

# The German School

Douglas House, Petersham Road, Petersham, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7AH

## Inspection dates

25–27 April 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Sixth form provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and directors, has brought about improvements in the school. They have ensured that good teaching and a suitable curriculum enable pupils to achieve well.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils, know them well, and have secure subject knowledge. As a result, pupils make good progress. However, teaching does not always challenge the most able pupils to achieve their best.
- Pupils are friendly, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. However, some pupils are too reliant on staff to support their learning.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. They know whom to contact if they are worried.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff receive regular training and updates to ensure that they are aware of the latest guidance.
- Staff benefit greatly in their work from the valuable training programme.
- Governance is effective. Directors are increasingly confident in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- The school's assessment system is currently being refined. As matters stand, leaders and directors do not know enough about how well different groups of pupils are doing in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always set work at the correct levels for pupils of different abilities.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. Effective leadership and teaching have secured good outcomes for students.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the school’s assessment system contains a broad enough range of information to enable leaders, staff and directors to check accurately progress across all subjects and among different groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils’ outcomes, including children in the early years, by ensuring that teachers:
  - set work at the correct level to challenge pupils in their thinking, particularly the most able, and so enable them all to make the best possible progress
  - help pupils to become less reliant on teachers to support their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The board of directors, headteacher and senior leaders have established a caring ethos with high expectations. These attributes have ensured that pupils become successful young people because they have the necessary skills to adapt to different countries, cultures and schools.
- Leaders inspire a committed team of staff and they have secured provision of good quality. Together, they have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards. The headteacher and his senior team are fully aware of what the school still needs to do to make the provision outstanding.
- Since his arrival in August 2016, the new headteacher, supported by senior staff and directors, has strengthened the school's management systems. The improvements include developing the school's training and development programme for teachers, reorganising staff responsibilities, especially for middle leaders, and strengthening the curriculum for bilingual pupils. These changes, together with refining the school's appraisal and assessment systems, are having a beneficial effect on the quality of the teaching.
- Overall, staff are very positive about the many training opportunities available to them. Staff work well together in teams and are regularly involved in observing each other's teaching and in sharing good ideas. In addition, staff have attended training in France, Germany and Russia to improve their skills and practice. Staff commented on how successful these strategies have been in helping them prepare interesting activities.
- The German School is a multicultural community where pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is not taught separately but is integrated into each subject area. This helps pupils to develop their personal skills alongside their academic studies and make learning more meaningful. This is especially helpful for those pupils who struggle to make connections between the knowledge and skills they acquire in different subject areas. Pupils are respectful and tolerant of people who have different beliefs or different lifestyles from their own, including those whose characteristics are protected in law. The school makes strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also extends their understanding of how society works and gives them a broad general knowledge of key aspects of modern British life and institutions.
- The school's curriculum reflects very well the requirements of the German Abitur and International Baccalaureate (IB). Academic subjects, together with physical, technological, creative and outdoor pursuits, are carefully matched to pupils' needs, and their experience is further enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils visit places of interest, both locally and internationally, which gives them a strong sense of what it means to belong to a global community. Effective careers education and guidance ensure that pupils are well informed and prepared for the next stage of their lives. The rich arts and sports programmes are very effective at helping pupils achieve excellent standards at both individual and team levels.
- Of those parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, the large majority would recommend the school to another parent.

- The school's assessment system is valuable in enabling leaders to see how well individual pupils are achieving. However, it provides less detail and analysis about the pupils' progress across a range of different subjects and among different groups.

