowded households. Almost all the pupils come from the local community, and live in a mixture of local authority, housing association, privately rented and owner occupier accommodation.

The school population is ethnically very diverse. Of the 747 on roll in January 2013 21% were Mixed Heritage, 18% White British, 19% Black Caribbean, 17% African, 10% White Other, 4% Black Other, 3% Other Groups. Other ethnic groups with small numbers include Portuguese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Asian Other 1%. About 51 languages are spoken in the school. The most common mother tongue languages were English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish and Twi.

Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected of children of that age. Despite very low attainment at entry, evidence from value-added and pupils' progress in the school suggests that pupils do make good progress between key stages and the school is in the top league in value-added nationally. The key stage data also shows that the school's results have been consistently well above the LA and national average with an impressive improvement rate in the last five years (see Figure 2 and Table 1). Ofsted Inspections confirm that:

*'Kingswood primary school is an outstanding school.'* (Ofsted 2013)

*'For three consecutive years the school was placed in the top 1% of schools for pupils' rate of progress.'* (Ofsted 2013)

Central to its success in raising achievement and progressing pupils well are:

- Inspirational leaders and managers led by an outstanding executive headteacher and head of school
- High expectations of what pupils and staff can do
- High quality teaching
- An innovative curriculum
- Inclusion strategy
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support for pupils
- Close links with parents and increasing community support
- Effective use of data
- Effective use of pupil voice

The evidence used to inform the judgements made here draws upon interviews with:

- The head of school
- deputy head ( Standard and Curriculum)
- 2 deputy heads (Assessment and Tracking)
- 2 classroom teachers (Year 2 and Year 6 group leaders)
- Inclusion manager
- 2 SENCOS
- Family Support manager
- 4 pupils focus group
- SEN practitioner and HLTAS
- 2 governors
- Parents

The evidence used for this report also includes scrutiny of relevant published documentation, previous inspection reports, research and surveys involving the school, and performance data<sup>2</sup>. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. Details of the findings are discussed below.

### Achievement and Standards

*'The achievement of pupils is outstanding.'* (Ofsted 2013)

The school's leaders have been successful in transforming the school and raising achievement for all pupils, whatever their background. Expectations of all pupils' social and academic achievements are high and the school is deeply embedded in the life of the area it serves. The school's results highlight how successful they have been in ensuring that this happens. Despite challenging circumstances and low attainment at entry, results for all pupils at KS2 have improved consistently over the past five years under the leadership of the executive headteacher.

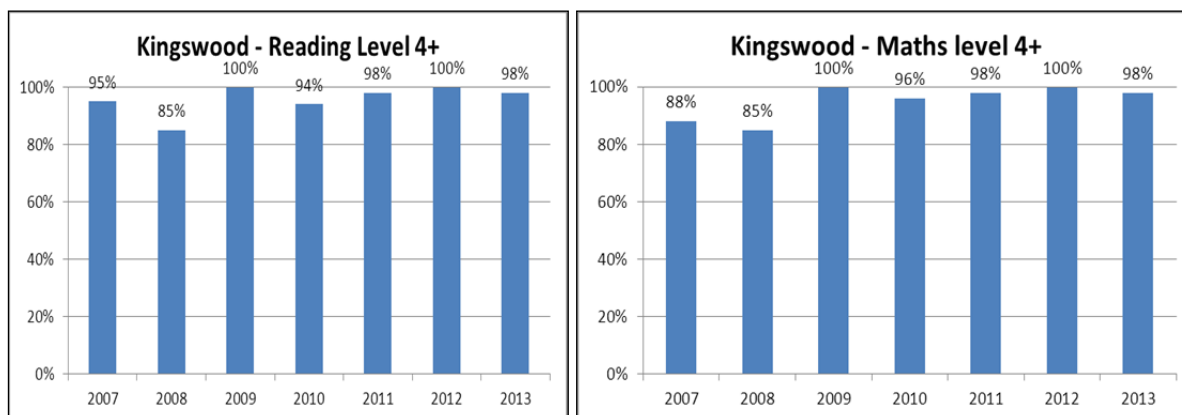
The number of pupils attaining level 4+ and 5+ at the end of KS2 has been significantly above the national average for a period of seven years. The overall performance of the school is very impressive and evidence from Figure 1 shows that 98% of pupils attained level 4+ in maths and reading.

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<sup>2</sup>Details of KS1 and KS2 performance and value-added from:

- Kingswood Primary School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-18.
- Kingswood Primary School, *KS1 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2013; p.1-4.
- Kingswood Primary School, *KS2 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
- Kingswood Primary School, *FSP contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
- Kingswood Primary School, *KS1 to KS2 Value-added Analysis of Pupil Progress*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
- Ofsted (2013). Kingswood Primary School Inspection Report, Ofsted.
- Ofsted (2013). Kingswood Primary School RAISEonline report, Ofsted.

**Figure 1: KS2 Attainment in Kingswood School for All Pupils**



**Table 1: KS2 Test Results 2007-2013**

Key Stage 2 Tests (Level 4+)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	National 2013
English	95%	88%	100%	94%	98%	100%		
Reading	95%	85%	100%	94%	98%	100%	98%	85%
Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar							97%	74%
Maths	88%	85%	100%	96%	98%	100%	98%	84%
Writing, Reading & Maths combined	85%	82%	100%	94%	98%	98%	93%	84%
Average (Reading & Maths)	92%	87%	100%	95%	98%	100%	98%	85%
Overall Value-Added	-	-	-	-	103.1	103.6	101.9	n/a

The value-added data of the school is also impressive and confirms that all pupils have made very good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 (see Figure 2). This compares the relative progress made by all pupils in the school with progress made nationally by all pupils in England. The findings suggest that all pupils in the school have made very good progress in terms of value-added. Overall 55% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in maths compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. Similarly 38% are in the upper quartile for reading suggesting excellent progress compared to national expectations.

Only 8% are in the lower quartile range making less progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. This is a school where Portuguese pupils in particular and all pupils make impressive progress.

**Kingswood Primary School**  
**National Median Line Relating Pupils' KS1 APS in 2009 to their KS2 Reading Mark 2013 - All Pupils**

Y-axis: Key Stage 2 Reading Mark - 2013 (0 to 50)  
X-axis: Key Stage 1 Average Points Score - 2009 (0 to 21)

Legend:

- Chart Area (Red Triangle)
- Pupils (Red Triangle)
- National Lower Quartile 2012 (Dotted Line)
- National Median 2012 (Solid Line)
- National Upper Quartile 2012 (Dashed Line)

Reading Levels indicated by horizontal dashed lines:

- Level 5 (approx. 36)
- Level 4 (approx. 19)
- Level 3 (approx. 11)

Individual Pupils (KS1 APS, KS2 Reading Mark):

Pupil ID	KS1 APS (2009)	KS2 Reading Mark (2013)
1	18	0
2	17	40
3	17	32
4	17	28
5	19	36
6	9	25
7	7	29
8	9	34
9	9	43
10	9	32
11	11	40
12	11	33
13	12	33
14	13	30
15	14	32
16	15	34
17	16	37
18	17	39
19	17	37
20	18	37
21	18	44
22	15	28
23	11	25
24	13	36
25	14	29
26	14	37
27	15	34
28	16	37
29	15	36
30	14	32
31	16	40
32	15	34
33	16	37
34	11	33
35	17	39
36	17	37
37	17	32
38	13	29
39	14	28
40	9	25
41	17	39
42	11	30
43	12	25
44	9	28
45	15	28
46	16	28
47	19	41
48	16	25
49	11	43
50	16	25
51	17	32
52	17	40
53	11	40
54	18	37
55	17	32
56	11	26
57	16	28
58	17	28
59	17	28
60	18	37
61	18	37
62	18	37
63	18	37
64	18	37
65	18	37
66	18	37
67	18	37
68	18	37
69	18	37
70	18	37
71	18	37
72	18	37
73	18	37
74	18	37
75	18	37
76	18	37
77	18	37
78	18	37
79	18	37
80	18	37

*'All pupils made excellent progress, reaching at least the levels expected them at age 11. National test results were much higher than in most schools. This is because all staff in the school are determined to make sure that every child has an equal chance to succeed. Following regular checks on pupils' progress, lessons are adapted and where high quality support is required it is accurately directed to meet individual needs.'* (Ofsted 2013)

The school also challenges disadvantage as measured by eligibility for free school meals. The data shows that they outperformed others and there is a small gap between the proportion of those pupils who receive free school meals and others. In addition, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the school.

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## Leadership and Management

Research undertaken in 2012 on behalf of the National College for Teaching and Leadership concluded that the role of the school leader has become more complex in recent years. The new Ofsted framework, the national curriculum and the rapid expansion of academies are just some of the changes leading to demands on school leaders. The complexity of school leadership and headship in particular, continues to increase with a consequent intensification of work. The need to develop internal school capacity and effective partnerships appear essential for schools as they navigate numerous national policy changes within their particular contexts. The report found that there was a substantial risk that the nature and demands of current policy change would disrupt the focus of schools and leaders from teaching and learning and their authentic improvement. Within this context of rapid educational change, Kingswood Primary School's leadership has remained firmly focused on teaching, learning and school improvement, whilst developing successful partnerships with five other schools forming the Gipsy Hill Federation. How is it then that the inspiring leadership of the executive headteacher of Kingswood has overcome the challenge of not only improving the school from the Ofsted category of 'special measures' in 2002 to being judged as 'outstanding' in 2009 and again in 2013, but has gone on to replicate this success across the five school federation?

An extract from the 2013 Ofsted inspection report on the school's leadership reads: *'Highly qualified, exceptionally talented, inspirational leaders and managers at all levels are extremely ambitious for the pupils, and uncompromising in their drive to improve this school and others in the federation. They are determined that education in the school should be first rate, 'world class'. Whilst supporting other schools, and growing at a rapid rate, the school has improved its outstanding practice and raised further pupils' achievements since the previous inspection.'*

So how has Kingswood succeeded against the odds and continued to raise pupil achievement?

Morale is very high and belief in the school's success runs through all levels of staff. The school leadership's ambitious vision for every child to excel inspires and motivates all those connected with the school as they seek to make their own contribution to the fulfilment of the vision. It is worthwhile delving into the source of this vision which finds its root in the initial teaching experience of the executive headteacher and also the current head of Kingswood school. Both formerly taught at Kender Primary School in Lewisham. The head of school explains the significance of the influence of this school on Kingswood's leadership: *'Kender was classified as a 'Beacon School' and was well known among educationalists for its outstanding teaching and learning. The headteacher of Kender came from a working class background and was passionate about all children achieving the highest possible standards.'* Many of Kender's rigorous practices of monitoring pupil progress, the very high expectations, its rich, creative curriculum, and excellent teaching have been firmly embedded at Kingswood.

Looking back at the enormity of the challenge presented to the executive headteacher when he made a decision to move from a 'beacon school' to the headship of Kingswood (which could only be described as a 'sink school' in 2002), one can only marvel at his bravery. Indeed 'brave' is a word which describes his particular leadership style as he confronts and overcomes the challenges most leaders would avoid given a choice. He is able to view the possibilities that change may bring in a positive light, rather than viewing them negatively and it is his honest, 'up-beat' and direct leadership style which is attractive to those who share his vision.

Kingswood went into special measures (two weeks after the headteacher took up post in September 2002) and over four terms was monitored closely by HMI. It was removed from special measures in November 2003 having made good progress in addressing the key issues. The headteacher was described as providing 'excellent leadership'. He recalls that he knew that the school was going to

be a challenge when he took up the headship, because it was already identified as having serious weaknesses. Nevertheless he believed that neither he nor anyone else knew the full extent of the challenge. He identified his initial key concerns with regard to pupils and staff:

*'Pupils: they looked neglected and needy, not materially, but in terms of their self-esteem, their confidence and their self-worth; they had poor attitudes to learning and poor behaviour; attendance was very low; there was inadequate provision for pupils with EAL and SEN.'*

*'Staff: they were bruised and battered and had been neglected – morale was low; teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour were low; there was no deputy headteacher and an ineffectual senior management team, the overall quality of teaching was poor and there was a high rate of staff absence and long-term sick leave.'*

The headteacher's main priorities were: *'To deal with re-structuring the leadership team and appoint an exceptionally talented deputy; to be tight and highly prescriptive and put in place structures and systems to establish a climate for learning, e.g. behaviour management strategies, staff communication, the highest expectations, curriculum planning, monitoring and the checking and relentless evaluation that what we had put in place was being implemented and impacting on the children. I had to 'crack' the culture of dependency on the headteacher and ensure that there was collective responsibility. It was also vital to improve the learning environment.'*

With a newly formed leadership team the headteacher continued to rigorously monitor learning and teaching, scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning weekly. He and his deputy modelled excellent teaching practice and showed staff how to manage pupils' behaviour. Tough decisions had to be taken as the leadership tackled issues of poor performance by staff, long-term sickness and absence. Never one to shy away from these kind of challenges, he confronted all hindrances to the achievement of his vision for the school in an honest and forthright manner. He modelled a professional approach for all staff, developed the leadership and management skills at senior and middle management levels and provided bespoke professional development for staff. Improving relationships with parents and community was another key focus.

