



L'École des Petits, Fulham

Independent School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

DfES Registration Number 205/6386
Unique Reference Number 100375
Inspection number 296835
Inspection dates 25-26 January 2007
Reporting inspector Mr Peter McKenzie AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 3-7	Published 20 February 2007	Reference no. 296835
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

L'Ecole des Petits is an independent day school for pupils from 3 to 7 years of age. It is a bilingual school where both the French and English educational systems are seen together. Within the French education system, almost all these children would be pre-school (*maternelle*) pupils. The school welcomes bilingual pupils from a range of cultures, which aims to generate a truly international atmosphere. The partnership with the family is paramount in the school's ethos.

Evaluation of the school

L'Ecole des Petits is a very effective international school, offering a truly bilingual education. It is based on a caring family atmosphere and pupils are valued as individuals. They clearly enjoy their life at school and develop self-confidence. They make good progress through a well-planned combined English and French curriculum because of good teaching, providing for individual needs. As a result of the inspiring leadership of the principal, the school prepares pupils very well for the next stage in their education. The school has recently received a very favourable report from the French inspectorate.

Quality of education

The curriculum provision is good with the emphasis on bilingualism as a major strength. Teaching is in both English and French. This develops confidence and a natural facility in both languages and pupils may often use both languages in one sentence. The school follows the prescribed French National Curriculum and the English Foundation Stage guidance. Letter recognition is not introduced until pupils are 4 to 5 years old, in keeping with the French curriculum. Pupils study a full range of subjects, including technology, although information and communication technology (ICT) is not included, as it does not form part of the French curriculum at this stage. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught in circle time. The curriculum stimulates pupils' interest and benefits from clear schemes and planning throughout.

Teaching and learning are good and have some outstanding features. Lessons are well planned and organised. Most teachers pay attention to the needs of individuals by appropriate challenge and by encouraging independent learning.

Support from teaching assistants plays a significant role in developing pupils' learning. Work is assessed by both the French and English frameworks, although the French system does not encourage the keeping of formal data for pupils of this age. Teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' achievement to plan lessons and activities. The school provides a wide range of learning resources and a stimulating environment. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they are committed to their learning and concentrate on their activities. They produce a wide range of work illustrating things they have learnt. Individual pupils produce diaries (*cahiers de vie scolaire*). Teachers add pupils' own words (*dictée à l'adulte*) and there are photographs of activities and displays. The most outstanding teaching makes more than one use of pupils' work: for example, learning to make pictures with a range of textures led to the use of tenses to describe what they did.

Pupils make very good progress in French and English because they use both languages in their learning activities. They make good progress in their learning because they are inquisitive and much of their teaching is based on tasks to challenge them at an individual level. They develop an impressive level of confidence in expressing themselves and are pleased to show what they have learnt and can do. Pupils' progress reflects the school's aim of developing an international bilingual learning community.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. French education is secular. Therefore no religion is taught. Pupils are taught to value individuals and respect differences. The caring ethos of the school encourages them to support others and understand feelings. They are fully aware of right and wrong and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour. It also characterises their relationships with other pupils and adults: they enjoy school because they are good at working together, sharing their work and explaining it to people. Attendance is very good and lunch is a pleasant social occasion. The 23 nationalities in the school represent a wealth of cultural diversity, in which pupils learn in total harmony. These different cultures are celebrated by parents and pupils through events or activities built around, for example, food and stories.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. There is a health and safety policy setting out the responsibilities of adults in the school. Consequently the school is a safe place in which to work and learn. The curriculum and leisure time provide opportunities for regular exercise. The school staggers breaks to ensure that pupils have maximum access to the

limited outdoor space, which is equipped with high-quality play facilities. The school's healthy eating policy is promoted through hot and cold lunches and snacks. It goes to great lengths to ensure pupils' safety. Regular checks of all electrical equipment and fire appliances are carried out. A fire risk assessment was completed in the current school year. Outside steps have non-slip surfaces; outdoor and interior floor surfaces are in good condition. All staff are trained in First Aid and health and safety. First Aid boxes are available and records of accidents are kept. Regular child protection training takes place for all staff in keeping with French requirements for all teachers. The child protection officer's enhanced training is currently in need of renewal. The school has an appropriate, current plan to improve facilities for disabled access under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 (DDA).

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school follows all required procedures to confirm employees' suitability to work with pupils. Those appointed from the United Kingdom undertake Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) enhanced clearance. Those appointed from France are subject to the French system of clearance, *Casier Judiciaire Vièrge (CJV)* but conform to the British CRB requirements inside six months. All employees have current clearance. In addition, all staff are routinely checked for identity, qualifications, medical fitness, character and professional references before confirmation of their appointment.

School's premises and accommodation

The school makes very good use of its premises to produce a bright, welcoming building with adequate access for emergency evacuations. Maintenance and decoration are of a high quality and all classrooms are suitable for the pupils' ages and educational needs. The outside play areas are of a very high quality with soft-landing surfaces and a range of equipment. Classroom furniture, equipment and display of pupils' work are of a high standard. The profile of the building, with many steps and some narrow corridors, is not ideal for pupils or staff with mobility difficulties but the school has prepared a three-year DDA access plan.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Although the school does not publish a brochure, the provision of information to current and prospective parents and carers is good. The school has good information on its website, and plans revisions in the near future. It makes a commitment to provide this information as hard-copy to parents and carers without internet access. Reports on progress and achievement, issued at least annually, and three times a year to older pupils, are detailed and very informative.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a satisfactory policy and procedure for handling complaints. A significant number of parents reported that they were not aware of the procedures. These have now been made available to them, on request.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of that listed below.

The school does not meet one requirement in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- attend to the training issue identified regarding child protection (paragraph 3(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Introduce ICT into the curriculum, at least for older pupils
- Ensure that the best practice in teaching, providing for individual pupils' abilities, is used to raise the already good standards of teaching within the school.

School details

Name of school	L'Ecole des Petits		
DfES number	205/6386		
Unique reference number	100375		
Type of school	French pre-primary and primary bilingual school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 1977		
Age range of pupils	3-7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 67	Girls: 57	Total: 124
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 4	Girls: 4	Total: 8
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,440 - £6,975		
Address of school	2 Hazlebury Road London SW6 2NB		
Telephone number	0207 371 8350		
Fax number	0207 736 9522		
Email address	admin@lecoledespetits.co.uk		
Headteacher	Madame Brisset		
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs Otten		
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter McKenzie AI		
Dates of inspection	25-26 January 2007		