## **Governance**

- Governance is effective.
- Membership of the board of eight directors is drawn from a wide field of professional expertise and experience, which includes architecture, business, finance, governance, law and public relations.
- Directors have ensured that robust arrangements are in place for the appraisal of the headteacher. They have a good understanding of the process of setting targets for staff.
- Directors regularly commission independent reviews of aspects of the school's work to ensure that they have an accurate view of its performance. Recently, reviews of the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and for the IB curriculum, have been carried out. As a result of the recommendations from these reviews, the relevant areas have been strengthened.
- At directors' meetings, senior staff regularly give presentations about the effectiveness of their work. This enables directors to learn about and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses so that they are able to challenge leaders and hold them to account. However, they do not receive regular summaries of pupils' progress in all subjects and in different groups and so do not have a full picture of the school's performance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders are notably alert in using any safeguarding incidents to adapt and improve what pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe.
- Record-keeping for child protection and safeguarding is thorough.
- The school's safeguarding policy is suitable for its purpose and reflects the Secretary of State's latest statutory guidance. The policy is published on the school's website, alongside all other required policies and information. All staff understand the importance of their role in safeguarding pupils, including the need to respond to concerns rapidly and promoting safety online. They receive regular training and updates to ensure that they understand the most recent guidance and requirements.
- Of the small number of parents who responded to Parent View, a large majority feel that the school keeps their children safe. Staff work well with parents and external agencies to provide effective support for pupils and their families.
- Directors and leaders regularly commission audits to check that the school's safeguarding procedures are fit for their purpose. Recently, they checked to ensure that the school's internet system permitted pupils and staff to access only suitable learning resources.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve above-average standards because they are taught well.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge which in turn gives them confidence to inspire pupils to learn effectively. Relationships between staff and pupils are consistently positive and respectful. Over time, pupils develop strong communication skills in both English and German, and also in other languages. For example, key stage 3 pupils were able to apply their knowledge of grammar that they learn in one language to their Latin studies.
- Younger pupils, new to studying English, make good progress and were using their emerging reading skills to learn how to name different items of clothing. Staff are successful in helping the pupils with the lowest prior attainment and those who have additional learning needs to make good progress in their reading skills.
- Nevertheless, although the most able pupils in the school make good progress, they are not always set sufficiently challenging tasks to enable them to reach their full potential.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They know whom to ask for help if they are anxious or worried. The curriculum, supported by enlightening presentations from outside speakers, includes sessions on how to stay safe both online and while travelling in London, and includes the teaching of cycling proficiency.
- Pupils move around the extensive school campus in a calm and respectful way. They are polite to each other and form positive relationships with adults.
- The pastoral care pupils receive from staff ensures that their needs in relation to their physical and emotional well-being are met. The presence of a qualified psychologist and counsellor on the school campus makes a strong contribution to pupils' welfare by providing appropriate support at times of anxiety and stress, especially around examination times. Throughout the week, pupils have many opportunities to reflect on their learning. The school's caring approach to the pupils' welfare has been beneficial in improving pupils' self-esteem and helping them to understand which strategies help them to learn most successfully.
- Through interesting assemblies and in classrooms, pupils learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different types of bullying, including that which is racist or homophobic. Those who spoke with inspectors said that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, it is quickly dealt with by teachers.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that they are happy and get on well with one another. Overall, pupils have a good appreciation of people who have different beliefs or different lifestyles from their own.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In classrooms and around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered, showing respect for each other and their teachers. They have very positive attitudes to learning and they work together extremely well.
- The very helpful rewards system motivates pupils to adopt the highest standards of behaviour. The high expectations of staff and their effective management of classroom activities ensure that poor behaviour is extremely rare.
- Pupils attend school regularly because they enjoy the many exciting opportunities available to them.
- Occasionally, pupils are overdependent on adults to support their learning, which inhibits their ability to work on their own and so cultivate good study habits.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress in acquiring knowledge and skills and are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or entry into the world of work.
- When they join the school, pupils' skills and aptitudes are carefully checked. The results of these checks are used to establish a clear picture of pupils' current attainment and future potential. Teachers then use the information to plan interesting activities to meet pupils' needs.
- Stimulating classrooms, rich in language, help pupils to develop a love of reading. In the well-stocked library, they are often seen choosing books, in both English and German, talking about what they are reading, and settling down to read. Teachers skilfully develop pupils' knowledge of phonics to ensure that all make strong progress in their reading skills.
- In 2017, over three quarters of pupils achieved one or other of the two highest levels in the German equivalent of GCSE examinations.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in academic, physical, technological, creative and linguistic subjects. Pupils achieve particularly well in music and sport. Almost 300 individual music lessons take place each week, involving a range of musical instruments. Those who attend off-site sporting activities make strong progress, often adding to their experience and skills by taking part in competitive fixtures. Pupils develop their confidence further by participating in overseas music competitions. These experiences help pupils to develop high levels of self-confidence and self-control, particularly when performing in public.
- Visits to classrooms and scrutiny of workbooks show that pupils' skills in mathematics are also strong and develop well during their time in the school. Interesting problem-solving activities deepen pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts, and engage their interest because they are often related to real-life situations.
- Pupils of different nationalities, including bilingual pupils, make good progress. This is

because staff know them well and can plan interesting activities that meet their needs.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong gains in their literacy skills. This enables them to make good progress across the curriculum. The staff meet pupils' differing educational and care needs well.
- Nevertheless, pupils, particularly the most able, are not consistently set challenging tasks to enable them to achieve the very highest standards of which they are capable.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children in the early years department are enthusiastic learners because of the engaging opportunities planned by their teachers. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and adapt the learning to meet the needs and interests of the children. Because of effective teaching, incorporating a range of interesting activities, children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children enjoy working together and display high levels of maturity towards staff and each other. They are motivated and encouraged to explore new ideas in practical ways to enhance their understanding. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed counting shark's teeth and singing songs to help them remember the names for numbers.
- Leaders carefully and regularly track the progress of the children so that they can identify those who need extra support in specific areas to help them catch up. Because of careful tracking, children make good progress in the early years. Further work is planned to ensure that the system for tracking progress can analyse and compare the needs of all children.
- Adults' consistent expectations across the early years mean that routines are established quickly so that children can become more independent, for example, taking responsibility for their own belongings.
- Most children enter the early years at typical levels of development for their age. They settle quickly because the children's social and emotional skills are high priorities. At the end of their time in the early years department, children are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Behaviour is good in this area of the school. Children cooperate and negotiate with one another successfully, both indoors and outdoors.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. There is an accurate view of the strengths of the provision and of areas that need further development. All necessary actions are taken to support children and their families where their circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- There are good procedures to enable the staff to get to know children, and their families, before they start at school. Adults and teachers build effective relationships with parents, other agencies and partners to support learning at home.
- Safeguarding practices meet all the relevant independent school standards and the statutory requirements of the early years are also met.
- Leadership of the early years provision is effective. The leader understands the children's learning well. She, together with other adults, checks individual children's progress

carefully. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that staff need to analyse the performance of different groups of children more thoroughly so that the most able children achieve their full potential.