This wave of change put the school on a firm road to recovery, such that when inspected in 2006 teaching was graded as 'good overall and sometimes outstanding.' When inspected again in 2009 it was graded 'outstanding' in all areas and inspectors noted:

*'Kingswood is an outstanding school that flourishes under the inspirational lead of the executive headteacher. In the last four years the school has not only continued to improve itself, but has provided excellent support to promoting community cohesion.....Senior leaders have been effective in raising achievement and standards and maintaining very high levels of care. Kingswood benefits from a very stable, capable and innovative senior leadership team and there is excellent capacity to improve further.'*

Indeed, this has been the case. In its drive to constantly improve the quality of education, the leadership has never sat back on its laurels, but has built on its substantial strengths, in meeting and sustaining ambitious targets for all pupils.

Having established the Gipsy Hill Federation of five schools across Lambeth and Southwark the executive headteacher's role is strategic, he is a National Leader of Education and the school is a National Support School and Primary Academy Sponsor. The operational leadership is delegated to heads of schools. Having 'come from the same stable' as the executive head, one hears the same mantra from the head of school at Kingswood. Her main focus is on the highest possible

achievement, outstanding teaching and a school ethos *'immersed in culture and very high expectations.'* The head of school puts Kingswood's success down to the same principles that were embedded in Kender...*'we have not moved away from these same key elements.'* Undeniably, while the school and the federation have grown, Kingswood's core values, ethos and core purpose remain fully intact.

Former Kingswood school leaders have moved on to headships elsewhere and staff at all levels have come and gone, but at the start of every September, INSET days are allocated to what the head of school explains as: *'Going back to basics... for everyone. We clarify expectations and ensure all staff understand our core procedures, recorded outcomes, positive behaviour management, outstanding marking and AfL, planning assessment, overview of the curriculum, attendance and timetabling; the journey to outstanding teaching.'* Rigorous and extensive monitoring and self-challenge to ensure that the school's robust protocols and practices are understood and implemented is another key aspect of the school's success as the head of school describes: *'We explain to staff 'this is what we do and this is how we do it – from day one – the expectation is there. We do it because we know it works. We immerse them quickly into our basic routines and procedures. We see rapid improvements.'*

Whilst the emphasis on the highest quality teaching and learning has remained constant, the structure and organisation of senior leadership roles, subject leadership roles and administration/learning support roles at Kingswood has evolved as its leading role in the federation as determined. It is regarded as the 'mother ship' although in every other way, there is equity across the federation. The head of school believes that the distributed leadership structure has been the 'key' to the growth of the federation, as she explains: *'At every level you have the executive headteacher, heads of schools, deputy headteachers (variable according to the number of forms of entry) year group leaders and faculty leaders. Our strength is that when a teacher arrives at Kingswood it's the potential we see in them, we are able to grow them and support them in the process. We have programmes for 'good to outstanding teaching.' This year we looked at how we could develop our faculty leaders through the leading teacher alliance.'*

Teacher recruitment is never an issue within the school or the federation: *'We advertise in the TES and sometimes we are over-staffed to cover all our projects. Existing staff state their preferences with regard to year groups or working on different sites. They are ambitious but staff retention is very good as there are so many opportunities for promotion. The career opportunities are immense – whole careers within the federation. Some people have a federation-wide responsibility for example, curriculum and standards, data etc. Equity is very important. The staff from each school comes together (80) for staff meetings and we rotate meetings so they take place on a different school site every week. The heads of school meet with the executive headteacher every week and the senior leadership team meets weekly, bringing everyone together and reflecting and reminding us what we are doing and why we are doing it! It's economies of scale, there are many opportunities within the federation, the same ways of working, but it has just grown larger.'*

Rigorous appraisal systems make a clear link between pupil progress and pay progression, this together with an exceptional CPD programme available to staff at all levels, has raised the quality of teaching. In addition individual professional development is also encouraged and supported to the extent that twenty members of the teaching staff (including TAs) are studying for an MA in a partnership with Southbank University and one of the deputy headteachers is studying for a PhD at Cambridge. The head of school recognises the advantage of this emphasis on CPD: *'The MA teachers feed back into whole school development, raising the bar at CPD meetings – our staff training is now outstanding.'*

There are five very talented deputy headteachers at Kingswood with responsibilities across the school and the federation for the curriculum framework, standards, SEN and inclusion. They line-manage faculty leaders, NQT induction, specialist staff and SEN practitioners. There are faculty leaders for a variety of subject areas. Ofsted comments; *'Faculty, year group and inclusion teams include staff from schools across the federation. They have high levels of responsibility and are held to account for pupils' progress. Together with senior leaders, they are innovative and share and develop their considerable leadership expertise through robust self-evaluation and frequent checks on the quality of teaching. All leaders and managers have a deep understanding of the school's performance. While there is a detailed long-term plan with aspirational targets for improvement, action is often taken quickly to eradicate weaknesses and refine practice.'*

Examples of how the executive headteacher's ability to 'talent spot' has led to a wide range of staff accessing opportunities for professional development, leading on to promotion and career progression. The SENCO who started her career as a TA in one of the federation schools joined the GTP programme at Kingswood and last year took on the role of SENCO, comments:

*'There is no hierarchical system – your contribution is valued. I can say this because I have been a TA, a teacher and a member of the inclusion team.'*

A family support worker has been another valuable addition to the staff team and she notes the excellent teamwork which comes from the executive headteacher: *'I was doing some link work in the school and I bumped into Mr Tunstall, he asked me about my work. He leads by example and we all try to do the same. I would like to give credit to Miss Davenport too. If all the leadership were not on site, someone would step up. We would all do that and that comes from the leadership. The ethos is such that everyone will pull together.'*

The deputy headteacher with responsibility for Standards and the Curriculum was able to recount how the excellent leadership had impacted on her own career at Kingswood: *'I came to Kingswood as a Year 6 teacher seven years ago. Craig's vision was very clear 'removing barriers to achievement and not making excuses for any child not achieving.'* That vision has not changed. He believes thoroughly that an excellent school can make all the difference to children's attainment in core subjects and their aspirations: *'I was put forward as an AST and lead teacher in Lambeth very quickly. We have an expert team and all our training comes back into the classroom. We have a strong collaboration with Southbank University and this is how the Masters' programme was developed.'*

The executive head's style which she describes as 'brave and community focussed' is something that the deputy headteacher says makes him such an outstanding leader: *'He revels in it, he doesn't shy away from the early conflict and he is straightforward in a no-nonsense, impassioned way. He breaks down barriers by his honest approach... he is quite emotional when children are not getting the best education.'* Clearly Ofsted observed this characteristic of the leadership in the following quote from the inspection report:

*'Inspirational leaders and managers are determined to ensure pupils receive a 'world class education'. They are highly ambitious for each child to acquire the particular skills they need to reach their potential and lead successful lives.'* (Ofsted 2013)

### **The Effectiveness of the Governing Body in Challenging and Supporting the School**

*'All members of the governing body work closely with the senior leaders in their pursuit of excellence to bring about the highest levels of achievement and personal development for pupils by the time they leave the school. They know what the school is highly successful in comparison with other schools locally and nationally, and hold leaders fully to account. Through robust performance*

*management procedures, senior leaders are challenged to sustain high quality teaching and pupils' rapid progress. Pay reviews for staff are linked to pupils' progress. Governors supplement the money available for the pupil premium and check that the wide range of provision it supports is having the anticipated impact on raising achievement. They are fully aware of the school's strengths, including the high quality of teaching, and its areas for development. Governors have considerable financial expertise and use this to set and monitor the budget closely. They undergo training to refine their skills and ensure they are fully effective. Statutory duties are met and arrangements to safeguard pupils are checked rigorously. The governors make sure that the classrooms are attractive and maintained to a high standard.'* (Ofsted 2013)

A parent governor with a child in Year 4 confirmed that she felt well informed about the school's performance: *'I know the school is doing really well, we look at the children's work, go on a learning walk around the school, and there are high standards of behaviour. The heads of schools (in the federation) come to governors' meetings and report on progress. We look at how well they are performing against other schools, any dips or areas to improve, addressing issues where a year group might not be doing so well. Most people on the governing body are parents of children in the school. The school does really well at communicating with parents.'*

With regard to the governors' role in challenging the school, the parent governor commented: *'Some bring a high level of expertise to the governing body, for example, in finance. I have asked quite awkward questions myself and have not found them defensive or stonewalled in any way. It has always been working as a team and they are open to being challenged. We in the Resources Committee have asked for some changes with regard to forecasting expenditure and the school have taken this on board.'*

Concerning the federation partnership, the parent governor believes that there have been many advantages to Kingswood children with the shared resources that are available: *'It helps with combining resources. My son has benefited from this because he has needed extra help from occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and has had a full assessment for dyslexia. He has also benefited from the horse riding which is available to develop his gross motor skills. This wouldn't have been possible in most schools.'*

The governors are appreciative of the staff: *'The staff are really dedicated, they care about the children and they get involved, although this is a very large school they make it feel small for you, you never feel overwhelmed. I have never found that my son feels lost in any way. I have lived in this area a long time since before Craig Tunstall took over. Its reputation was dreadful. Once we were driving past and two parents were fighting outside the school. I said: never ever is any child of mine going to that school! The area hasn't changed much and there's still the same amount of private housing. The reputation of the school has impacted on house prices significantly and there are more middle class parents now.'*

### **Effective Teaching and Learning**

*'Inspirational teaching methods and high expectations motivate pupils to achieve as well as they can. For example, Year 6 pupils responded extremely well to the challenge to apply their literacy skills by taking on the role of the 'Big Bad Wolf' and writing in defence of his actions towards the 'Three Little Pigs'. Thorough lesson plans set out what pupils are to learn and how they are to learn it. This is made very clear to pupils so that they know exactly what they need to do to achieve well. Activities are amended so that they are matched closely to pupils' interests and abilities. Through the evaluation of these plans teachers make sure that lessons over time build very effectively on what pupils have learned before and that all pupils have equal opportunities to excel.'* (Ofsted 2013)

Consistently high quality planning meets the needs of all groups of learners and is amended to respond to on-going assessment of pupils' understanding. Teachers plan in teams with a team leader and 9 – 11 colleagues in equivalent year groups across the federation. A morning is set aside to meet and plan and teachers are positive about the advantages of these planning meetings: *'We value that team work because we know that people bring in different skills, securing quality first teaching. We ensure we match up people in planning sessions in terms of strengths and weaknesses.'* (Year 6 team leader)

Team work also extends to assessing pupils' work and teachers value the opportunities afforded to them when moderating pupils' work across the federation schools: *'We look at each other's books and anyone who is having difficulty challenging say, more able pupils, can learn from what colleagues have done. We do the same thing with peer-observations and give each other feedback. Motivation is very high and people want to get children to succeed – this comes from the SLT.'*

Ever conscious to provide additional challenge for gifted and able children in Year 6, useful links have been established with Norwood Secondary School as the AST in Year 6 explains: *'We have a strong link with Norwood; it's almost like having another member of the faculty. In Year 6 we have an English session on Monday and maths on Tuesday and secondary teachers come in to take lessons with our higher ability pupils working at Level 6. This also helps transition to KS3.'*

Because of the split site, with the lower school being sited further up Gipsy Road, arrangements for the transition from Year 2 to Year 3 have also been implemented, as the Year 2 teacher explains: *'They make many visits and many now know the Upper School. We ensure it's as smooth as possible. It is very valuable for children to have lower and upper sites as resources are excellent – pupils have access to a very wide range of resources.'* Ofsted praised the *'rapid progress pupils make in KS1 especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They gain a good grasp of the sounds letters make and read regularly to an adult... their writing is vivid and sophisticated for their age'*. And with regard to the curriculum: *'Wherever possible, reading writing and mathematics skills are planned across different subjects. Pupils in Year 2 took on the role of scientists in the Antarctic to calculate the number of animals there. They used books and films to find information and to write imaginatively, engagingly and confidently about the life of penguins.'* (Ofsted 2013)

Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with striking impact on the quality of learning.

Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and is kept at this level because of the high quality professional development they receive. Pupils' outstanding achievement reflects the very high standards of teaching. Teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve and give them challenging and interesting work which is very well matched to their capabilities. Teachers and other adults are acutely aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding and plan very effectively to build on these. Work in children's books reflect these very high standards and the 'green pen' marking gives pupils a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve their next piece of work, but engages them in the process by posing questions which encourage reflection.

In 2012 all pupils made exceptional progress, reaching at least the levels expected at the end of KS2. Ofsted believe this is because: *'All staff in the school are determined to make sure that every child has an equal chance to succeed. Following regular checks on pupils' progress, lessons are adapted and where high quality support is required, it is accurately directed to meet individual needs. Pupils know that their teachers want them to reach even higher levels of attainment and they rise eagerly to the challenge. In the same year over two thirds of the pupils reached these high levels of*

*attainment in English and more than half achieved similarly in mathematics. One tenth of these pupils taking the mathematics test reached levels that are usually only found in secondary schools.'*

Homework in English and mathematics and the independent learning projects, build very well on what pupils have been learning in class and make a significant contribution to the rate at which they progress.

