

Elena Lenskaya graduated from Moscow State Linguistic University as a teacher of English and Spanish, taught English in a primary school for several years piloting new curriculum developed by the Russian Academy of Education. She soon became a textbook writer and completed her doctorate in the Academy on early language learning and acquisition.

In 1987 she was invited to lead on the mass introduction of English into primary schools and to write a series of textbooks which are still one of the most widely used in Russia. In 1988 she joined a temporary team created to plan a comprehensive reform of Russian education and in 1991 she joined the first Ministry of Education of independent Russia. As the personal advisor to the Minister and then as the head of International Co-operation Department of the Ministry she has helped launch and implement more than 100 international projects in education some of which have introduced dramatic changes into the Russian educational system.

In 1997 she joined the British Council and was one of the first non-British assistant directors for Education and English Language teaching. The British Council then became the key partner for the Russian Ministry of Education in piloting educational innovations in the regions of Russia and a systemic reform of English Language teaching across the country. Major innovations such as the first standardised exams in English, the compulsory teaching of English in primary grades, first school governance bodies, and competence-based curriculum for secondary schools were introduced in Russia with her participation and leadership.

Recently Elena was asked to join the General Education sub-board of the Open Society Institute and as of 2003 she is the chairperson of this board. She participates in the Analytical centre of the National Training Foundation and is part of the reform team of the Ministry of Education.