

# La Scuola Italiana a Londra

Independent school standard inspection report

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DfE registration number	207/6000
Unique Reference Number (URN)	136747
Inspection number	393244
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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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>

## Information about the school

La Scuola Italiana a Londra is a non-selective independent day school for children aged from three to six years. It provides a bilingual English and Italian education. It is housed in a listed building that is located in Holland Park, in the London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The majority of children speak English as an additional language. The school has no religious affiliation.

The school was registered and opened in September 2010 and has not previously been inspected. There are currently 18 children on roll. Sixteen are aged between three and five years and are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery and Reception classes. No children are funded under the government's nursery scheme. None has a statement of special educational needs and no children are looked after.

The school is a charitable organisation, managed by a governing body. Its mission is to create an Italian school which is fully integrated with the British context in which it operates and aims 'to offer a safe and nurturing learning environment where pupils are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential; inspire a passion for knowledge in general as well as stimulating the personal interests and abilities of each pupil; promote self-discipline whilst encouraging freedom of thought and creativity'.

## Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of the education is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding arrangements, is satisfactory. The school meets all except one of the regulations for independent schools.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. The Italian curriculum 'Scuola Dell'Infanzia' sets out projects to be studied during the course of the academic year that ensure children's

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

learning is developed in a broad range of areas. These projects share much common ground with the English Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Both emphasise that provision is 'based upon the interests of children, who are encouraged to determine the course of teaching and its form'. In addition to the prescribed projects within the Italian curriculum, the school has developed separate projects and themes such as recycling, library studies and music to further extend and enrich the curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, planning for all areas of learning is satisfactory. All of the required areas of learning are taught and the combination of the Italian and English curricula ensures children are provided with suitable opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Children are given appropriate opportunities to develop their reading and mathematical skills and a particular strength of this unique school is the strong development of speaking and listening skills in both Italian and English.

Childrens' personal, social and health education is provided through regularly timetable lessons and circle time sessions. Provision makes a positive contribution to developing children's personal, emotional and bilingual skills and helps to promote healthy living. The curriculum is enhanced through planned visits which have included the Science Museum, local shops, the library and local parks. Overall, resources are adequate, as they were at the time of the registration visit. There is a well-stocked 'shopping' area and suitable dressing-up clothes for role play purpose, plus a range of sand and water trays for practical work. However, in some lessons, particularly daily play sessions in the hall, staff sometimes miss opportunities to vary the type and use of equipment and resources to spark children's imagination. The school's outdoor area is small and appropriately resourced but is on a different level to children's classrooms. This makes it difficult for children to have free access to outdoor provision throughout the day. Nevertheless, staff do provide some opportunities for children to have free access to balcony areas and to develop their learning independently outdoors.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Provision is not good because teaching and the curriculum do not ensure children make consistently good progress in lessons or over time. Staff provide a range of suitable activities that ensure children make adequate gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, thus ensuring satisfactory progress over time. However, there are variations in the extent to which children's interests and progress are taken into account when planning specific learning activities and opportunities are sometimes missed to ensure that all children are challenged to make good progress.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and their encouragement and praise are warmly received. This is equally true of teaching assistants who contribute well to developing children's personal and social skills but occasionally miss opportunities to use questions and discussion to develop and extend children's thinking and ideas. Children satisfactorily develop their recognition of letters and their pencil control by carefully writing letters and numbers. In focused sessions, where children write letters of the alphabet under the direction of the teacher, children show sustained concentration. There is a suitable balance of adult- and child-initiated activities and

teachers quickly respond to the children's requests by adapting activities. For example, at a child's instigation, a teacher adapted their planned activity to do what the child requested; as a result, children enjoyed joining in a song about an elephant as they sang and counted in Italian.

Teachers suitably assess children's achievement in all areas of learning. Individual assessment sheets are used to highlight children's attainment and progress and assessment information is cross-referenced with observations and examples of children's work. Assessment of children's achievement against the Italian curriculum are gathered and recorded separately. However, the school does not currently gather this information centrally to monitor and evaluate children's progress from their starting points in the school.

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

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are involved in making choices from the time they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage and provision helps promote children's independence effectively. Behaviour management is good and children follow school closely. Consequently, children are developing a strong moral sense of right and wrong. Children's behaviour is good; those with more challenging behaviour are helped to develop their social skills so that there is a calm environment in classrooms. The school's friendly community ethos and regular opportunities to reflect on things ensure children's spiritual development is promoted effectively. Children enjoy their time at school and their attendance is good. There are good collaborative relationships between children and staff, helping to foster good social development. For example, children happily join in each other's imaginative scenarios as they play with sand and water. Children are helped to share and mix together in circle-time activities.