### **Innovative Curriculum**

The school believes that they can most successfully offer deep learning experiences to their children through a broad and balanced curriculum which provides children with fulfilling and challenging experiences. It considers that: *'Foundation subjects provide the ideal forum for giving children real, multi-sensory experiences that excite and inspire them to apply their learning in the core subjects in creative and individual ways... we aim to raise the status of these subjects while continuing to provide a rigorous education in the core subjects.'*

Ofsted took the view that: *'Subjects and topics contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment in learning and allow them to develop their talents. They are creative, lively, appealing and capture pupils' curiosity about the world around them, allowing pupils to achieve highly. There are many rich learning experiences including working alongside professional artists and musicians. A recent Global Art Day resulted in outstanding art work by pupils of all ages.'*

The deputy headteacher with responsibility for Standards and the Curriculum explains how the innovative and creative curriculum has been developed:

*'We have personalised the curriculum and arts, we took the initiative before the government! It was quite challenging for some people. Three years ago as a group we visited a school in Norfolk; we looked at what we were doing well but considered how we could make it more interesting and challenging. It hasn't stood still; we revised it again a year ago. We have looked at the way we structure history and we take on board what our teachers say, what children enjoy, obviously assessment and what the government says....but I think the structures are fairly simple. We make sure our subject leaders meet together and it has strengthened our humanities and arts teaching. We teach English, maths and science discretely. It has emphasised the areas of the curriculum that are not tested. It is about taking back some power from the standards and assessment agenda... developing the curriculum felt very empowering. It felt quite brave.'*

The subject areas covered and the expectations for progression in knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects are taken from the National Curriculum. However, the range of pedagogies suggested for making learning exceptional draw on the expertise of the federation's team of ASTs and all their outstanding teachers; they are research-based and have been adapted in-house to meet the needs of the children at Kingswood and the federation schools. Curriculum project work is planned to provide children with opportunities to progress in key learning and thinking skills: to explain, question, investigate, discover, invent, apply, create, predict, prove, solve problems and collaborate.

Detailed guidance is provided for teachers for the planning, marking and presentation of curriculum projects, in order to ensure rigour and equality of provision for pupils. Templates are provided to support teachers in their planning and examples are given as additional guidance. Impressive portfolios with samples of pupils' work in each year group, which have been levelled and marked to provide examples of the range and quality of work expected.



Ofsted acknowledge the richness of the curriculum in the following statement: *'A highly creative and rich range of subjects and topics allows pupils to develop their talents, especially in art, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very strongly.'*

### Effective Guidance and Targeted Support

Precisely targeted support provided by a range of highly trained staff makes a marked contribution to the quality of learning and the progress children make. The school's work with families, children and a range of agencies to sustain the learning, development and well-being of individual pupils facing challenging circumstances is deeply embedded at all levels. Discussions with the deputy headteacher with responsibility for inclusion across the federation and the SENCO for Kingswood revealed the extent of the guidance and support all children receive, irrespective of their abilities. There is no doubt that the children thrive in Kingswood's very caring ethos and they feel safe and valued.

Frequent pupil progress meetings are used to highlight any child not making progress, as the deputy headteacher explains: *'It could be a higher ability child who hasn't made progress. At our September baseline meeting we set targets and they are reviewed at the end of November. This informs our Spring Term provision maps. Half-way through the Spring Term we review to evaluate progress and then again at the end of the Spring Term. This feeds into the Summer Term's provision. There is a mid-term health check in the Summer Term which feeds into Autumn Term. There is a full day's handover to staff joining in September. In our September INSET we use assessment data, national curriculum levels, triangulated with the teacher who knows the child, teacher assessments and observations, book scrutiny outcomes, TA support and any other people, perhaps an HLTA or EAL support, linked to particular cohorts of children. So there is a dialogue. Our HLTAs make a very valuable contribution because they see the child in other situations. It enables the child's voice to be heard. Some children hate to be withdrawn from class for example, recently an HLTA let us know when this was the case. This led to a child's own views being taken into account... the emphasis is always on quality first teaching and many learning needs are addressed through this. We say 'if you are doing it right for children with SEN you are doing it right for all children!'*

The school are very conscious of pupil voice. The family support worker notes that the school has developed questions for the children about their views on their learning: *'If you ask our children they will say their teacher is the best in the world. They say that every year. Children do not just want to do well for themselves; they want to do their best for their class and their teacher. They are so keen to show us their work – they will create a proposal, charging around saying 'we want to do this in assembly'... they know their voice is heard and it is important. Recently we did a 'dyslexia assembly' and how they had conquered it. They gave up their lunchtimes to do practice. This suggests the safety of this environment here that they know the environment will support them. They will be looked up to because of that.... every member of staff buys into that ethos and all staff think it is important – parents too came to the assembly.'*

*'What is significant is that we all pull in the same direction because it's a waste of time if we later find out that we haven't. We do not always agree but we do all pull in the same direction. We have professional respect for each other. I learn something new every day.'* (family support worker)

Ofsted recognised the first-rate support provided by teaching assistants in the following quote from the inspection report: *'Highly skilled teaching assistants support pupils with specific needs extremely well throughout lessons. They know very well what the pupils they are helping are to achieve. Support for pupils outside of lessons is also of a high quality and enables them to catch up quickly.'*

Excellent training has been made available to HLTAs who have become EAL Specialists. The SENCO (who is studying for an MA) has led training for teachers and TAs in Dyslexia and Autism.



## Inclusion

The learning environment at Kingswood is such that it gives a visual representation of the school's expectations of high achievement and excellence. The school buildings are beautifully clean and meticulously maintained. Pupils' high quality artwork is framed and contributes to the wide-ranging and rich, cultural displays of artefacts and posters which line the staircases and halls. The external environment has been thoughtfully designed with gazebos for shade and rain protection and various apparatus and marked-out games areas. The children treat the site and each other with great respect.

Ofsted noted that: *'Relationships are excellent and pupils flourish within the school's compassionate environment. ... Pupils show high levels of respect for one another and to adults. One said: 'It is OK to be different. We accept everyone here for who they are, not what we want them to be!'*

In terms of special educational needs and inclusion a broad spread of needs are catered for including literacy, numeracy and communication difficulties; learning and other difficulties related to health needs or to a physical disability or birth trauma. Some children have identified and named patterns of health, global and specific learning difficulties and syndromes, including dyslexia and the autistic spectrum. There are pupils with significant levels of visual impairment; also social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition the school identifies and supports children with special abilities, gifts and talents. Children who are in the care of the local authority and/or children subject to a Child Protection Plan are represented in the school and there are others where levels of social concern are supported and carefully monitored. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is twice that found in most schools.

The breadth of support available for children of all abilities is impressive and wide-ranging, and this is expertly managed to ensure the best possible provision. A team of well-trained and experienced support professionals work both independently and alongside teachers and teaching assistants. Individual programmes include provision for both occupational and speech and language therapy. An example of the advantages of being part of a federation is that Kingswood is able to afford to buy-in an independent speech and language therapist (SALT) who works across all the schools in the federation. Careful thought has gone into how skills can be 'cascaded' to SEN practitioners (usually HLTAs) and a useful model has been developed. The SALT assesses a child first and then sets targets and discusses and models strategies of how to work with the child with the SEN practitioners. The SEN practitioner then shares these strategies with the class TA. The same method is used whereby an occupational therapist works closely with SEN practitioners ensuring that occupational and speech and language therapy is embedded in the classroom.

The school was awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark in 2012 and the advantages of working in partnership with other schools in the federation were expressed by the speech and language therapist in the Assessment Report: *'Because of the structure of the federation, people are able to move around, with their strengths, it's something to do with the management. They thought of what they could have in an ideal world. They think very differently not like an ordinary primary school. They can share good practice across the federation. Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We identify every child's needs and we have a huge array of interventions. It's about self-esteem. It's about empowering the child.'*

The inclusion manager is enthusiastic about the impact of the school's ability, through the federation arrangements, to provide unusually high levels of support for individual pupils: *'It has allowed us to buy in speech and language and occupational therapy, a CAMHS worker, music therapist, and two reading recovery teachers. It's not that these resources in themselves make a difference but it is the way it is managed and led and shared across the federation.'*

The SEN practitioners speak appreciatively of the opportunities they have received to increase their knowledge and skills as a result of the training they have received from the speech and language therapist and the occupational therapists, as one comments:

*'We have had training in developing gross and fine motor skills, attention and listening, sensory needs. We cater for the more serious children on a 1:1 basis. We have set up groups on each site; a group of six from Years 1 & 2 have 10 minutes exercise daily called Busy Bodies. They usually make something to take home. KS2 children are in groups three times per week with an HLTA and Years 5 & 6 focus on hand/eye co-ordination, building up shoulder girdle exercises at lunchtime.'*

Phonics, literacy and maths interventions groups are led by HLTAs working with children using the teachers' plans, adapting them where necessary. They work with children who have dyslexia and those who just need a boost.

HLTAs work with EAL pupils at KS2 on sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. They attend pupil progress meetings. One commented: *'We may have them for a year or just a few weeks. We start the year with a child 1:1 and then the TA comes in with them to observe what we are doing, so they can support the child in the classroom.'*

Ofsted recognised the excellent support provided by staff in the inclusion team: *'Highly skilled support and excellent resources for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, help these pupils to make excellent progress. All pupils learn to sign so that they can communicate very effectively with one another. Staff implement fully the advice of professionals such as speech therapists so that specific needs are met.'*

### Parental and Community Engagement

*'The partnership with parents is strong. Staff work closely with them to celebrate their children's achievements and help them to overcome challenges they may be facing. Parents regularly visit school to help pupils improve their reading skills, and often support their children with their work they are asked to take home.'* (Ofsted 2013)

The school has a highly positive relationship with all parents/carers, particularly those groups who might traditionally find it difficult to work with school. They are exceptionally well informed of all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development. The school provides tailored guidance and information about precise ways parents can support their children's learning across a wide range of subjects.

A parent who is also a governor sought the views of a number of parents prior to speaking with us, and sums up their views of the school:

*'Other parents have told me that the staff are very approachable, they are flexible in their arrangements about meeting with teachers and parents never feel rebuffed if they need to urgently speak with a class teacher at the start of the day. Children with SEN are well supported and all children are stretched according to their abilities. The confidence of the children is impressive and they are respectful.'*

Supporting evidence from the inclusion Quality Mark Assessor who interviewed parents during her assessment, reports:

*'One parent of a child with very significant difficulties told me that 'People talk. Lots of parents talk to one another. This is a good school and you feel your children are happy and are looked after well, then there's a lot less stress in parents... the expectations the staff have of children, they expect it of the parents too. There's an expectation and it flows out into the street.'*

These very positive relationships didn't happen overnight. As mentioned earlier, the school once had a poor reputation in the community and parents were hostile and occasionally violent towards the staff. The school being put into special measures in 2002 didn't do much to secure parental confidence. At that time, the executive headteacher (or headteacher as he was then) put in place some very effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality and involve parents and the community in this process. The head and his deputy would walk around the streets before school started, encouraging parents and children to get to school before the bell rang. They also targeted local shops enlisting their support in the process by asking them not to serve children if they were late for school. A designated 'parents' room with comfortable chairs and a homely feel, was made available and parents were invited in for coffee to meet with the headteacher and hear what his plans were for the children and the school, encouraging them to attend school assemblies and concerts. Very soon their confidence increased and the school's reputation began to improve, but it took commitment and perseverance on the part of the school leadership. All credit is due to them that the harmonious partnership now enjoyed, is the fruit of this earnest desire to engage parents fully in the life of the school.

Praise for the whole staff was forthcoming from parents in the IQM report:

*'During my visit to the Kingswood-Elmwood Schools I was introduced to the parents of several children, some of whom had the most complex needs, presenting the most difficult inclusion challenges. All of the parents were unequivocal in their support for the school, the staff and the senior management team, including the SENCO. They expressed total confidence in the school in terms of problem solving and support for families.'*

This support for families is borne out by the leadership appointing an experienced and committed family support worker, who works with children and families, including 'looked after children' throughout the school year, she comments: *'I am here all year round and full-time. Things often get more difficult for families during the school holidays.'*

The school acts vigorously and successfully, using information from an incisive analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context at local and national levels, to focus its exceptional contribution to community cohesion within its local community and beyond. The federation community is highly cohesive and the pupils have a strong understanding of what is required to maintain this state. Through its National Support School status and the outreach work of ASTs and lead teachers, the school continues to have an extremely positive impact within its immediate and wider localities.

