

Inspection of The German School

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

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say this school is a community where they get along with one another well. They are happy to play and socialise with pupils of different ages and to help one another. This happens during the school day as well as in after-school activities.

Leaders have established high expectations for pupils' learning. This is especially clear in the sixth form and early years, where the rich curriculum enables pupils to learn exceptionally well. Leaders also aim to ensure that all pupils leave the school fluent in German and English. This is because they want pupils to have the choice to further their education in either language.

From the very start of school, children are encouraged to discuss their feelings with each other. Pupils are confident sharing their thoughts in classroom discussions. In the secondary school, leaders consider pupils' views on a range of issues. For example, pupils vote for the teachers they want to report concerns or worries to. Pupils feel well cared for and safe in school.

Pupils are taught about different types of bullying, and they discuss any incidents with their teacher. Pupils learn how to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others. As a result, pupils learn to manage their own behaviour and bullying is rare. When it does occur, teachers resolve it quickly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a programme of learning that is broad and ambitious from the early years through to the sixth form. In the early years, children get off to an excellent start. The curriculum places a strong focus on language development and communication, in both German and English. Children quickly become confident talking about their views and the world around them, and use a rich range of vocabulary when doing so.

The early years curriculum also prepares children very well for learning to read. The approach to early reading is ambitious. Pupils initially learn to read in German and then apply their learning to read English. By Year 3, pupils are reading accurately and fluently in both German and English. For example, in Year 3, pupils confidently analyse free-verse poetry and discuss rhyme, alliteration and onomatopoeia in English texts.

In the sixth form, all students continue to study a broad range of subjects. This includes German, English, mathematics, science and the arts. The demanding curriculum enables students to flourish. They produce work of a consistently high standard in a range of subjects. Leaders know the clear end points of knowledge that students must achieve at the end of their studies. This knowledge is clearly sequenced so that students build on their learning step by step. As a result, students can use their knowledge to complete more-complex tasks as they progress through the curriculum. For example, in history, students learn about ancient Greece and

democracy and then apply this knowledge when they study the failure of democracy in Weimar Germany.

Staff regularly check if pupils have understood the key knowledge that they have recently been taught. Teachers do this in a variety of ways, for example with written tests and oral presentations. However, apart from in the early years and sixth form, the curriculum is not delivered in a way that enables pupils to recall and practise some essential learning taught in previous years. Sometimes, teachers' checks on pupils' learning do not establish whether pupils have remembered long-term important ideas taught in previous year groups. This affects how well, over time, pupils secure detailed knowledge of some subject content.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access the full range of subjects. Leaders are quick to identify pupils' needs with the support of external agencies. Leaders work with teachers, therapists, parents and carers, and pupils to create support plans for pupils with SEND. Leaders also work closely with subject leaders so pupils' needs are known in advance and can be planned for.

Pupils are polite and manage their behaviour well. They are focused in lessons and are keen to learn. They listen to teachers and fellow pupils with respect. Leaders invest time in teaching pupils their expectations for behaviour. As a result, pupils are mature and reflect on their actions. Learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils enjoy attending many activities outside lessons. These range from sports clubs and working on the school magazine to sixth-form students organising a youth peace day in response to the war in Ukraine. Pupils learn about different world religions and how to respect different groups in society. Pupils practise democracy in their class council discussions. Leaders have implemented the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education effectively.

Pupils receive extensive careers advice and support. Leaders encourage pupils with their aspirations for when they leave school. This can be to support pupils to attend a sixth form at 16 years old, or to go to a German university, or a UK or other international university, at 18 years old. A careers fair, work experience and guest speakers also provide pupils with information about the world of work.

The proprietary body has put in place effective arrangements to oversee leaders' work. This primarily consists of a local governing body made up of parents. Governors use a range of professional skills to support and challenge leaders. They meet regularly and as a result know the school well. They have a good understanding of the German education system as well as the independent school standards.

Leaders and the proprietary body make sure that the school complies with all the independent school standards and with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The school also complies with the statutory welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff know they have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff are trained and they know how to report any concerns they may have. Leaders are aware of their local context and the issues pupils in the school may face. They work closely with external agencies to make sure they get the support pupils need.

The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is published on the school's website. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, both physically and online. Pupils are also taught about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. They know who to report concerns to and they trust staff to respond swiftly.

The safeguarding policy incorporates the latest statutory guidance and is made available to parents on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Prior to the sixth form, leaders have not established a consistent routine for teachers to check what pupils know and remember of their learning in previous years. This means that pupils do not always have strong building blocks for their future learning. Leaders should ensure that helpful approaches are in place to check what pupils remember from previous years' learning as well as from current topics.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	102945
DfE registration number	318/6070
Local authority	Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number	10226769
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	823
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	83
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	German School Association Ltd
Chair	Jan-Peter Weiland
Headteacher	Claudia Wolff-Lieser
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,750
Telephone number	020 8940 2510
Website	www.dslondon.org.uk
Email address	info@dslondon.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 April 2018

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's most recent standard inspection took place in April 2018, when the school was judged good in all areas.
- Leaders do not use make use of alternative providers.
- The school serves the German-speaking community in London and those who wish their children to have a bilingual education in German and English. The German School London is part of a system of 140 German schools abroad.
- The language of instruction is mainly German, and the pupils follow, from age six to 18 years, the Baden-Württemberg curriculum. Most pupils complete the German International Abitur at the end of their education at 18 years old and some complete the International Baccalaureate diploma programme as a dual qualification.
- The school aims for all pupils to become fluent in both German and English by the time they finish school and for them to be able to progress to further education in either German- or English-speaking institutions.
- The school has a Kindergarten class and pre-school for three- to six-year-olds. The school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since November 2021.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the commercial director, headteacher, senior teachers and other staff. Inspectors met with the chair and other members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, science and history. Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning, and met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in other subjects, including French, politics and geography.

- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from the early years, primary and secondary phases of the school, including the sixth form. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes was observed.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and staff workload. Inspectors looked at staff, parent and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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