## Sixth form provision

**Good**

- The provision in the sixth form is good.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and, as a result, are able to motivate students to make good progress and achieve well in the Abitur and IB examinations. As a result of good teaching, students achieve well.
- Students thoroughly enjoy their time in the sixth form. They develop good academic and personal skills which enable them to learn cooperatively. They engage well in learning activities and extended projects, and are motivated to do well. Students make good use of new technologies to access online resources within their research assignments. The extended projects are a major contributor to their success in gaining places at prestigious universities. Teachers provide helpful advice on students' work. The students who spoke with an inspector commented favourably on the helpful support they receive from their teachers.
- The well-balanced sixth-form curriculum enables all students to acquire a broad range of skills and experiences. The curriculum is well tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of students, including those who find learning less exciting. Between the Abitur and IB courses, a wide range of subjects are available. The curriculum progressively and effectively develops students' personal well-being, enabling them to become confident and articulate learners. Although the most able students are served well, opportunities are occasionally missed across the curriculum to ensure that they always acquire the depth of understanding of which they are capable.
- Students conduct themselves well in classrooms and around the school. Relationships between staff and students and between students themselves are very positive.
- All students engage in a range of voluntary activities in the community. For example, they host and organise the annual charity dinner at which they work as waiting staff and provide the entertainment for parents and school staff. They also organise regular fun runs in Richmond Park. The money raised at this event is used well to support school charities.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and have been effective in securing increasingly strong outcomes for students. Students' satisfaction with the sixth-form provision is shown by the fact that almost all of Year 11 pupils move on to Year 12. In 2017, the proportion of students staying in school to move up from Year 12 into Year 13 was above average. The careers education and guidance are of good quality. This, together with interesting work-experience placements, personalised support and good teaching, prepares students well for their futures.
- In 2017, of those students who left the school, two thirds entered well-known universities based in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA. The remaining third took the opportunity to travel or work abroad.
- Students continue to develop the tolerance and respect for others' beliefs and lifestyles seen in the earlier year groups. They have set up a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender



group in the school with the support of staff. Students reported that bullying is minimal and would be dealt with rapidly were it to occur.

## School details

Unique reference number	102945
DfE registration number	318/6070
Inspection number	10035787

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	881
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	72
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	German School Association Ltd
Chair	Jan-Peter Weiland
Headteacher	Christian Nitschke
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,100
Telephone number	020 8940 2510
Website	<a href="http://www.dslondon.org.uk">www.dslondon.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@dslondon.org.uk">info@dslondon.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–19 June 2014

## Information about this school

- The German School in London is a non-selective independent school for boys and girls aged from three to 19 years. The school opened in 1971 and is registered to admit up to 900 pupils. It is housed in modern purpose-built accommodation set in extensive grounds in Richmond-upon-Thames.
- The school serves the German-speaking community in London. The German School

London is part of a system of 140 German schools abroad. Most pupils come from Germany, Austria or Switzerland, although, in all, 35 nationalities are represented in the school.

- The language of instruction is mainly German and the pupils follow, from age six to 16, the Baden-Württemberg curriculum that leads to the Mittlere Reife Prüfung (the German equivalent to GCSE examinations). Sixth-form students follow the German International Abitur and the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma programme as a dual qualification.
- The school caters for pupils aged three to 19 and is registered for up to 900 pupils. Currently there are 881 pupils on roll. This total is made up as follows: 125 children in the early years, 289 pupils in primary phase, 395 pupils in secondary and 72 students in the sixth form.
- The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. All pupils are bilingual to some extent, with just under one in 10 pupils being fully bilingual by the age of 14.
- The school supports just over one in 10 pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are no pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- The school has been granted exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage, and so these aspects were not inspected.
- The current headteacher has been in post since August 2016, and the commercial director joined the school in August 2017.
- The school 'aims to develop pupils' linguistic abilities to the full in both English and German'.
- The school was last inspected in June 2014, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- Off-site provision is made available for pupils to attend swimming at Putney Leisure Centre, Dryburgh Road, Putney, London SW15 1BL.
- When they leave, most students gain places at universities in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and the USA.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups and subjects, in almost all cases jointly with senior staff. They spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- There were 39 responses to Parent View and 20 text comments from parents. Inspectors considered the school's analysis of its own survey of the views of pupils and parents. Inspectors also took into account the 52 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors held discussions with seven directors, as well as senior and middle leaders and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed key documents and policies, including those relating to safeguarding, to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. They scrutinised pupils' books and the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Harvey	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
David Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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