### Use of data

An undoubted feature of Kingswood's success is the rigour of their assessment and the use of data to improve teaching and learning. The school has a well-developed pupil tracking system and it has detailed phonics, FSP, KS1, KS2 data and non-statutory optional assessment data at all year groups. The school undertakes detailed analysis of reading, writing and mathematics, based initially on scores in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile to establish that the children are on track to meet their targets at the end of Key Stage 1, and to see which children need further support. Each class has a tracking sheet for reading, writing and mathematics which includes the actual target for each child as well as a note of what each child is predicted to attain.

The school is acutely 'forensic' in monitoring the progress of particular groups for example boys, those receiving free school meals (FSM), those with special educational needs (SEN), or pupils with English as Additional Language, etc. They use data effectively to identify underachieving groups for further support, to set targets and to inform teaching and learning. All teachers have tracking sheets for pupils, identifying types of support. The school monitors by detailed background information data such as date of birth, place of birth, date of arrival in UK, ethnic background, home language, other language(s) spoken or understood, stage of fluency in English, date of admission, attendance rate, eligibility for free school meals, SEN stage, mobility rate, and, number of years in the school.

The use and analysis of data is one of the most significant drivers for improvement in the self-evaluation practices in the school. The school understands how well their pupils are doing. The school routinely monitors not just pupil attainment, but also teaching, learning and other aspects of their provision to evaluate the extent to which they are adding to pupil's education, well-being and care. The monitoring is linked to evaluation and the identification of priorities for improvement. These self-evaluation processes have helped the school to identify further potential strengths and areas for improvement.

This research also confirms similar findings and indicates that a number of good practices are used in the effective use of data including:

- The school also uses LA, FFT and RAISEonline data for school self-evaluation, tracking individual pupil performance and target setting.
- At the beginning of the year and each term the faculty leaders meet every class teacher to review where a child in the class is in terms of their learning and to set targets. Each child has their targets for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Data is used for a number of purposes. There is strong evidence that individual teachers within the classroom use data for informing teaching and learning including lesson planning; to inform accurate targets for individual pupils, gender and ethnic groups; identifying weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as a whole; arranging groupings for teaching and learning; tracking progress of pupils; setting high expectations with pupils and identifying implications for planning for different groups.
- Data is used to look at whole school and group issues and to drill down to individual learning concerns e.g. English fluency of particular pupils and the impact that this might have on their learning.
- The school has well-developed, detailed provision mapping which ensures that all learners with an identified need are given the best possible opportunities to succeed. Provision is reviewed termly alongside reviews of individual education plans for statemented children, class provision map meetings, target setting, rigorous pupil progress meetings and midterm pupil progress meetings. Children who are not on track with learning are highlighted and interventions made. Booster classes and targeted support for all pupils who are not on track with their learning are immediately implemented. This targeted support is all year round and the provision is regularly evaluated for impact and adjusted according to on-going pupils' needs. They are led by class teachers, teaching assistants, (TA), specialist SEN practitioners, EAL, HLTAs and the inclusion manager. When pupils achieve the necessary standards, support is re-directed to other identified pupils.

- There is a strong focus on learning in the school to make sure no child falls behind. The extent to which pupils make rapid progress and achieve outstanding results at Kingswood are shown in Figure 1 and are exemplified in the case studies outlined below:

**Child A Case Study:** Child A is an EAL pupil on the SEN School Action Plus register. She was assessed when she took the KS1 assessments as stage 2 level of English fluency which suggests she required considerable English support to access the National Curriculum. As a result of her English language barrier and SEN factor, her results at KS1 showed that she achieved Level 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. However, with well-targeted support at the school this has changed considerably. Through one to one, booster classes and in-class support, her level of English fluency improved to stage 3 (some support) by the time she took the KS2 tests. The school's support was considerable and this helped her to achieve level 5 in maths and level 4 in reading. This is a remarkable achievement for a child who had not been fluent in English and who was also on the SEN register (see Figure 2, pupil number 44).

**Child B Case Study:** Child B is a Year 6 pupil 'Looked-after' Child with SEN status as School Action. He is a late joiner. Following a year in foster care, he was placed in a long-term foster care placement. This change in his foster care home resulted in him being transferred to Kingswood. He is at risk of exclusion and he needs emotional and behavioural support. The following targeted support was given to Child B:

- Targeted reading
- SEN maths set and targeted mathematician
- Level 5 writing intervention
- Level 5 reading intervention
- For his emotional and behavioural needs he was referred to CLAMHS but rejected on three occasions. Kingswood therefore put in-house music therapy in place to meet his emotional and behavioural needs.
- Intervention by the Family Support team and SENCO-regular liaison and meetings with his foster carer to ensure home-school links and that his academic needs were also being met at home.
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of the interventions via provisions mapping and pupil progress meetings

The impact of intervention in place for Child B is evidenced in the accelerated progress that he has made. His entry record at Year 6 in Autumn Term shows that he achieved 3A in reading, 4C in writing and 3C in Maths. With targeted support and intervention he achieved at the end of Year 6 for KS2, 5C in reading and writing and 4B in maths and science. The music therapy also helped to improve his behaviour and he is now below the threshold of noticeable behaviour. In Years 4, 5 and 6, he has not received any exclusion. As evidenced above music therapy has also had significant impact on his learning. This evidence shows a remarkable achievement for a child who has many issues and it also shows that no-one in the school is left behind.

To conclude, it is clear from our observation that one strategy for raising achievement in Kingswood is the effective use of assessment data, progress-tracking, target- setting and support for pupils

slipping behind. Outstanding use of data analysis has tracked the performance of children across the school in relation to target groups, EAL, SEN, more able pupils, gender and ethnicity. This information has been used to gain an overview of underperforming groups in the school and is used to identify pupils for a range of booster and support groups. Periodically the data are updated and progress towards the target estimated.

### Pupil Voice

The research team met with 4 pupils from a range of heritage groups. We explored the following questions with them:-

- Do you enjoy coming to school? Why?
- Can you think of one thing in particular you like about your school? Why?
- What is special about your school? What are the reasons why your school is an outstanding school?

It was reassuring to find that overall, the pupils shared the vision that the school had articulated and they enjoy coming to school. They gave a number of reasons why they like the school and some of their responses are quoted below:

*'I enjoy coming to school because the school gave me a good opportunity to be a peer mediator. I will not be a peer mediator if I'm not in this school. Peer mediators got to meet the Mayor of London'.*

*'I enjoy coming to school. I am a school's councillor. I met the mayor of Lambeth'*

*'I like the school because they give us a lot of trips (to France and Kent)'*

*'We learn about World War 1, the French battlefields, underground shelters'.*

*'I love the teachers, they give you really fine work, and I love maths.'*

*'I love school'*

*'I love maths. The teacher makes it fun for us so it is easier and you understand it better'.*

*'I like school because In Year 4 we learn to play the Ukulele – it is quite difficult'*

*'In Year 6 you learn Samba and in Year 5 you learn to sing in the St. John's Church choir'.*

We also asked what is special about your school? What are the reasons why your school is an outstanding school? The response is quoted below:

*'Meeting people from Kenya who visited our school'*

*'We have a great opportunity'*

*'This school is special. The school helped another schools- Elmwood, Fenstanton ...'*

*'This school is special because we have a reading week'*

*'We have a Black History month'*

*'Kingswood has a lot of visitors'*

*'We have a lot of opportunity to meet different people e.g. Lambeth Mayor'*

*'We have independent learning project. Everyone is a winner. No one loses. Still you get a certificate, but if you win three times in a row you get to make your own pizza.'*

*'We have a golden book to reward children who achieve their targets. They get a postcard home to say that they have done well.'*

*'We have individual attendance award'*

*'We have a lot of activities and after school club- Tennis, street dance, freedom academy and play games'*

*'Teachers, staff, TA all support us and push us. They want best for us'*

*'Teachers help us to learn'*

*'There is a lot of freedom to run around in our playground'*

*'Play leaders let us play with them, so you will always have someone to play with. There is always equipment to play with; the school focuses a lot on sport and PE.'*

Pupils enjoy their lessons and their play time, after school activities and get well on exceptionally well with each other and with the adults in the school, saying, *'Teachers, staff, TAs, all support us and push us. They want what's best for us'*. The views expressed by pupils are also supported by a recent inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Assessment Report which states that:

*'Children who were interviewed were proud of their progress and achievement and described the special provision that was being made of them, including school responsibilities and the enrichment of clubs and other provision. They were keen to tell me about their school trips and other enrichment activities.'* (IQM, 2012, p.3)

Pupils thrive in the very caring ethos of the school. The rich and exciting range of extra-curricular activities contributes considerably to pupils' great enjoyment. There are a rich range of visits, educational trips and visitors to the school and these enhance the quality of pupils' experiences.

## Conclusions

This is an outstanding school that gives pupils an excellent all-round education. The driving force behind the school's success is undoubtedly the dedicated and inspirational executive headteacher. He is well supported by a highly qualified and exceptionally talented leadership team. The leadership of the school and all staff work together as a highly effective team to drive improvement in this school and others in the federation. The school is a shining example of putting the child at the heart of all that takes place. Pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are consistently above the national average and at the top of the league table in terms of national value-added. The research identified a number of other factors for outstanding performance:

- High quality teaching - One key feature of the high achievement is outstanding teaching. This includes high expectations of what pupils can achieve, stimulating and enthusiastic teaching which interests, excites and motivates pupils and accelerates their learning, well planned lessons which provide for the differing needs of pupils, well trained and highly skilled

teaching assistants and a close check on learning with effective marking and assessment. (Ofsted 2013)

- Effective use of data for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress - The use of the data for school self-evaluation is comprehensive and rigorous, clearly identifying strengths and areas of improvement. The school and individual teachers within the classroom also use data for informing teaching and learning including lesson planning, to inform accurate targets for individual pupils and ethnic groups, identifying weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as a whole, arranging groupings for teaching and learning, tracking progress of pupils, setting high expectations with pupils, and identifying implications for planning for different groups. The monitoring and tracking of a pupils' progress is linked to evaluation and the identification of priorities for improvement. The provision map is constructed through a thorough and forensic analysis of attainment and progress of groups and individuals.
- Targeted support and intervention through effective use of teaching assistants and HLTAs to support children with additional needs, pupils with EAL, more able and any underachieving groups or individuals. Highly skilled teaching assistants work very effectively alongside classroom teachers. They provide seamless and valuable support both in class and working with small groups and individuals. Very rigorous checking of pupils' learning leads to effective 'pinpoint' teaching of specific skills. Where additional support is required, it is extremely well matched to pupils' needs. The school uses a wide range of support, including small group and one-to-one activities. All groups of pupils do exceptionally well and make excellent progress from their starting point.
- Governors know the school well and are very effective in the way that they support and challenge the school.
- A strong link with parents - The school communicates very well with parents. It has developed many ways of supporting them in helping their children learn.
- A creative and stimulating curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents, especially in art and music, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development very strongly.
- Celebration of cultural diversity - The school is an inclusive school: *'The celebration of pupils' cultural heritage and the different faiths, residential visits and an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.'* (Ofsted 2013)
- Effective use of pupils and parent voice: Pupils and parents are very proud of their school and, its role in the federation and their achievement. They were keen to tell the researchers how the executive headteacher is inspirational and well committed to raising achievement in the community that is served by school.



## VAUXHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Background

Vauxhall primary school *'is an outstanding school'* (Ofsted 2012). It serves one of the most deprived wards in Lambeth. There are over 215 pupils on roll. Many pupils come from disadvantaged economic home circumstances. The number of pupils taking up free school meals is 51%, well above average. The school is placed within the upper quartile in the benchmarking and statistical families for LA schools, placing the school in the top 25% of Lambeth schools with the highest levels of disadvantage. The school's national deprivation indicator is also significantly higher than the national average. There is a high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at non-standard admission times. Over 72% of the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is more than average. The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and speak more than fifty different languages. Most pupils come from African, Caribbean, and Portuguese backgrounds. Despite challenges in terms of the level of deprivation in the area, the overwhelming impression the school creates is one of confidence and cohesiveness. The school is an exceptionally inclusive school. It promotes community cohesion and ensures pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds with a sense of shared vision, fulfilling their potential and feeling part of the community. Through the school curriculum, pupils explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the UK and in Lambeth. The school prides itself on the diversity of its workforce. The school has recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflects the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The school recruits staff from the local community and this has sent a strong message to the community that they are valued. This has helped the school to become a central point of the wider community and has built trust. Teaching assistants are greatly valued in the school. They play a key role in communicating with parents and supporting pupils.

