

# La Petite Ecole Française

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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DfE registration number	207/6387
Unique Reference Number (URN)	100545
Inspection number	361320
Inspection date	18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

## Information about the school

La Petite Ecole Française is a French nursery school for children aged between three and six years of age situated in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It opened in 1983 to serve the French-speaking community in London. It is an 'école homologuée' that operates under the auspices of L'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger and it teaches a curriculum based on the French curriculum for nursery schools. The school moved to new premises in September 2010 and is now registered for a maximum of 90 children. There are currently 89 children on roll, all of whom attend full time. There are 61 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, taught in two Nursery classes, one Reception class and one mixed Reception and Year 1 class. None receive public funding under the nursery voucher scheme. None has a statement of special educational needs. Most children are bilingual (French and English) and transfer to the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle or the Ecole Primaire Jacques Prévert. Most children have diverse cultural heritages and a small number use a third language at home. The school believes that:

'every child is an individual with unique talents and intends to create an environment that allows the child to flourish academically and creatively; it strives to develop confident, well-behaved and happy children'.

This nursery is part of a consortium of 'écoles homologuées' in London. It has been under new ownership since July 2008. The school leaders have close professional links with the French authorities and colleagues from similar schools in London. The school is inspected annually by the French inspectorate. It was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Evaluation of the school

La Petite Ecole Française provides an outstanding quality of education and meets its aims. The school is led by a new team of senior leaders that has secured significant improvements since the last inspection. Several aspects of its work, previously judged to be good, are outstanding: the curriculum, the rate of progress made by children, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their behaviour and their welfare, health and safety. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. The new premises provide spacious teaching accommodation that enables very effective learning. All the areas of non-compliance highlighted in the last inspection report and related to the quality of information to Parents and Carers and others have been addressed and the school now meets all of the regulations for independent schools. However, despite the exceptional quality of the provision and outcomes for the children, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good rather than outstanding because the school does not comply fully with two requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding across the age range. It is planned successfully to reflect all the principles and areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage without compromising the requirements of the French curriculum for nursery schools. It is exemplary in its provision for basic skills, learning through play and hands-on experiences, and children's spiritual, social, moral, cultural and personal development. The 'projet d'école' provides a creative framework for planning links between all areas of learning and engaging children in exciting activities in and out of the school around the theme 'citizen of my school, of my town and citizen of the world'. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking, listening, calculation, creative, thinking, problem-solving and enquiry skills. This is delivered through a broad range of activities, as well as laying secure foundations that prepare children extremely well for formal reading and writing when they move on to primary school. While children's literacy skills are promoted mainly through the French language, the time allocation for English teaching has increased since the last inspection. This equips the very few children who transfer to English schools with the skills they need for the next stage of their education and all children with the competence required to live in England. Dance, music and drama are taught in English by specialists, and so are activities that extend children's basic skills and support their social and emotional development. The provision for physical education has greatly improved since the last inspection. It is delivered through the use of a large room for dance, a gymnasium adjacent to the school and a spacious playground, and through an increased time allocation. The provision for information and communication technology is now good and children have access to computers, CD-recorders, cameras, torches and magnifying glasses. The 'vivre ensemble' programme is a great strength and provides daily opportunities for developing children's personal, social and health education. Good procedures enable the early identification of children's linguistic or special educational needs and the provision of

targeted support. Children's learning experiences and skills are exceptionally well extended by the enrichment programme. This includes a wide range of school outings, events and high quality workshops and after-school clubs including art, cooking, young explorers, ballet and dance.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. The restructuring of the senior management team has considerably improved the quality of the provision and this was noted by some parents and carers. While the headteacher, who is a full-time teacher, leads by example, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous to disseminate the existing best practice. The staff are highly motivated and show adaptability when adopting innovative approaches. Small-sized classes enable teachers to know children well and match work to their needs closely. Classroom assistants provide highly skilled support to the children and the teachers. The staff have very high expectations of children's work and behaviour, and establish excellent relationships based on mutual respect and an excellent understanding of how children learn. They focus meticulously on developing children's language skills by modelling a high level of language and encouraging children to make full sentences. They use questioning effectively to make children think and deepen their understanding. The assessment framework includes continuous assessments building into comprehensive assessments in each area of learning, that are reported to parents and carers every term, and child-friendly marking. Where the teaching is outstanding, good quality evaluations of sessions and continuous assessments of individual children's learning are used very effectively to plan activities that provide consistently high challenge for the individual child. The 'cahier de vie' and 'cahier de liaison' are used effectively to provide a link between teachers and parents and carers and engage parents and carers in their children's learning.

