

L'Ecole de Battersea

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Paul Armitage

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

L'École de Battersea opened in south-west London in 2005 as an independent school for boys and girls aged from three to eleven years. It is a bilingual 'école homologue,' which means that it is formally recognised as a French school and therefore has to follow the French curriculum. It also means that pupils have automatic right of entry to the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle. There are currently 234 pupils on roll. The majority are French but 24 nationalities are represented, including a sizeable number of British pupils. For 135 pupils, English is not their principal language. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are 33 children aged three to five years. No children receive free nursery education and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school had its first inspection by Ofsted in February 2008 when it met all of the regulations for independent schools. The French inspectorate inspects the school annually.

The school aims, 'to provide the best possible all-round education and care for pupils'. In addition, it 'puts strong emphasis on its French/English bilingual context and aims for all its pupils to be immersed in both cultures and to become fluent in both tongues before they leave'.

Evaluation of the school

L'École de Battersea provides an outstanding education for pupils and meets its aims. It has made excellent progress since the last inspection by raising quality in every aspect of the school's work and continues to meet all of the independent school regulations. The quality of the curriculum is outstanding; the mix of the French and English curricula suits pupils very well. Teaching and the use of assessment are outstanding; teachers have an excellent understanding of the needs of this diverse body of pupils. Pupils' outstanding personal development is reflected in very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour, and they are well protected by the school's meticulous procedures for welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, despite one statutory breach which has no negative impact on children's learning and development.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. There are many reasons for this but a significant one is the highly successful blend of the French and English curricula for every age group. The French curriculum predominates, but the English curriculum is used in some subjects where the school believes that the English curriculum is more suitable to meet pupils' needs. Examples include the humanities, some aspects of sport and physical education, and in information and communication technology (ICT). A second reason for the outstanding judgement is the way the curriculum is tailored very well to meet the needs of pupils who enter the school with limited language skills in French or English. It is also very well tailored to meet the needs of those pupils who leave at age 11 for British schools rather than the Lycée.

The French curriculum consists of all the subjects covered by the English National Curriculum with identical as well as different content. There are clear schemes of work which are appropriately adjusted by teachers when particular needs, such as improving progress in reading or experimentation in science, are identified. Personal, social and health education is not covered as a discrete subject but is very well dealt with in other subjects; for example, human reproduction is studied in science. Personal development issues are also very well covered in assemblies, in many projects such as the recent one on citizenship, and on many visits to places of educational relevance. The extra-curricular curriculum is rich. There are a large number of clubs, including fencing, art, drama, dance, music, sewing and ICT. There are opportunities for sport, including football, netball, cricket and basketball, which help promote a healthy lifestyle and keep pupils fit.

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding and, as a result, pupils make outstanding progress. All lessons observed during the inspection were either good or outstanding, with the majority outstanding. There are many reasons for this judgement, including the fact that teachers are very well qualified; they prepare lessons and other activities well; and they know how to encourage pupils to develop highly positive attitudes towards learning. Using assessment and other information, lessons are very well tuned to meet the needs of pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is particularly evident in helping with pupils' reading and language development and also helping the few pupils who have been identified by the school as having special educational needs. Teachers are self-critical and constantly want to improve. The current *Projet d'Ecole* (improvement plan), created by the teachers, is successfully driving improved teaching and learning in science.

There is an effective assessment system covering all subjects. It allows for pupils' progress to be tracked well. It also provides summative attainment judgements to be made at various stages as pupils move through the school. As is normal in French schools, pupils take *évaluations nationales* (formal assessments) in Years 3 and 6. The school evaluates these results very carefully and uses the information effectively to improve further.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As they grow older, it is very clear that pupils grow in confidence, developing an increasingly perceptive understanding of themselves and others. This is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as amongst older pupils. One good example of this was an assembly when Reception and Year 1 pupils, very bravely, used a microphone, costumes and projected pictures to explain to the whole school about horses and horse-riding events. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, indicating their excellent understanding of how to act responsibly. Attendance rates are high. Moral understanding is developing well. This is very well illustrated by the outcomes of the recent 'anti-bullying' week. Older pupils say this helped them recognise behaviours that they had never considered before.

A very strong feature is the way that all pupils, whatever their backgrounds and cultures, are socially aware and get on very well together. They regard diversity as an important strength to be understood and celebrated. Pupils have successfully taken part in an 'Africa Week' and there are also frequent class events such as the China and Caribbean projects. There are visitors from different countries; recently including a musician from Sénégal. On one day of each week, the canteen provides specialist food from different countries. Differences between France and the United Kingdom are explored virtually all the time in different ways. British culture and institutions are successfully studied in projects and visits, for example to Hampton Court and to the School Proms at the Royal Albert Hall.