Overall the evidence from the school performance suggests that pupils make good progress between key stages and this has placed the school in the top league in value added nationally (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The key stage data also shows that the school has had an impressive improvement rate in the last five years. The Ofsted Inspection confirms that: *'The achievement of pupils is outstanding.'* (Ofsted 2012)

Schools such as Vauxhall Primary that have improved impressively from special measures to outstanding within a short period of time have been the subject of a number of research projects. Reynolds, Hopkins, Potter and Chapman (2001) identify a range of internal preconditions for a school to be able to improve:

- Transformational leadership
- A school-wide focus on teaching and learning
- A commitment to staff development and training
- Teamwork in decision-making and action with staff and stakeholders
- Time and resources for reflection and research into the school

Against this backdrop of research, this case study will map Vauxhall Primary School's achievement in being identified as an outstanding school by Ofsted and as a Centre of Excellence for inclusion (the

only school in London to be awarded this status). Central to Vauxhall school's success in raising achievement and progressing pupils well are:

- A strong leadership team led by an outstanding executive headteacher and head of school
- Effective teaching and learning
- Effective governing body
- Excellent care, guidance and targeted support
- Effective inclusion policy and practice
- An innovative curriculum
- Effective use of data
- Effective use of pupil voice

The evidence used for this report included interviews with senior managers and pupils and scrutiny of relevant published, current and, where applicable, previous inspection reports and surveys involving the school, and performance data, including RAISEonline<sup>3</sup>. The school was asked to identify the features it considered central to its success in becoming and remaining outstanding. Researchers visited the school, each of whom had prepared a day's programme of meetings with key members of the school community. They explained and displayed, in effect, the 'secrets' of their school's success.

During the day spent at the school for the case study, the following members of staff were interviewed: the executive headteacher, head of school, associate headteacher, inclusion manager, 4 assistant headteachers, 2 class teachers (Year 2 and Year 6) and 2 governors including the chair and a parent governor, together with 8 pupils across the school.

The following report considers the evidence collected from those interactions and draws conclusions from these and more informal observations, conversations and discussions made during the day.

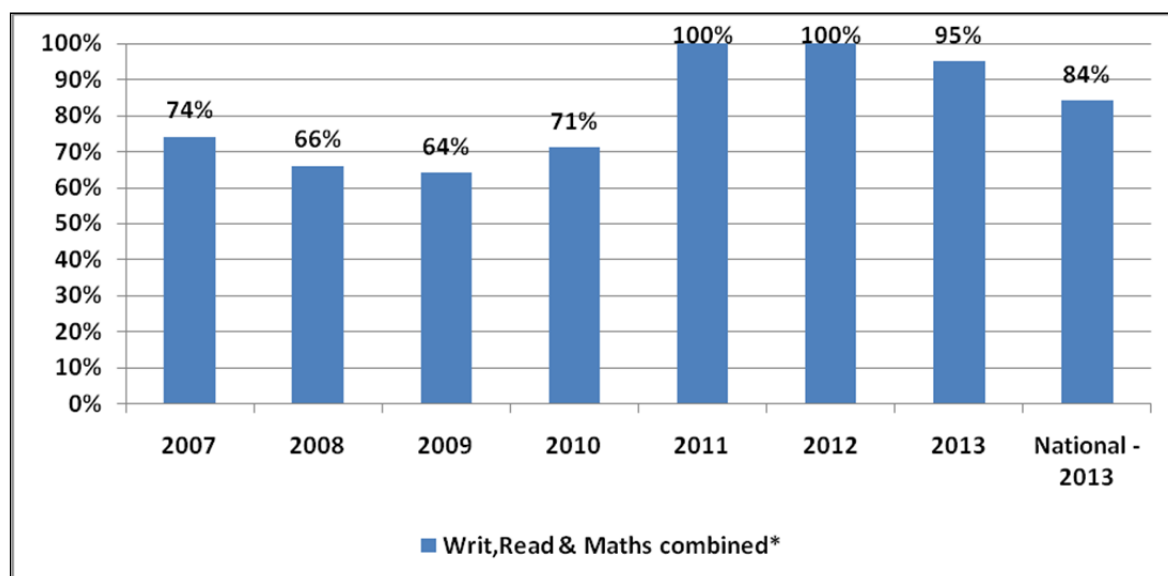
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<sup>3</sup>Details of KS1 and KS2 performance and value-added from:

- Vauxhall Primary School, *School Profile: Making Figures speak for Themselves*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-18.
- Vauxhall Primary School, *KS1 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, December 2013; p.1-4.
- Vauxhall Primary School, *KS2 contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
- Vauxhall Primary School, *FSP contextual Analysis of Pupil Performance*, Lambeth Research and Statistics Unit, November 2013; p.1-4.
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## Achievement and Standards

**Figure 1: KS2 Writing, Reading and Maths Results (combined) 2013**



The school's leaders believe passionately that the pupils should achieve their best during their time at Vauxhall. Table 1 shows how successful they have been in ensuring that this happens. Despite challenging circumstances and low attainment at entry, results for all pupils at KS2 have improved consistently over the past five years under the leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school. The school is one of the fastest improving schools in Lambeth. The appointment of the executive headteacher and the head of the school signalled the start of an impressive journey from special measures to outstanding performance. The school's achievement at KS2 improved from 64% in 2009 to 100% in 2012 and 95% in 2013 in Writing, Reading & Maths. This is significantly above the national average of 84% in 2013.

**Table 1: Key Stage 2 Results 2009-2013**

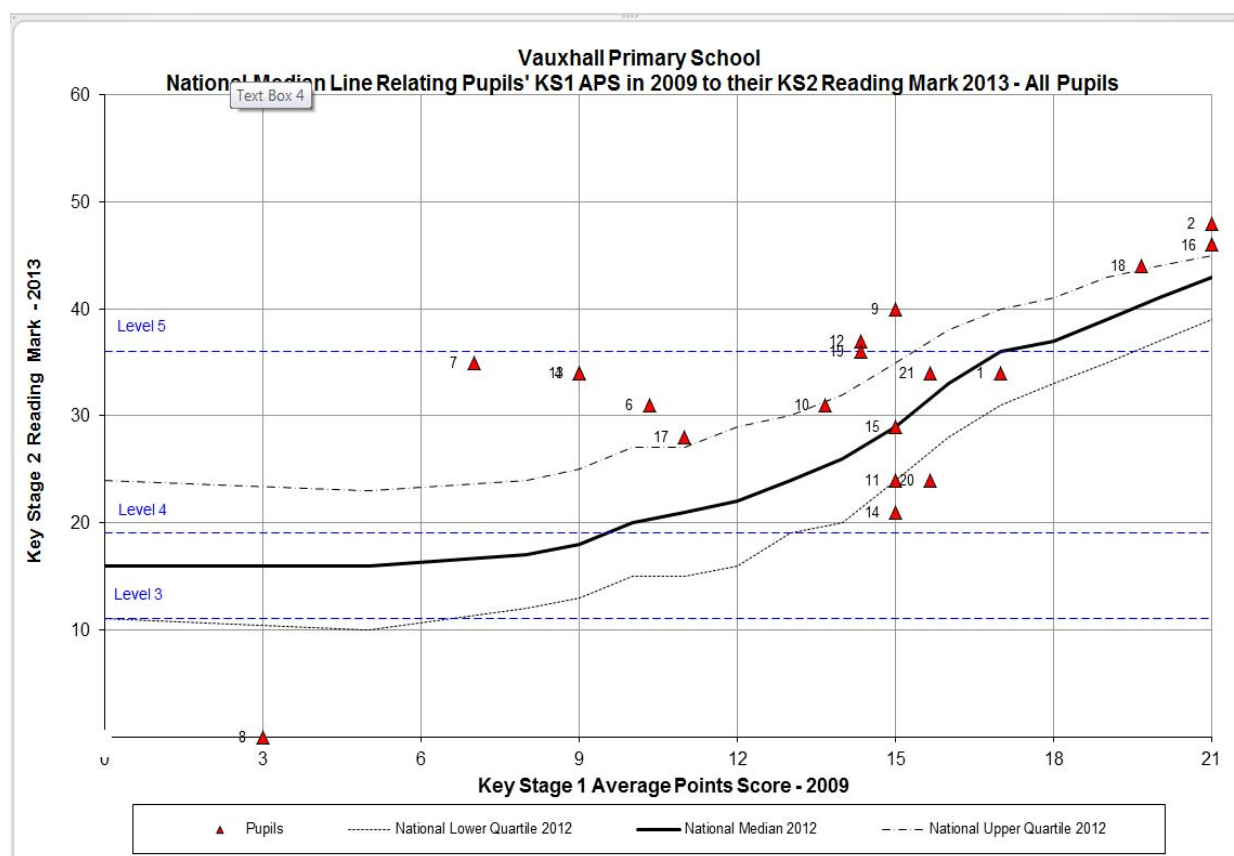
KS2 Tests (Level 4+)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	National 2013
English	82%	81%	100%	100%		
Reading	86%	90%	96%	100%	95%	85%
Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar					86%	74%
Maths	64%	86%	100%	100%	95%	84%
Writ, Read & Maths combined	64%	71%	100%	100%	95%	84%
Average (Reading & Maths)	73%	83%	100%	100%	95%	85%
Overall Value-Added	-	-	102.5	101.9	n/a	n/a

The value-added by the school is also very impressive. KS1 to KS2 value-added data in the graphs overleaf, which compare the relative progress made by pupils in Vauxhall School with the progress

made nationally by all pupils in England, show that pupils have made very good progress. About 59% of the pupils in the school are in the upper quartile in reading compared to 25% nationally, indicating that their progress is greater than would be expected given the average rate of progress. The interquartile range performance is 24% compared to 50% nationally suggesting the pupils progressed better than expected. Only 18% are in the lower quartile range making less progress, compared to 25% expected nationally. Similar evidence was also recorded between KS1 and KS2 for the school for maths, suggesting excellent progress in all curriculum areas for all groups. This is a school where all pupils make impressive progress between KS1 and KS2.

*'The most recent Ofsted inspection also reported that 'when children join the school in the nursery their skills and knowledge are lower than expected for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics, to reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. All groups of pupils achieve equally well year on year because expectations are high, their needs are understood and their progress monitored carefully each term. New arrivals and pupils who are the early stages of learning English are fully integrated into school so settle quickly and make rapid progress, achieving at least as well as other pupils. The school is highly successful in closing any gaps in the attainment and progress of pupils. Those who are eligible for the pupil premium, for example, achieve at least as well as all other pupils in the school and better than similar pupils nationally.'* (Ofsted 2012)

**Figure 2: Vauxhall KS1 to KS2 Reading Value Added Scatterplot**



Overall at Vauxhall school pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are consistently above average. This picture of outstanding progress and very high standards of attainment is evident throughout the school and year groups (see Figure 2 and Table 1).

## Leadership and Management

The innovative, dedicated head of school has played a significant role in the process of the transformation of Vauxhall and has been loyal to the school through all its ups and downs over the past nine years. His leadership potential was recognised earlier in his career, when the current executive headteacher led the school out of special measures on the first occasion. Uniquely Vauxhall at that time (2002) was in a soft federation with Reay Primary with the same executive headteacher.

As the experienced and highly regarded headteacher of Wyvil, a large local Primary School, and a National Leader of Education (NLE), with prior knowledge of Vauxhall's strengths and weaknesses, the executive headteacher was invited to form another federation with the school when it was placed in special measures a second time in 2009. He was able to use his extraordinary leadership skills and draw on his prior knowledge of Vauxhall to identify some talented key members of staff to form a new leadership team. He states: *'The leadership structure might look top heavy with a head of school and three assistant headteachers, but they all have clearly identified roles and make a strong supportive team.'* To further strengthen the leadership and build capacity at Vauxhall he moved a SENCO and a Key Stage 2 manager from Wyvil. Clearly the hard federation with Wyvil has had a bearing on Vauxhall's capacity to sustain improvement, not least because of the availability of additional financial and human resources. The retention of staff has also been secured as opportunities for promotion are increased across the federation.

There is a common vision for the federation partnership which is 'Achievement for All'. However the leadership take account of the uniqueness of each school: *'There are still some things which are distinctly Vauxhall or Wyvil... the beauty of this federation is the distinctive ethos of each school. Vauxhall has a strong tradition in the arts and music, has eighteen after-school clubs and is represented in many sports. It is successful in meeting the aspirations of parents and admissions are strong... the school is oversubscribed. It is also the only primary school in London which has been identified as a Centre of Excellence for inclusion. The idea of a 'needy Vauxhall' was never an issue. There is equal status between the two schools with Wyvil staff coming and learning from Vauxhall and Vauxhall staff advising on some key areas. This federation is a partnership and there has been no attempt to change the school completely or take over, we have remained distinctive, for example there has been no change of school uniform.'*

The executive headteacher reflects on his previous association with Vauxhall... *'It helped considerably that I had been involved with the school before... relationships were already established with the staff. The situation was not of their making. Respect is very important and it was good to have had previous knowledge of the school.'*

The leadership's initial task at Vauxhall following the federation was to bring clarity for everyone with regard to the school's priorities. As the school was still being monitored by HMI, the executive head used Ofsted evaluation criteria and the key issues identified in the inspection to establish priorities for improvement. As a consequence the staff 'bought-into' the need for change... *'It drove the momentum for change... a combination of new projects brought in and certain things that were not contributing to achievement were lost or pushed out. Some of the existing good practice, such as pupil progress meetings which are an embedded part of the practice here and the very strong English and maths leadership just needed the space to put their plans into place.'* One of the challenges for headteachers and their leadership teams is to find ways of bringing the staff on board and getting them committed to and prepared to become involved in change. Nine times out of ten the biggest hurdle to overcome is achieving staff commitment to the change. Without it long-lasting improvement will not occur. It is to the credit of the executive head that his sensitivity and exemplary inter-personal skills have enabled this commitment to be brought about. His inspirational

leadership style has been a critical factor in Vauxhall's success and his clear vision for what an excellent school looks like. He made his ambitious vision for Vauxhall explicit to everyone in the school community and embedded a culture of excellence by sharing with all where the school was heading.