The school is a harmonious community where children from different backgrounds and cultures work closely together. The Italian and English curricula include cultural projects and opportunities to effectively reinforce personal, social, health and emotional issues on a regular basis. Provision helps children gain an understanding of cultural diversity, and bilingual work makes a positive impact on further developing children's linguistic development. A range of trips, visits and visitors provide children with an appropriate awareness of public bodies and institutions. For example, children developed their understanding of the world of work and civic duties when visiting a fire station and meeting the local mayor. They showed high excitement and appreciation when examining her official regalia and wearing her hat.

Children respond well to adults' praise and encouragement. They have positive attitudes to learning and make a positive contribution to the school by helping to clean tables and set out lunch for others.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision for children's welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The school pays suitable regard to current national guidance on safeguarding, and children are protected from harm. Essential health and safety policies are in place and their implementation is generally satisfactory. There are satisfactory arrangements for fire safety and fire fighting equipment is checked annually. Admission and attendance registers are not kept in accordance with requirements.

Staff show care and consideration for children in their day-to-day relationships. All staff have received appropriate training in first aid, fire fighting and child protection. The school monitors and records children's accidents appropriately and has a clear policy in place to administer medicine to children, although no medication has had to be administered to date. The school's promotion of healthy eating is satisfactory and parents and carers are supportive of the arrangements. For example, they provide healthy lunch boxes and welcome the fact that their children have access to the daily bowl of fruit provided. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school has clear procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff and others. All of the required checks have been completed effectively to ensure the suitability of staff and governors to work with children. Record-keeping is well organised and the school is vigilant in ensuring that staff from countries outside the United Kingdom undergo additional criminal checks. All of the required information is recorded in the single central record.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The premises keep pupils safe and secure and enable satisfactory learning to take place. The school has organised the refurbishment of the kitchen area and hot meals will soon be provided during the school day. The premises are well lit and well ventilated and classrooms are of an appropriate size. There is sufficient outdoor space for play and recreation. The school makes use of children's displays of work to enhance the interior corridors and teaching areas.

## **Provision of information**

Parents and carers are very supportive and have been instrumental in helping to establish the school. In a letter of accreditation from a representative of the Italian Ministry of Education, effusive praise was given to the school's governors, staff, parents and carers for their tenacity in achieving their vision of establishing a bilingual school in London. In their parental returns, all were positive about the school and recognise its strengths and qualities; in particular, parents and carers commented about the gains made by their children in developing their bilingual skills from an early age. They receive satisfactory reports about their children's attainment and progress. Parents and carers also get regular reports about their children's

achievement in relation to the Italian and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. They are also invited to attend a meeting during the spring term to discuss their children's education and meet separately with the English and the Italian class teachers. Parents and carers receive colourful newsletters featuring their children's school life, and their work, and have access to the school's website where all of the required information is provided, or is made available, to parents and others.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The complaints policy meets regulatory requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the admissions and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

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

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

- Plan specific activities based on identification of children's next steps, to ensure that all children are challenged to make good progress.
- Vary the type and use of equipment and resources to spark children's imagination, particularly in the daily play sessions in the school hall.
- Make more purposeful use of information held on children's achievement by monitoring and evaluating children's progress from their starting points in the school.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made).

## 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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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Italian day school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2010		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–6 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 7	Girls: 10	Total: 17
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
<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 (day pupils)</b>	£9,000		
<b>Address of school</b>	154 Holland Park Road London W11 4UH		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7603 5353		
<b>Email address</b>	info@sial.org.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Marani		
<b>Proprietor</b>	La Scuola Italiana a Londra		

**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.**

3 May 2012



Dear Children

**Inspection of La Scuola Italiana a Londra, London W11 4UH.**

Thank you for the warm and friendly greetings you gave to the inspection team. It is clear that staff and children enjoy coming to school and spending time together. You all learn to speak both English and Italian and make quick progress in both listening and speaking the languages from an early age. Around the school you behave well. We saw how well you joined in each other's games and played together. You are polite and thoughtful to visitors. You listened carefully to the Mayor and you enjoyed the chance to wear her hat and put on her special chains.

You are able to concentrate and work hard from an early age. You spend time carefully writing out letters and numbers under the watchful eye of your teacher. Staff at the school provide you with a wide range of activities to help you learn and develop across many subjects. However, we have asked the school to make some of the activities that you do more challenging and better matched to your capabilities so that you make consistently good progress. We have asked the staff to vary and change the equipment and resources used, particularly in daily play sessions in the hall, to help keep things interesting and exciting. Your garden and playground areas are small but adequate. Staff make sure that you all get the chance to play and learn outside. We have asked staff to carefully use their assessments to plan special activities for individual children every day to help improve their learning.

The headteacher, governors and staff at the school take care to make sure that you are safe and healthy. They have worked hard over a long time to set the school up and to make sure it runs smoothly. We have asked them to keep a better check on how well you are learning in both Italian and English over time. Leaders must also ensure that the admission and attendance registers are kept in good order.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield  
Her Majesty's Inspector