

# SIAL

154–156 Holland Park Avenue, London W11 4UH

## Inspection dates

16–18 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have enhanced the curriculum and sharpened the school's assessment systems. They have secured improvements in teaching, pupils' outcomes and personal development. Consequently, much of the school's work is outstanding.
- Teachers use ongoing assessment information to plan challenging activities that meet the needs and interests of pupils. Pupils gain deep knowledge across a broad range of subjects.
- Pupils make outstanding progress across subjects, many of which they learn in both English and Italian.
- Through the curriculum and many enrichment activities, leaders take highly effective action to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils gain a sound understanding of the different cultures, faiths and lifestyles found in modern life, particularly in Britain and Italy.
- Pupils behave extremely well and have excellent attitudes to learning. Their attendance is high.
- As a result of the high levels of pastoral care and staff vigilance, pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. Members of staff take excellent care of pupils' well-being.
- Effective leadership of the early years ensures that the curriculum, teaching and support help children make strong progress academically and socially. Leaders do not, however, use the outdoors well enough to enhance children's learning and physical development.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's work. They challenge and support leaders effectively. They make a strong contribution to developing and improving the school.
- Governors and school leaders have not made sure that the school is compliant with all of the independent school standards. They quickly addressed most unmet standards that were identified at the start of the inspection. Leaders are now dealing with the remaining unmet standards.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by leaders keeping abreast with the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance, and making sure that the school routinely meets all of the independent school standards and other requirements.
- Improve early years provision by making better use of the outdoors for promoting children's learning, including in developing their gross motor skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors are ambitious. They strive to provide a high-quality bilingual education that prepares young people to be responsible members of society. Since the previous inspection, they have secured many improvements, leading to outstanding teaching, pupils' outcomes and personal development.
- Leaders have created a culture where pupils and members of staff feel valued and committed to the school's vision. Parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey, and who spoke with inspectors, were overwhelmingly positive. A comment typical of those made was: 'Children go to school always very happy and I am surprised how much they learn, and all in two languages. This school is amazing!'
- Senior leaders regularly check teachers' planning to make sure that they use assessment information to formulate activities that meet the needs of all pupils. During weekly reviews, leaders visit all classes to check the quality of teaching. They use the information to identify teachers' training needs, and they give them useful feedback on how to improve their pedagogy. Leaders use regular appraisals for staff to hold them to account. Teachers told inspectors that they find these processes fair, supportive and encouraging. As a result, teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes have improved, and are now outstanding.
- Leaders design the curriculum so that pupils study a range of subjects in English and Italian. They make effective use of specialist teachers, such as for French, art, drama and physical education. Since the previous inspection, leaders have sharpened their planning to define clear curriculum aims that incorporate elements of both the English and Italian national curriculum. They plan learning in a way that ensures that pupils build on their prior knowledge, review their prior learning and apply their skills in a variety of contexts across subjects.
- The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a strong understanding and tolerance of, as well as respect for, people with protected characteristics, under the 2010 Equality Act. Pupils learn about different faiths, and each year group makes an annual presentation at a school assembly on an aspect of one faith's celebrations. Pupils participate in a global UNESCO project of 'adopt a granny', enabling young and old to spend time with each other. Other pupils took part in an art project, which was based on the experiences of refugees travelling from Africa to Italy. These, and many more such activities, make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and their understanding of modern life in Britain and beyond.
- Phase leaders play a strong part in improving the school's work. The newly appointed phase leaders have made a very good start in maintaining and developing the excellent teaching and pupils' well-being.
- At the start of the inspection, it emerged that some of the independent school standards were not met. Inspectors found some non-compliance regarding the premises. Leaders took immediate action to rectify those shortcomings, and, by the end of the inspection, these standards were met. Although governors have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), inspectors found that the new chair's certificate had not been

countersigned by the Secretary of State. Leaders immediately contacted the Department for Education (DfE) to apply for the necessary approval in order to meet this requirement.