The school had to leave its materials and equipment in the former premises and has had little time to rebuild its stock, and so resources are satisfactory in range and quantity. Although the playground provides opportunities to enhance several areas of learning, it is currently underdeveloped. The staff produce high quality home-made resources that support children's learning imaginatively. However, there is not always sufficient awareness of the size of font required when showing a printed text to the whole class so that all children have full visibility. The learning environment is well prepared to help children to focus on their tasks, practise their independence and make choices, enabling them to flourish and excel. As a result, children of all ages make outstanding progress in their personal development and across subject areas. They develop a wide range of skills that prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education. Excellent arrangements ensure that children transfer smoothly to their next schools.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has developed significantly since the last inspection and is outstanding. Children enjoy school highly and their attendance is good. The school ethos helps children to

develop a keen sense of right and wrong and of social and moral responsibility. Children show exceptionally high levels of self-discipline and their behaviour is outstanding. They form extremely positive relationships and play and work harmoniously together. They have regular opportunities for reflection and express their views with self-assurance. The careful display of their art work and judicious use of praise boost their self-esteem and self-confidence. Children focus on their tasks with sustained concentration and show respect for others and their learning environment. They have good opportunities to develop their imagination during role play and creative activities and the use of drama further enhances their communication skills. Provision for their cultural education is exemplary, greatly enriched by the 'projet d'école' and a wide range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Through high quality workshops run by professionals, children learnt about book writing by developing a story and producing water-colour illustrations. They also learnt about the basics of filming when writing a story that was filmed and edited. The school has greatly improved its provision for multicultural education which is now good and well supported by some parents and carers and grandparents and carers who come to talk about their cultural and religious festivals.

Children make excellent contributions to their school and global communities. They are highly responsive in class. They have classroom responsibilities and participate in choir and drama presentations. Within the 'projet d'école,' they learn about and visit a wide range of public institutions, and their education as young citizens is exemplary. They participate in a charity race to raise funds for children who are less fortunate than themselves.

## **Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety**

Provision for safeguarding children's welfare, health and safety, formerly judged to be good, is outstanding. The school has a diligent approach to minimising risks and safeguarding children in all circumstances. All policies and procedures, including the child protection policy, have been reviewed conscientiously since the last inspection, and reflect an excellent understanding of current government guidance, duties and responsibilities. They are implemented consistently and deficiencies are remedied at once. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that all the required checks are carried out on staff and the proprietor, and recorded appropriately in a single central register. All staff receive the appropriate level of child protection training. A high number of staff have regular training in first aid and six hold first aid certificates with qualifications appropriate for the age group. The level of fire safety is good. The school has recently identified a potential risk, taken prompt action to upgrade security arrangements, and informed Parents and Carers. High levels of supervision safeguard children throughout the day. The staff promote very high standards of behaviour at all times and instances of bullying are extremely rare. Most parents and carers feel that their children are safe.

Children demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are visibly happy and feel well-cared for, which is noted by parents and

carers. Children develop a good understanding of how to be healthy because there is a high emphasis on hygiene routines and they are encouraged to eat healthily. The canteen provides well-balanced and well-cooked meals. Children enjoy the wide range of physical activities on offer. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Although the school is highly effective in ensuring that the outstanding provision meets the needs of the individual child exceptionally well and in securing outstanding outcomes for the children, the leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The school promotes the welfare of all children rigorously and safeguarding arrangements are robust. The leadership is strongly committed to providing a very inclusive environment in which diversity is valued and celebrated. The very close partnerships between parents and carers and the school ensures that children's needs are identified early and regularly reviewed. As a result of exceptional care, an outstanding curriculum and good teaching, children make outstanding progress in their learning, personal development and all the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

Although all staff are suitably qualified to work in French nursery schools, not all have qualifications that fully satisfy the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, they have developed a good understanding of the welfare and educational requirements of the English framework through training and good support from the local authority. The school has effective systems to monitor the quality of its provision and of outcomes for children. A process of continuous assessment of each child's learning in the six areas of learning informs the planning of daily activities. This culminates in the completion of detailed termly reports that record the progress made by each child against the goals of French nursery education and that are discussed with parents and carers during one-to-one consultations. However, the school does not transfer this information onto the English Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles for children coming up to the age of five as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. The good improvements made since the last Ofsted inspection and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation reflect the leadership's good capacity for sustained improvement.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

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

- 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.

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

- ensure that all staff have suitable qualifications and match the adult-to-children ratio accordingly.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- share the best practice to raise further the good quality of teaching
- build up its resources and develop the playground.

## 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

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	French Nursery		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 1983		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–6		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 45	Girls: 44	Total: 89
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees</b>	£7,710		
<b>Address of school</b>	73 St Charles Square London W10 6EJ		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8960 1278		
<b>Email address</b>	lapetiteecolefrancaise@gmail.com		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Madame Typhaine Dauchez		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mrs Devika Malik		