

London Steiner School

9 Weir Road, Balham, London SW12 0LT

Inspection dates

21 January 2020

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)

- The previous inspection found that the school's curriculum review had not been completed. The delivery of the curriculum was not well sequenced. In addition, the content taught was at the discretion of the class teacher. As a result, pupils developed gaps in their understanding. The inspection also discovered that plans did not contain clear enough information about how the aptitudes and needs of all pupils were taken into account.
- Leaders have not written suitable action plans to show how they intend to meet the unmet standards identified at the previous two inspections, in November 2018 and in July 2019. The school's action plans were rejected by the Department for Education (DfE). Leaders' actions taken to revise and construct a well-sequenced curriculum have had little impact.
- There has been too little progress since the previous inspection in July 2019 to improving the school's curriculum. Members of the college of teachers and the faculty present different and conflicting views on the school's current vision and plans for the curriculum. They are drawing on a range of sources to inform their curriculum. The Steiner curriculum is at the heart of the curriculum plans. However, other sources that have been chosen to inform the review of the curriculum have not been integrated into plans in a consistent or coherent way. The school has sought external advice from other schools to support curriculum development. However, some of this advice has been based on rhetoric about what Ofsted 'require' and has not helped leaders to focus on how they will design and implement their own curriculum.
- Blocks of planning remain the responsibility of individual class teachers. The plans do not take into account the needs of all learners. As a result, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge. It is unclear how work scrutinies, pupil progress meetings and assessments inform teachers' planning for pupils' various needs.
- Leadership of the early years curriculum is new and developing. In this phase, there is a clear rationale and understanding of what actions need to be taken to review the curriculum so that it connects all aspects of children's learning and meets the children's needs. Nonetheless, improving the early years curriculum was an area for improvement

following the Ofsted inspection in November 2018. Senior leaders have been too slow to ensure that improvements to the early years curriculum have been made and embedded.

- Members of the college of teaching and the faculty were not able to articulate with any clarity how they sequence their teaching to build on what all pupils know and can do. The lack of a well-planned curriculum was reflected in visits to lessons. Teachers do not build on pupils' prior knowledge to challenge them to achieve standards of which they are capable. For example, some of the oldest pupils in the school received guidance on writing which did not build well on the writing skills which were already evident in pupils' books. In a story session, some pupils struggled with comprehension of some of the imagery within a story and this was not addressed during the lesson. Gaps remain in pupils' understanding of the curriculum.
- Leaders have not made sure that all the requirements of the independent school standards in this part are met.

Paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had invested in new resources so that pupils could find information about different career pathways. However, leaders were unable to demonstrate that they had suitable curriculum plans in relation to careers guidance. In addition, leaders' oversight of the careers guidance was too limited.
- The curriculum offer in terms of careers guidance is well managed and there has been strong progress in this area since the previous inspection. The curriculum plans include weekly careers guidance lessons, which have had a positive impact on pupils. Pupils are well informed about different routes they can take to achieve their goals. They are confident and ambitious for their future. Staff have helped pupils to experience interview situations by holding mock interviews and giving precise feedback, which pupils value. Pupils are well aware of their potential and what they need to do to achieve their ambitions. Leaders are reflective in this aspect of the school's work and have sought further external advice to enhance curriculum plans even further. Leaders have effective oversight of the curriculum for careers guidance.
- Leaders have made sure that all requirements of the independent school standards in this part have been met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection in July 2019, the proprietor had established a leadership structure with clear lines of accountability. Trustees had actively sought out opportunities to learn from effective practice in other schools. Nevertheless, leaders' work had not impacted well enough on the quality of the curriculum and its implementation. Pupils did not learn and attain well.
- Leaders have not made the required improvements to the quality of the curriculum. The curriculum is not planned in a coherent way. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers do not use the information from pupils' assessments to adapt their plans to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Although more progress has been made to redesign the early

years curriculum, this work has not been completed in a timely manner. The failings of the curriculum were first identified in the Ofsted inspection in November 2018. Leaders have been too slow to structure a curriculum that enables all pupils to achieve well.

- Leaders have improved the curriculum for careers advice and guidance. Pupils receive regular information to inform their next steps.
- The safeguarding policy is detailed, up to date and published on the school's website. It complies with government guidance. Staff understand their duties in terms of safeguarding. They receive appropriate training. The single central record of staff recruitment checks is compliant and is regularly reviewed and monitored by leaders.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent schools standards are met. They have not demonstrated enough urgency in improving the quality of the curriculum and its implementation from the inspection in November 2018. The requirements of this paragraph have not been met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	101073
DfE registration number	208/6344
Inspection number	10132752

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Number of part-time pupils	9
Proprietor	The Waldorf School of South West London Ltd
Chair	Philip Martyn
Headteacher	Not applicable
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,320 to £9,400
Telephone number	020 8772 3504
Website	www.londonsteinerschool.org
Email address	office@londonsteinerschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	27–29 November 2018

Information about this school

- London Steiner School provides Steiner-based education for boys and girls aged three to 14. The school is located in a residential area of Balham, SW12. The premises consist of a former residential building converted for educational use.
- The school's aim is 'to provide a holistic education that nurtures the children to become well-rounded, confident, independently minded, creative thinkers who are authors of their own life, and well prepared for the needs of the 21st century'.

- The kindergarten provides early years education for children in the Nursery and Reception Years. Year 1 pupils are also taught in the kindergarten. Pupils enter the lower school in Year 2 (class 1) and leave upon completion of Year 9 (class 8).
- The school has no headteacher. Leadership of the school is provided by the college of teachers and the faculty.
- There is no pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan at the school.
- The school's last full standard inspection was in November 2018, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- This is the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to be inadequate in November 2018. The inspector was asked to focus on whether the school complied with particular requirements within Parts 1 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The first monitoring inspection took place on 4 July 2019. The school was judged to not comply with all of the independent school standards.
- Following the standard inspection in November 2018, the DfE required the school to prepare an action plan to outline how leaders plan to meet the unmet standards. The action plan was evaluated by Ofsted in March 2019, and was judged to be not acceptable. The DfE rejected the action plan. Following the monitoring inspection in July 2019, the DfE required the school to prepare another action plan. The DfE rejected this action plan.
- The inspector had a tour of the premises and visited lessons. The inspector held meetings with members of the faculty and of the college of teachers. The inspector checked that the single central record relating to staff recruitment checks was up to date.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum plans and met with a group of pupils from Years 6 to 8. The inspector looked at work in a range of pupils' books.
- The inspector reviewed the safeguarding policy and the single central record.
- The inspector reviewed a letter from one parent. There were no recent responses to Ofsted's survey for parents.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons; and
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

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 roles so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1 Quality of education

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-

- 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
- 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
- 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
- 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

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