## **Governance**

- Governors bring a range of expertise to the board, including from the world of education, in this country and in Italy, law, finance, and public relations.
- Last year, governors commissioned an external consultant to attend their meetings to advise and help them develop their effectiveness. Governors visit the school frequently, volunteering to read with pupils, for example, and to speak with leaders, other staff and pupils. They are very knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work, and keep a close eye on pupils' progress.
- Governors have introduced robust systems of appraisal for senior leaders, and they hold them to account for improving the school. They support school leaders in their work, and they actively seek the views of parents.
- Governors make safeguarding and pupils' welfare a high priority. They vet external speakers, for instance, by arranging a formal meeting with any proposed guest speaker to check the appropriateness of their planned presentations.
- Governors have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leaders make sure that they keep themselves and all members of staff fully up-to-date with safeguarding guidance. Many members of staff undertake a higher level of training than is formally required.
- In this small school, members of staff know the pupils extremely well. Staff are vigilant, and report any changes in behaviour that raise concerns. Teachers check on how pupils are feeling. They use 'mood measures', which help pupils to articulate any worries they may have.
- The school arranges workshops for parents on safeguarding issues, such as the dangers of multimedia. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about a range of potential dangers and how to keep safe in different situations.
- Documentation shows that there are rigorous systems and procedures for record-keeping, reporting, and working with parents and external agencies to keep pupils safe.
- The school publishes its safeguarding policy on its website. It has regard to current government requirements.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- The routinely outstanding teaching enables pupils to make substantial progress. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and teaching assistants are highly skilled.
- Teachers and other adults use assessment information to plan activities that meet the needs of pupils and challenge them to meet their potential. Teachers plan learning that

builds on pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills. They plan regular revision of core curricular learning aims. This helps pupils commit learning to their long-term memories. Pupils, therefore, develop skills in retrieving prior learning and applying their knowledge to solve problems in new situations.

- Strong support from teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils who join at different times to learn a new language. There is equally excellent support for those for whom English is an additional language, as there is for pupils who speak little Italian. As a result, pupils catch up quickly with their peers, and make outstanding progress across the curriculum.
- In line with the school policy, teachers give pupils regular written feedback on how they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. In addition, teachers and adults give pupils verbal feedback during lessons. Evidence in pupils' books shows that they learn from their mistakes, and they make notable gains in their learning.
- Regular homework contributes excellently to deepening pupils' learning and expanding their knowledge. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and to explore more deeply into the topics they learn in class. Teachers set pupils research projects during school time, and for the school holidays. Projects have included, for example, research on biodiversity and entering a national art competition to build a bridge from recycled materials.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- As pupils move through the school, they grow in self-esteem. They master at least two languages, moving seamlessly from one language to another. They confidently and articulately express their opinions, and they consider the views of their peers.
- Leaders place pupils' welfare at the heart of their work. Last year, they appointed a well-being supervisor who offers support for pupils and their families. In addition, leaders organised a meditation workshop for pupils, staff, governors and parents. In these ways, leaders pay excellent attention to ensuring pupils' emotional and mental well-being.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. Pupils and parents say that the school community feels like a family. Records confirm that bullying incidents are extremely rare. Pupils know that should bullying occur, adults will immediately and effectively resolve the situation.
- Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility. Inspectors observed a meeting of the elected school council. Members seek the views of their classmates and make sensible and mature suggestions for improving the school. Pupils raise funds for local, national and international charities. The school choir sang at a Barnardo's fundraising event, for example.
- Pupils benefit from a range of visitors. These include people from different professions and business entrepreneurs. These visits help pupils to start thinking about their future career ambitions. A visit by the local Member of Parliament helped pupils to understand the workings of democracy in Britain, and to gain some understanding of current political issues, such as the Brexit debate.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They are confident to ask questions and research information. This is because they are typically eager to gain new knowledge and deepen their understanding. These excellent attitudes promote pupils' successful learning.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They keenly engage with them in conversation. Their behaviour in lessons and at social times is excellent. They take great pride in their school, and they look after the environment. Pupils make sure that the site is free of litter, for example.
- There have been year-on-year improvements in the rates of pupils' attendance since the previous inspection. As a result, attendance is now high.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, there have been constant improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- The school's assessments show that, last year, across year groups and subjects, including in English and mathematics, pupils made very strong progress.
- Inspection evidence confirms that current pupils are making substantial progress across subjects. This is because of highly effective teaching and support.
- Owing to small numbers, this report cannot comment on groups, as they are not statistically significant.
- With their excellent attitudes to learning, and outstanding outcomes, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stages in their education either in England or Italy.