'Clarity' is a much-used word at Vauxhall, clarity of communication at all levels through the line management structure, clarity of information and the simplification of complex plans to ensure that they are understood by everyone in the school, is one of the strongest features of the leadership. The School Improvement Plan sets ambitious priorities for development. These are translated into action plans, CPD priorities, and performance management objectives through to curricular and individual pupil targets. The links are clear and consequently staff do not feel overburdened by being bombarded with a plethora of disparate initiatives and information.

The current head of school was previously maths co-ordinator and he has been pivotal in ensuring that children achieve the highest standards, not only in maths but in all areas of learning. Apart from his inspirational and efficient school leadership he is an excellent role-model as a 'leader of learning' and his passion for every pupil to succeed is supported by his constant efforts to improve outcomes for pupils. His goal is to ensure that by Year 2 *every* child is able to read, write independently and have a mastery of number appropriate to their age, with a significant proportion exceeding this. This is an ambitious target when attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. The implementation of the rigorous phonics and number programmes are a consequence of his innovatory leadership. He has also been instrumental in collating assessment information from a wide range of sources, to inform his monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance. The systems are so tight that no child slips through the net!

The assistant headteachers cover a wide range of responsibilities for inclusion, Key Stage co-ordination, EAL, partnerships with external agencies, Child Protection and SEND. They too are excellent role-models for staff, who recognise and draw on their strengths, seeking their advice and support across an assortment of school related matters.

The assistant headteachers (AHTs) speak appreciatively of the leadership of the head of school and executive head, and believe that they have been pivotal in developing a committed staff team and establishing a collegial ethos. Newly qualified teachers receive first-rate support and develop excellent professional skills. Where possible they are retained by the school and through expert coaching develop into outstanding practitioners. The AHTs acknowledge the superb contribution of the support staff, many of whom have been in the school many years and know families well. They appreciate their contribution to the knowledge-base of the local community. This mutual respect is expressed by one AHT: *'There is no distinction between teachers and teaching assistants – we all want the children to achieve – we are working towards a common goal.... new support staff that come on board all go on training and they all feel like leaders. We call them instructional leaders... they are keen to lead a group of pupils. Many of them lead after-school clubs every day anyway. Their knowledge of the children is a strength for us; they see children outside and have a different relationship with them. The relationship between teachers and instructional leaders is very strong, there are no distinctions.'*

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) takes place as the need arises, within either of the schools or within the Oval Cluster – a collegial network of eight primary schools, skilfully led by the executive headteacher, which benefits all schools involved. Subject leader development and networks of, for example, SENCOs and EYFS Co-ordinators are able to share knowledge and expertise. Vauxhall plays a principal role in leading learning within the cluster and the head of

school is managing an exciting project called 'Number Masters' a unique two-year programme aimed at the development of number mastery and computational fluency in KS1.

An emphasis on learning pervades the whole school from the leadership to the teaching staff, to the instructional leaders, support staff, parents and pupils. The school vision of 'achievement for all' embraces all members of the school community and has become embedded at Vauxhall.

As a National Support School, Vauxhall has much to share with others, looking beyond its own school gates to help more and pupils achieve and drawing on its own journey having succeeded against all odds to becoming a truly outstanding school.

### The Effectiveness of the Governing Body in Challenging and Supporting the School

There is now a single governing body for the federation partnership of Vauxhall and Wyvil and extremely positive relationships exist between governors and the school leadership. The current chair of governors (previously chair of governors at Wyvil) managed the process of federation to ensure a smooth transition so that standards were not adversely affected at Wyvil. He recalls that at first: *'There were things that didn't exist at Vauxhall such as various committees.... We now have things carefully monitored especially on issues of welfare, behaviour and curriculum. It has been a fascinating story.... The federation has allowed Vauxhall to flourish... there were staff members here who had not been valued.'*

The positive relationships which now exist are based on trust, openness and transparency. Historically this had not been the case with the former governing body. The present governors are well-informed and knowledgeable about the school because they are given accurate information about pupil achievement and have access to the range of self-evaluation sources available. *'We ask all the questions from RAISEonline and attendance... we have challenged the head when there have been weaknesses in teaching - but in a constructive way. When attendance levels were not what they should be, we brought in Breakfast Club'*, reflects the chair.

Governors look directly at what children are doing or what children are presenting to them. Part of the school's enrichment programme enables children to meet with the governing body. Governors have an open dialogue with class teachers and communicate with parents at parent evenings. In fact there are more parent governors than usual because the school appreciates their contributions. A parent governor who has had three children in the school and has seen it 'through its ups and downs' recalls: *'I have seen the executive headteacher getting people working together'... 'We notice that the children's behaviour has improved. We are very proud of this school.'*

When asked what is special about Vauxhall, governors stated that: *'It is a local school and in a tight-knit community which helps the school move on. Families know each other very well. We are like the United Nations here... at the same time we have been able to exploit where we are located – right next to the South Bank, where through governors' connections the school can take advantage of visits...not many schools can perform at the Royal Festival Hall and the Young Vic'*

Governors spoke appreciatively of the dedicated staff at Vauxhall: *'Teachers take time off their lunch breaks to help children with EAL and these children really achieve well. They sacrifice part of their time and get the joy of seeing the children achieve, there is a family feeling about the school. Everybody knows each other and all aspects of their cultures are embraced.'*

Questionnaires and surveys provide feedback from parents. Governors are well briefed on the National Data Dashboard, RAISEOnline, Family View and Parent View. Most governors have a direct involvement with the school, for example one is associated with "Music for Youth", and another is a former adviser for Portuguese parents and community, another governor is a local solicitor.



Co-opted governors offer a level of distance from the school, which is helpful where governors are seen to have no vested interest in decision-making.

Governors are proactive in seeking further information regarding pupil premium spending and speak knowledgeably about how it is used to support pupils. They also speak with pride about the proportion of pupils achieving Level 6 mathematics in Year 6 and how links with Lilian Baylis Secondary School have enhanced provision.

### Effective Teaching and Learning

Ofsted (September 2012) judged teaching to be outstanding. The inspection report states: *'High quality teaching has had a significant impact on the impressive rise in pupils' achievements over the last three years. Teachers create well-ordered and stimulating classrooms in which purposeful learning takes place. They have a calm and consistent approach to managing behaviour, which all pupils respond to well, including those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils are in no doubt what is expected of them.....Teaching is particularly effective when adults ask pertinent questions to develop pupils' understanding. They get pupils started on well-tailored activities quickly and assess the quality of learning that is taking place thoroughly, correcting misconception and moving pupils to their next learning steps as soon as they are ready. ...The use of additional staff in lessons to support individual pupils with specific needs or groups of pupils is very effective, so all pupils are purposefully engaged in activities and learning well. Work in pupils' books is marked well with clear next steps identified so pupils know precisely how to improve.'*

Teachers from Year 2 and Year 6 were interviewed in this case study and both had started their teaching careers in Vauxhall School, one initially as a teaching assistant in Year 5 who then transferred to the Graduate Teacher Programme with a Year 6 teacher as her mentor. At that time the school was still in special measures. When asked what made a difference to the school's improvement? Teachers unanimously agreed that it was the leadership and the structure of the senior leadership team: *'It is how they plan and how this filters down to class teachers... the clarity of communication is so good. When I started in Year 6 every class was a little island by itself. Then when the head of school and the executive head took over everything changed. There was more dialogue between teachers and management. The support we get and everyone gives each other every day ensures I never feel I am on my own. Everyone is approachable. It is very clear who is in charge and who to go to. It's a lovely place to work.'* Another positive trait of the leadership is the affirmation teachers and pupils receive for their efforts: *'They give spontaneous praise when they see pupils' work displayed or the work in children's' books...you really feel valued.'*

The excellent communication which comes through the leadership is what teachers appreciate: *'Our staff meetings are always full of discussion, lively, people throwing about ideas'.... 'They (the leadership) communicate the aims of the school and the reasons why we are doing things; they really communicate with us how they see the school moving forward so we can do it together.'*

In Key Stage 2 pupils know their targets and next steps so they are part of their own learning. The Year 6 teacher stresses this: *'We always involve the child; it's about little steps towards bigger goals.'* In essence teachers are equipping learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their own learning. Constructive feedback and guidance on planning the next steps in their learning are provided through effective marking. More formal assessments take place every half term and this information, together with pupils' books and teacher assessments are monitored by the leadership. Pupil progress meetings are held between class teachers and subject leaders in English, mathematics and science three times per year. Whilst assessment is central to classroom practice it is not seen as stressful for pupils: *'Pupils do not realise they are being constantly assessed... they don't know... you*



*do it subtly at the end of a lesson you check their understanding by asking questions and through feedback in marking. I do not think the children feel pressurised.'*

Outstanding teaching of early reading skills and the daily phonics teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 provide a very good foundation for children to learn to read. The involvement of the instructional leaders in teaching phonics and maths enables children in Years 1 and 2 to make excellent progress as they are taught in small groups, where activities and resources match their needs.

Teachers are constantly trying to make lessons exciting and relevant to the children and their stages of development, drawing on a wide range of resources and materials to support learning. They are also conscious of the learning needs of individual pupils, as one teacher said: *'I try to have different learning styles within the lesson, group work pairs, I mix it up... every child has a different pace for learning.'*

### **Innovative Curriculum**

Teachers have developed a broad, balanced and imaginative curriculum and have been proactive in incorporating the revised National Curriculum (due for implementation in September 2014) into their plans. A curriculum map identifies foundation subjects to be taught through topics and presents a well-structured learning journey for pupils from Year 1 - Year 6. The humanities co-ordinator has taken a leading role in curriculum development and has produced exciting materials for Black History Month which feature local and national 'heroes' or role models, people from the West Indies and Africa who have made a significant contribution to life in Britain.

Core subjects are taught systematically and the school has pioneered its own approach to the teaching of phonics and numeracy. Phonics teaching is rigorous and is taught for 25 minutes per day to children in Years 1 and 2. Because of the success of this programme (taught by teachers and instructional leaders) the school has introduced 'Number Masters', targeting the same pupils, who are taught in small groups for 15 minutes every day to ensure that their engagement with numbers is intensive and consistent.

Teachers talk with enthusiasm about their approach to the curriculum and try to make lessons exciting and relevant to the children: *'We used the Creative Learning Journey so people could become imaginative – especially in maths as it starts to make sense to children when you use real-life situations ... we did a great maths shop last year... each class came up with things they could make and sell, sandwiches, fruit shops, each class had a stall. The rest of the school came around and bought things!'* Making the connections between subjects is another strength and examples of how drama was incorporated into work on food-chains in science e.g. children played the part of bees pollinating flowers.

Children benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest. Because of the location of the school and the excellent range of partnerships which have been established, pupils are able to perform at the Royal Festival Hall and the Young Vic and capitalise on visits to Tate Modern and events at the South Bank.

### **Effective Guidance and Targeted Support**

Another of the key factors in the outstanding achievement pupils of all abilities make at Vauxhall is early identification of need. Close collaboration with the Children's Centre ensure that needs are identified very early and support is put in place immediately the child enters the nursery. The inclusion manager describes the process: *'We try hard to build up confidence in the children, to build*

*their self-esteem and belief in themselves.’ She explains...‘All the staff are aware of the importance of this; we have had lots of training.’*

Ofsted (Sept 2012) noted the context in which the school is working: *‘When children join the school in the nursery their skills and knowledge are lower than expected for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics, to reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. All groups of pupils achieve equally well year on year because expectations are high, their needs are understood and their progress monitored carefully each term. Timely, high-quality support and specific intervention programmes help any pupils who are not achieving as well as they should to catch up.’*

Children entering the school in other year groups are also very well supported. If the child speaks English as an Additional Language (EAL) or has particular learning needs then the literacy co-ordinator (who also has responsibility for EAL) will assess them. Because of the diversity of the staff at the school, very often it is possible to find someone who speaks the child’s home language, but where this is not the case, the school goes the extra mile to find support, as a teacher explained: *‘I had a child from Latvia come into my class and the head eventually found someone who could speak the language to help.’*

Class teachers give new arrivals a phonics assessment and then set targets following a discussion with the literacy co-ordinator. Teachers keep in close contact with parents of pupils new to the school: *‘I communicate with parents of new children every day after school for a couple of weeks – just to reassure them.’*

Additional support, according to specific needs, is provided through a wide range of well organised interventions, i.e. by ensuring the child is always in a group led by the class teacher or the learning instructor, or 1:1 support. Children with SEND have Individual Education Plans to target their specific needs. Whilst academic achievement is the main focus and every child achieves to the best of their ability, by identifying the particular gifts each child possesses, they are able to achieve success in music, arts or in a wide range of sports.