One of the main reasons that pupils' personal development is so positive is the opportunity encouraged by the school to participate in, and understand, the issues of the wider community. A recent project called 'Being a Good Citizen' covered many matters, including rights and responsibilities, conservation and recycling. The school has been very successful in Transport for London's Olympic 2012 essay writing competition. Currently, a 'management group' of pupils is actively involved in creating an 'eco school' but there is not yet a school council to involve pupils in strategic decision making. Older pupils attend a 'discovery week' in Dorset which provides the opportunity for them to live together. The 'house' system gives all pupils, including prefects, a sense of belonging and provides them with administrative and management experience. The school is involved in a good number of charities.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The quality of pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All the required policies are in place, are up to date, and provide very clear guidance on correct procedures. This includes policies and procedures on child protection, behaviour, first aid and anti-bullying. The training of staff in welfare matters has been very thorough. Three members of staff, including the person with overall responsibility for safeguarding, have undertaken advanced courses in child protection, and all other

staff have been trained by the local authority to the appropriate level. Eleven staff, including the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, have paediatric training, which was undertaken in conjunction with a general first-aid course. Four teachers have undertaken advanced training in first aid to enable them to instruct others and ensure first-aid cover at all times. Risk assessment is taken very seriously, with a large number of risks made on daily, monthly, termly and longer cycles. A useful checklist of the many assessments required ensures that none is missed. Fire drills are undertaken regularly, the results studied and remedial action taken if necessary. Arrangements for the storage and administration of medicines are appropriate.

The school takes pupils' health very seriously. A local Italian restaurant prepares good quality food which is eaten by pupils in the canteen, although a small number bring packed lunches. A nutritionist regularly reviews menus. Care is taken to meet the needs of those with special diets. Education about healthy eating and the need for exercise are taught in science and physical education, and they are also covered in many other ways, including assemblies and clubs. In collaboration with Wandsworth Council, the school has drawn up a travel plan which encourages pupils to exercise by walking to school. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school is meticulous in its checking of staff and others for their suitability to work with children. The results of these checks are recorded in a properly constituted central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The original building is Victorian and was a primary school run by the Salesians of Don Bosco since 1880. It has been creatively extended to provide an excellent environment for both pupils and staff. The quality of internal decoration, floors, furniture and fittings is high. Classrooms are of a good size. The school is now well resourced with computers and whiteboards, a significant improvement since the last inspection. The outside area for Early Years Foundation Stage children is welcoming and suitably resourced. The playground for older pupils is relatively small, given the number of pupils, but it is adequate because the space limitation is successfully overcome by scheduling usage for different year groups. The provision of outdoor resources such as table tennis is very much appreciated by pupils. Toilets and washbasins are easily accessible and are very well maintained. There are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. Termly reports on pupils' progress are informative and the regular dialogue between the teachers and parents and carers of older pupils using the *Cahier de Correspondance* (information exchange notebook) is very successful. *L'Ecole*

Families, a voluntary group, provides significant help and information, especially to parents and carers new to the school. The regular newsletter is also very popular.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clear complaints policy and procedures which meet regulatory requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children make outstanding progress. The quality of provision and outcomes is outstanding. The learning environment is of high quality in terms of decoration, cleanliness, furnishings, and displays of children's work. The curriculum is French but it is adapted to make it more relevant to bilingual learners. Resources are outstanding. Visits and visitors to school who organise excellent activities such as art and dance enrich the curriculum.

The quality of teaching is outstanding overall. There is a strong emphasis on adult-led activity but children also develop well as independent learners. They show considerable initiative through their responses to questions, the initiation of new ones and extending activities themselves. The partnership teaching involving English- and French-speaking teachers works extremely well. There are effective assessment procedures which chart the progress children make in the French equivalent to the English six areas of learning. Assessment information is used very well to inform teaching. The informative *Cahier De Vie* (Book of Life) accompanies each child and provides evidence of progress. The setting does not complete the English Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Managers have a very clear idea of the setting's strengths and potential areas for development. The headteacher liaises very well with staff and with parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').³

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

- ensure that, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are assessed against the 13 scales in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and that this information is properly recorded.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following point for development.

- Further encourage pupils' understanding of strategic management by establishing a school council.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	✓			
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	✓			
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	✓			
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	✓			

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Preparatory		
Date school opened	September 2005		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 116	Girls: 118	Total: 234
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,040 - £3,100		
Address of school	Trott Street London SW11 3DS		
Telephone number	020 7924 3186		
Email address	Battersea@lecoledespetits.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mme Frédérique Brisset		
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs Nicholas Otten		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

26 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of L'Ecole de Battersea, London, SW11 3DS

You will remember that I came with two colleagues to inspect your school.

In this letter, I want to tell you a little of what we think about your school.

- We think it is 'outstanding'.
- We very much like what you study.
- We like the fact that you can speak both English and French.
- We think your teachers are excellent. You and your teachers work very well together.
- We noted that you are all becoming more confident and understanding of things and people as you grow older.
- We think it is very good that you make visits to places and that visitors come to school. This gives you an excellent understanding of different cultures.
- We are pleased that the school takes care of you by making sure that all the adults in the school have been checked.
- We think your behaviour and willingness to learn are excellent.

We have made one suggestion about how your school can improve even further. We think all of you would benefit from having a proper school council to discuss things of importance to you that you form a view on which you can then share with your headteacher. We have also asked your headteacher to sort out a technical issue about how the progress of five year olds is recorded.

En conclusion, nous vous remercions chaleureusement de votre aide, de vos sourires et de votre courtoisie pendant l'inspection. En conséquence, pour nous, l'inspection a été facile, intéressante et agréable. Nous vous présentons nos meilleurs vœux pour l'avenir.

Cordialement

Paul Armitage
Lead inspector