## Early years provision

## Good

- Typically, children join the early years with skills typical for their age. There are, however, some fluent Italian speakers who are at the early stages of speaking English as a second language, and vice versa. Children make strong progress in all areas of learning. They are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers use assessments to check on children's progress and to plan the next steps of learning for each child. Teachers pay particular attention to developing children's language skills. They create additional resources to support children who are at the early stages of speaking English or Italian. In Reception, for example, inspectors saw children learning about the parts of a tree, and how trees grow. They taught the children in English and Italian, and children wrote in both languages. Children thus developed both scientific and linguistic knowledge. Later, children explored their creative talents by painting pictures of trees and the autumn leaves.
- Early years staff work effectively with parents. Parents told inspectors that they are delighted with their child's progress and development. They were particularly proud that their children are gaining proficiency in two languages. Parents work in partnership with

the school. They share information with early years staff about their child's activities and learning outside of school. Leaders arrange parental workshops to help parents support their child's learning and ensure their safety.

- Children feel safe and secure, and grow in confidence as they trust the adults who work with them. Their behaviour is excellent. They understand and follow routines, listen to each other, share, cooperate and take turns.
- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders make sure that teaching is routinely effective in helping children to develop academically and socially. They provide children with resources inside the school, covering a range of learning areas. These areas are stimulating and encourage children's inquisitiveness. The outdoor area, however, is underdeveloped and is not used as effectively to promote learning. Outdoor learning opportunities are limited, for example in supporting children to develop their gross motor skills.

## School details

Unique reference number	136747
DfE registration number	207/6000
Inspection number	10054297

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	Bilingual Italian and English School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Proprietor	La Scuola Italiana a Londra
Chair	Raffaella Celia
Co-Headteachers	Benjamin Mearhart Ines Saltalamacchia
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,700–£16,250
Telephone number	020 7603 5353
Website	<a href="http://www.sial.school">www.sial.school</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head.bm@sial.school">head.bm@sial.school</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–10 December 2015

## Information about this school

- SIAL (La Scuola Italiana a Londra) is a non-selective independent day school, registered for 160 pupils aged 3 to 14 years.
- The co-headteachers took up their posts soon after the previous inspection, following the retirement of the former headteacher.
- Since the previous inspection, the age range has extended from 3 to 11 years to 3 to 14 years. There have been other changes to staffing and leadership. Governors appointed middle leaders to take charge of the different phases and appointed an assistant headteacher. The current chair of governors took up her post in September 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.



- The school provides a bilingual English and Italian education. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school is a charitable organisation, which is managed by the governing body. Its mission is to create an Italian school, which is fully integrated into the British context.
- The school 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; and promote self-discipline whilst encouraging freedom of thought and creativity'.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in 12 classrooms, most of which were visited with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' work. They checked the school's information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors spoke with the co-headteachers, other leaders, teachers and other members of staff. They met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. Inspectors had formal discussions with a group of pupils, and various informal discussions with pupils during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and parents' additional written comments. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors considered the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work for compliance with the independent school standards.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Frances Hawkes

Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 20(5) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual who is the Chair of the school if–
  - 20(5)(a) the individual–
  - 20(5)(b)(i) where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check, countersigned by the Secretary of State where an application for such a check is made under section 113B(1) of the 1997 Act.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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