## Inclusion

Vauxhall Primary recently received the inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) and operates as an IQM Centre of Excellence in Inclusion, the only London school to have achieved this status.

The IQM Assessment Report fully endorses the excellence of the school in ensuring that every possible barrier to achievement is overcome:

*‘If I could nominate a school where inclusion is lived and breathed, it would be Vauxhall. It permeates every aspect of school life, perhaps, as the head of school commented, “with so much need, we have no choice but to use inclusive approaches”. But inclusion at Vauxhall is more than that statement, it is the raison d’être, like a stick of rock, sliced anywhere, the word Inclusive would be seen, hearts, minds, bodies and souls are dedicated to the same aims. Although the end of term was in sight, there was still energy and vibrancy to the school which belied its Victorian building, although even that had been imaginatively used to enhance all aspects of teaching and learning, from Nursery to age eleven.’*

On arrival at the school one is immediately struck by both the outside play areas and the premises as a whole which are immaculately maintained to the highest standards. An abundance of trophies and quality marks, including the prestigious Arts Mark Gold are displayed in the reception area and visitors are greeted by friendly, professional staff, who ensure that school protocols, especially with

regard to safeguarding pupils are understood. Displays of pupils' work in the corridors and in classrooms are stimulating and of high quality, reflecting the creative, imaginative curriculum. Pupils are very proud of their school and of the staff. They recognise the school's uniqueness and are highly motivated to succeed and to capitalise on all that is offered. Their behaviour is exemplary.

The school has developed a wide-range of community partnerships to support pupils' welfare and achievement and these also enhance parental participation.

Teachers and support staff are energetic and have opportunities to innovate. They have received high quality continuing professional development and are confident practitioners. Assessment for learning is used by all teachers, with a range of other assessments, formal and informal, to monitor children's attainment and to track progress and inform target-setting.

The school leadership at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities and they are highly motivated to see every child succeed. Monitoring of teaching and learning is well-established and thorough. Teachers say they welcome the opportunities to be observed and to receive feedback seeing it as a valuable source of professional development. In addition to classroom observation, the leadership monitors children's workbooks, charting progress towards achieving their targets.

### Parental and Community Engagement

Vauxhall Primary also incorporates the Vauxhall Children's Centre which offers a range of services that support families through child care, adult learning, parenting programmes and helping bring a range of service providers (health, social care, employment) into the community. Almost three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language and are from a range of minority ethnic groups living in the area, the largest of which are from various African countries.

Parental links are very strong and extraordinary efforts are made by staff to enable parents to support their children's learning. This is especially important as the majority of parents are unfamiliar with the British education system. The school understands that simply passing parents information without enabling them to understand what it means in practice, is unhelpful. Vauxhall have overcome this barrier for parents by inviting them to come into the school and to see first-hand how a phonics lesson is taught to groups of children from Years 1 and 2. They are able to see what materials are being used and to ask questions where necessary. Twenty-one parents (the majority of whom were Somalian) observed a lesson during our visit and many wanted to buy the resources to use at home! Similar demonstration lessons are offered in mathematics. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator observes: *'It is very powerful for parents to see a lesson. Staff keep encouraging parents to come to the workshops; we keep reminding them to come.'*

The leadership seize every opportunity to communicate directly with parents. At a recent Macmillan Coffee morning where parents (including some Fathers) attended, the head of school used the event to impart other information.

The impact of the excellent range of partnerships with among others, The Royal Opera House (A Chance to Dance), the Polka Theatre, Shakespeare Schools, Southbank Centre have enabled parents to accompany their children free of charge. Many parents at Vauxhall have never visited a theatre, art gallery or museum before and these opportunities enrich their own lives as well as their children's.

The school goes the extra mile to ensure parents feel welcome. The head of school emphasises: *'Parents feel proud that they are in this school and they help push the children forward. There is a tradition of involving parents and making sure they are welcome to come in and share their ideas.'*

## Use of data

*'The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning are systematic and robust.'* (Ofsted 2012)

One key factor of success in the outstanding performance in Vauxhall School is related to the effective use of data to raise achievement and to track pupils' progress at all levels. The school uses data effectively and staff knows their pupils' performance and the school's strengths and areas for development very well. Teachers closely monitor work in the classrooms and pupil progress is tracked rigorously so that any child at risk of underachievement is identified and given the support they need. Regular, targeted training for staff, in partnership with Wyvil federation school, has secured a significant improvement to many key aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Through very regular monitoring of teaching against Ofsted's teaching standards, and systematic checks on the impact teaching has on pupils' progress and attainment, leaders and managers secure and maintain excellent teaching quality and high achievement at all levels.

The school has well-developed pupil tracking systems and it extensively uses optional SATs tests, phonics and foundation data, KS1 and KS2 assessment, test data and other background data to set targets and track pupil performance. The outcomes of the careful scrutiny of test results and contextual background data are used very well to identify areas needing improvement and resourcing and these are tackled robustly. Those learning English as an additional language, gifted and able pupils, and those with SEN, are well supported and monitored by the outstanding head of school. In the words of the head of school 'there is thorough and rigorous monitoring of performance by ethnic background, language spoken at home, EAL stage of fluency, mobility rate, class attended, attendance and types of intervention and support. Early intervention is based on detailed analysis of the data and need. This is a key factor in the school's drive to raise achievement and maintain outstanding performance across all year groups and is further confirmed by the chair of governors who stated that:

*'The school has excellent practice in relation to self-evaluation. Every year there is a thorough review of the whole school, including parental feedback and pupil voice which feeds into the school development plan and school self-evaluation.'*

All staff interviewed are aware of what the data tells them about the school's standards and achievement and the key priorities under the outstanding leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school. Staff share a common purpose and are well supported by senior staff through well-resourced pupil premium money to help raise achievement of specific groups. More importantly teachers we observed and interviewed, make effective use of data to evaluate the quality of provision and to identify and provide support for differentiated groups of pupils. At classroom or pupil level, effective use of data enables the school to highlight specific areas of development of individual pupils, identify areas of support for the class as a whole, inform accurate targets for individual pupils and provide evidence to support decisions as to the focus of resources and teaching.

The head of school is rigorous in triangulating data and evidence about the achievement in the school. He uses in addition to the school's data, a comprehensive range of benchmarking, contextual and value-added data, including local authority data, RAISEonline, FFT, parental view etc. As a result the school is *'very successful in using these data in order to identify and tackle barriers to learning for pupils from different cultural backgrounds and providing targeted guidance and support.'* (executive headteacher)

**Table 2: Sample of APS Vauxhall Summer 2013 Monitoring Spreadsheet: Year 5 Class Teacher: A**

	Progress					Attainment				Average	
	Size	Read	Writ	Math	Sci	Read	Writ	Math	Sci	Prog ress	Attain ment
All	22	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.55</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>26.45</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>26.09</div>	<div>25.82</div>	<div>3.89</div>	<div>25.84</div>
Boys	11	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.36</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>25.73</div>	<div>29.91</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>25.73</div>	<div>4.09</div>	<div>27.09</div>
Girls	11	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>2.73</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>27.18</div>	<div>25.73</div>	<div>25.18</div>	<div>25.91</div>	<div>3.68</div>	<div>26.00</div>
Non FSM	11	<div>3.64</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.45</div>	<div>4.18</div>	<div>27.73</div>	<div>26.27</div>	<div>27.55</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>3.82</div>	<div>27.14</div>
FSM	11	<div>4.36</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.64</div>	<div>3.82</div>	<div>25.18</div>	<div>23.73</div>	<div>24.64</div>	<div>24.64</div>	<div>3.96</div>	<div>24.55</div>
EAL 1		<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>	<div>n/a</div>
EAL 2	2	<div>4.25</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.50</div>	<div>3.75</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>21.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>3.88</div>	<div>24.25</div>
EAL 3	8	<div>3.50</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.50</div>	<div>4.25</div>	<div>25.50</div>	<div>24.50</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>24.75</div>	<div>3.81</div>	<div>24.69</div>
EAL 4	8	<div>4.50</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>29.75</div>	<div>28.00</div>	<div>29.00</div>	<div>27.50</div>	<div>3.88</div>	<div>28.56</div>
English Only	4	<div>4.22</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>3.33</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>23.00</div>	<div>22.00</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>3.89</div>	<div>23.25</div>
Black African	9	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>27.67</div>	<div>25.89</div>	<div>25.44</div>	<div>25.44</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>26.11</div>
White British	1	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>2.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>19.00</div>	<div>15.00</div>	<div>21.00</div>	<div>19.00</div>	<div>3.50</div>	<div>18.50</div>
Caribbean	1	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>26.50</div>
Mixed: White and Black	1	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>27.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>26.00</div>
Statements	1	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>19.00</div>	<div>15.00</div>	<div>21.00</div>	<div>19.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>18.50</div>
School Action +	3	<div>5.33</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.67</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>23.67</div>	<div>22.33</div>	<div>23.67</div>	<div>24.33</div>	<div>4.50</div>	<div>23.50</div>
School Action	2	<div>4.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>2.00</div>	<div>4.00</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>24.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>25.00</div>	<div>3.50</div>	<div>24.50</div>

Progress:

Inadequate	0-2.99
Satisfactory	3-3.89
Good	3.9-4.49
Outstanding	4.5+
Not Applicable	

Attainment

Inadequate	0-22.99
Satisfactory	23-23.99
Good	24-24.99

*NB: This approach of monitoring each class teacher is used for all year groups including Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6*

Termly tracking of progress enables the SMT to intervene at the earliest possible time, and match pupils' needs with specific provision and interventions. The school undertakes careful analysis of internal and external pupil level data, historical attainment and progress rates to monitor the impact of the teaching and learning including the use of pupil premium. The robust self-evaluation

procedures and a number of case studies carried out by the school, guided them in deciding where and how to spend the pupil premium. The head of school argued that the pupil premium grant allowed the school to offer a range of curriculum enrichment activities which proved successful in developing children's confidence, and boosting self-esteem, improving standards in mathematics and Year 1 phonics and KS2 outcomes. In addition, the school effectively spends additional money on breakfast booster class, 1:1 reading support, enrichment activities, additional L5 mathematics work for more able children, small group springboard mathematics support, English, mathematics and revision materials for Year 6, 1:1 phonics support and reading intervention, staff training on outstanding teaching, to release teachers for pupil progress review session three times a year, extended services including a wide range of after-school clubs. As a result of such support and outstanding provision: *'Progress by FSM pupils in all subjects exceeded expectations and attainment is within age-related expectations. In particular the percentage of FSM children classed as 'more able', is growing each year. By the end of Key Stage 2, the % children achieving the higher level 5 in all core subjects are significantly higher than the national average.'* (head of school)

Pupils who are new to the school, including those who are at the early stages of learning English, are also monitored very carefully and given highly effective support following a precise diagnosis of their needs. These carefully planned programmes of one to one and small group support are effective in raising pupils' attainment and self-esteem. This means EAL, SEN and underachieving pupils feel positive about developing reading and language skills and also make just as rapid progress as their peers.

### Pupil Voice

In this section we have asked a pupil focus group 'Why do you like best about this school? What is special about your school? Why is the school an outstanding school?' We interviewed 8 pupils from all year groups. As can be seen in the comments below the pupils felt their school is outstanding and they get good education and they enjoy coming to school. They gave a number of reasons why they like the school:

*'I like the school because it helps to learn everything'*

*'I like school because every day we learn something new'*

*'I like playing'*

*'I like learning something new and being with my friends'*

*'I like the playground because you can relax and play with friends'*

*'I like sports and clubs, computer programmes like maths'*

*'I like drawing, dancing and singing'*

*'I like singing at The Royal Festival Hall'*

*'I like the Shakespeare Club – we are doing A Midsummer Night's Dream'*

*'I like the class assemblies – I am the Gingerbread Man'*

*'I like being with friends'*

*'I like the playground. The school do a lot of sport activities'*

*'I like the clubs'*

*'I like maths'*

*'I am good at maths'*

*'I Like maths game, puzzle and cards game. It helps to learn'*

*'I like design and technology'*

*'I like maths and literacy, arts, phonics, and ICT'*

*'I like arts. Helps to express how you feel'*

*'I like art and ICT because art is a way to relax and ICT because I like making posters and investigations'*

*'I like the school because it is easy to make friends'*

When the pupils were asked what is special about your school and what is the reason why your school is an outstanding school? They gave the following reasons:

*'Teachers here are special. They help us'*

*'Teachers are nice in school and give us lots of activities to do'*

*'The teachers make the school outstanding. They teach well and they are nice'*

*'The thing that makes our school special is all of us'*

*'Good support is available for pupils in our school'*

*'Teachers and staff give extra help'*

*'The school is outstanding because the achievement is high'.*

We finally asked the pupils 'who help you at home with your homework?'

*'My dad helps me'*

*'I ask mum and dad to help'*

*'I ask for mum and dad's help sometimes with maths and science or literacy homework'*

*'We get homework twice a week and mum and dad help with my reading'*

*'My older brother helps with maths and literacy homework'*

## Conclusions

*'Vauxhall is an outstanding school in which every pupil really matters. The school promotes community cohesion and ensures all pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. They make outstanding progress from low starting points to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average'*

*by the end of Year 6. All pupils, whatever their different needs and abilities make excellent progress and have a well-developed reading, writing and mathematics skills by the end of Year 6.'* (Ofsted)

The study identified a number of key factors for success:

- Strong, inspirational leadership with an emphasis on raising expectations for all pupils and teachers. The excellent executive headteacher and the head of the school, working with a committed and talented senior leadership team, have created a thriving, purposeful school with achievement and care at its heart. Expectations are high and, as a result, all pupils flourish and achievement is outstanding.
- Effective use of data is a strength of the school. Rigorous pupil tracking is established as one of the core elements of raising achievement in the school.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated in lessons because tasks and explanations are matched exceptionally well to their needs (Ofsted)
- A strong link with the community and a clear commitment to parents' involvement
- Senior leaders, supported by a strong and skilled governing body, continually check the quality of teaching to ensure pupils continue to achieve to an exceptionally high standard.
- Governors are a key force in the drive for excellence. They have in-depth knowledge of the school and are proud of how well it compares to other schools. They have very ably supported the executive headteacher and the head of the school in establishing the highest expectations of staff and pupils and ensuring that the quality of teaching remains high
- Teachers are exceptionally well supported to improve their practice because leaders invest a lot of time and effort into providing bespoke training opportunities.
- *'Pupils and staff rise to the high expectations leaders have of them. In turn, they are given the support and help they need to do the very best they can'* (Ofsted)
- Good and well co-ordinated targeted support to all groups of pupils through extensive use of TA, EAL teachers, learning mentors, SENCO etc.



## SECTION 4: SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS - COMMON FEATURES OF SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO RAISE ACHIEVEMENT

This research project has been undertaken to investigate how schools have helped pupils to achieve high standards and to identify significant common themes for success in raising achievement. It draws lessons from good practice research carried out in inner city outstanding schools and asks the following four overarching questions:

- Why do some schools succeed against the odds?
- Why are they outstanding schools?
- What are the factors contributing to this success?
- What are the implications for school improvement?

It provides evidence based answers to these questions, drawing on the practice, experience and ambitions of schools in challenging circumstances. The three primary schools in this research, which serve disadvantaged communities in Lambeth were all at some point in their past, identified by Ofsted as requiring special measures or had serious weaknesses. However, they have all been graded as 'outstanding' in recent inspections, and have consistently high levels of achievement. They were selected according to the following criteria:

- an above-average proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals
- outstanding grades in the most recent Ofsted inspection
- exceptionally good results, high standards and a sustained KS2 improvement
- a pattern of high value added scores from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

The introductory section of this report sets out in detail the reasons for the research and it emphasises the need for detailed case studies of schools that have succeeded in raising the achievement of all their pupils. It highlights the necessity to carry out research into the factors which contribute to educational success and outstanding achievement and to increase our understanding of the ways in which some schools can significantly enhance pupils' academic achievement. The case study schools in this report defy the association of poverty and low outcomes and they enable children from such families to succeed against the odds. They refuse to use a child's background as an excuse for underachievement. Overall the case study schools' data shows that from their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards.

Further detail is provided in Section 2 on the methodological framework used in this study.

### Why do some schools achieve against the odds?

The three case study schools in this report represent the 'cream of the crop' achieving excellence consistently in difficult circumstances. What stood out in all three schools was the quality of the leadership. In each school there was a system of distributed leadership and each was in a partnership federation with at least one other school. The federation partnerships have had a significant impact on the capacity of the case study schools' ability to sustain improvement.

What also stood out in these schools were a powerful vision, articulated and 'lived out' by the leadership, which engaged and motivated all staff, staff with very high expectations and the highest aspirations for pupils; commitment and teamwork; and excellent teaching and learning taking place.

## Why are they outstanding schools?

The outstanding schools in this report act out of a passion to see every child achieve their highest potential. They understand that barriers to learning have to be tackled in order to make learning possible. They are adept at reducing barriers, overcoming emotional and psychological hurdles and creating the right conditions for learning.

Outstanding schools have much to offer other schools. By virtue of overcoming their contextual challenges so dramatically, these schools, as National Support Schools, are resources for school improvement to be used by others, particularly schools in challenging circumstances. All three schools have a key role in a federation partnership led by executive headteachers who are National Leaders of Education. All three schools have shown an exceptional capacity to sustain their excellent performance over a number of years and they deserve their local and national reputations.

## What are the factors contributing to their success?

- **Achievement and standards:** - In each case the schools' core purpose of maximising children's achievement has been realised through a fundamental belief that every child can succeed. The results of these schools justify this view. All three schools achieved remarkable results for all their pupils, far exceeding national average benchmarks at the end of Key Stage 2.
- **Leadership and management:** - The executive headteachers/heads of schools in the case study schools are intrinsically motivated to sustain excellence. Descriptions such as 'brave', 'pioneering' and 'courageous' sum up the qualities of leadership expressed by their colleagues. All are strongly focused on developing further the highest possible standards and achievement. In each of these schools there is a culture of high expectations and no excuses, collaboration with colleagues and close links with parents/carers and the community. The picture that has emerged is of schools which, while focused on their pupils and communities, are alert to the need to not only appoint high-quality staff but also to add to their repertoire of skills to sustain their interest, motivation and effectiveness. The federation partnerships provide an excellent vehicle for sharing knowledge and skills, and given their quality and expertise, the most important resource for these staff for their development is often their own colleagues. The depth and extent of teamwork, openness in sharing practice, and interest in providing new and exciting stimuli for children's learning all contribute to these schools as real learning communities.
- **The role of the governing body in supporting and challenging the school:** - Evidence suggests that the governing bodies are excellent in challenging and supporting the executive headteachers, the heads of schools and SMT. They carefully monitor the impact of the school's work in raising achievement and rigorously hold school leaders and managers to account through effective use of data. The governing bodies discuss extensively what the data tells them about the schools' performance including the interventions strategies and the impact of the strategies the school has put in place to improve performance of particular groups of children. These discussions have led to new challenging targets for one school in particular.

What is remarkable in this school are the words of their chair of governors: *'The data is read and used in the context and focuses on where the school could look to make further improvements. The school endeavours to go beyond outstanding'*.

- **Teaching and Learning:** - There are high levels of rigour and consistency in all three schools. There is also a lot of support, for example inexperienced teachers are paired with outstanding teachers or work with parallel year groups of colleagues across the federation to plan high quality lessons. Collaborative planning, marking and the moderation of pupils' work are other important features which offer support and challenge to teachers. Ofsted comments on the teaching in all three schools, as follows:

*'Teaching is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated in lessons because tasks and explanations are matched exceptionally well to their needs' (Ofsted)*

*'One key feature of the high achievement is outstanding teaching. This includes high expectations of what pupils can achieve, stimulating and enthusiastic teaching which interests, excites and motivates pupils and accelerates their learning, well planned lessons which provide for the differing needs of pupils, well trained and highly skilled teaching assistants and a close check on learning with effective marking and assessment.'* (Ofsted)

Teachers are continually encouraged to take responsibility for improving their teaching. The high investment in their ongoing training is paying huge dividends, as seen by the high quality of many lessons as observed by Ofsted. Teachers capture the pupils' enthusiasm and make them want to succeed because they show how much they enjoy their teaching.

- **Innovative Curriculum:** – As confident organisations, the case study schools weigh up curriculum initiatives and local and national programmes before deciding whether they are right for the school, not being afraid to dispense with them if they are not. Common to all three schools is the way in which they understand the needs of their pupils and shape the curriculum to match them very closely. They place great emphasis on achieving very high standards in the core skills and enrich these through a creative and innovative approach to the curriculum. Curriculum project work is planned to provide children with opportunities to progress in key learning and thinking skills: to explain, question, investigate, discover, invent, apply, create, predict, prove, solve problems and collaborate. Homework is often linked to this project work.

Children benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest. Because of the location of the schools and the excellent range of partnerships which have been established, pupils are able to perform at the Royal Festival Hall and the Young Vic and capitalise on visits to Tate Modern and other events at the South Bank. An example of innovation is the exciting partnership established with the London Music Masters, through The Bridge Project which has contributed to the excellence of one school's curriculum. The Bridge Project is an educational initiative which identifies and nurtures young children who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage in classical music. Children have a range of unique opportunities and experiences including performing at the Royal Festival Hall. They receive music tuition and participate in various musical workshops and performances throughout the school year.

- **Targeted intervention and support:** - Each school provides high quality targeted support and intervention through the effective use of teaching assistants and HLTAs to support children with additional needs, pupils with EAL, more able and any underachieving groups or individuals. Highly skilled teaching assistants work very effectively alongside classroom teachers. They provide seamless and valuable support both in class and by working with small groups and individuals. Very rigorous checking of pupils' learning leads to effective 'pinpoint' teaching of specific skills. Where additional support is required, it is extremely

well matched to pupils' needs. All groups of pupils do exceptionally well and make excellent progress from their starting point.

- **Inclusion:** - The schools all place emphasis on the importance of early intervention in the case of children who require extra help. These needs are identified in the Children's Centre or Nursery and support is targeted at the outset. The work of the inclusion teams is expertly co-ordinated, and efficiently managed through the opportunities created by the federation, to provide unusually high levels of support for individual pupils: *'it has allowed us to buy in speech and language and occupational therapy, a CAMHS worker, music therapist, and two reading recovery teachers. It's not that these resources in themselves make a difference but it is the way it is managed and led and shared across the federation.'*
- **Parental engagement:** - Gaining the trust and confidence of the community has been necessary for all three schools, and they have used resourcefulness in employing specialists who can build trusting bridges between school and family, e.g. family support workers, and learning mentors with specific roles with parents/carers or in promoting 'Dads' in activities. One of the case study schools invited a group of parents of children in Years 1 and 2 to observe a group of children being taught phonics. Many of these parents were educated abroad and speak English as an additional language, so for them to observe how their children are being taught has been crucial to their understanding of how to support their children at home.
- **Use of data:** - The use of data is exemplary and a strength of each school. High quality assessment, tracking and target setting procedures, for individual and groups, are the features of the effective management, which supports teaching and learning. Rigorous pupil tracking is established as one of the core elements of raising achievement in these schools. The use of data involves all staff, governors and parents:

*'The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning are systematic and robust. Careful use of data, rigorous monitoring in lessons and regular tracking ensure that any variance in progress is tackled quickly.'* (Ofsted)

*The school has excellent practice in relation to self-evaluation. Every year there is a thorough review of the whole school, including parental feedback and pupil voice which feeds into the school development plan and school self-evaluation.'* (chair of governor)

*'Teachers make effective use of data to evaluate quality of provision and to identify and support for differentiated groups of pupils.'* (head of school)

*'There are excellent systems for monitoring the work of the pupils, identifying those who need additional help or extra challenge and then providing them with appropriate additional support.'* (inclusion manager)

- **Effective use of pupil voice:** - The pupils we spoke to had specific roles on the School's Council or as prefects. They were unanimous in their love for their schools, giving examples of how they enjoy their lessons and their play times, after school activities and how they get on exceptionally well with each other and with the adults in the school, saying *'Teachers, staff, TAs, all support us and push us. They want what's best for us'*. The views expressed by pupils are also supported by a recent Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) Assessment Report which stated that:

*'Children who were interviewed were proud of their progress and achievement and described the special provision that was being made of them, including school responsibilities and the enrichment of clubs and other provision. They were keen to tell me about their school trips and other enrichment activities.'* (IQM, 2012, p.3)

- **Celebration of cultural diversity:** - One of the factors that has helped these schools to acknowledge and celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds of pupils is that many of the staff working in the schools represent the communities they serve. Not only does this give them insight into the lives of their pupils, it also provides pupils with good role models and the sense that the school is also part of their community. These are truly multi-cultural schools where the diversity of ethnic origin, languages spoken, and of cultural heritage, brings real life to learning. Pupils thrive because they see around them every day the living evidence of what it is to live in a multi-cultural world.

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The views expressed in the report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Lambeth Council.

## Glossary- A guide to acronyms

ASH	Assistant Headteacher
AST	Advanced Skills Teachers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
DfE	Department for Education
EAL	English as an Additional language
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FFT	Fischer Family Trust
FSM	Free school meals
FSP	Foundation Stage Profile
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INSET	In Service Educational Training
KS1	Key Stage 1
KS2	Key Stage 2
LA	Local Authority
NC	National Curriculum
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
QCA	Qualification and Curriculum Authority
SALT	Speech and Language Therapist
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLT	Senior leadership team
SMT	Senior management team
TA	Teaching Assistant
WW2	World War 2



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