

Inspection of La Petite Ecole Française

73 St Charles Square, London W10 6EJ

Inspection dates:

22 to 24 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly, welcoming school. They learn a broad range of subjects in French and English. Pupils particularly enjoy the many clubs available, such as gardening, drama, pottery, martial arts and chess. The oldest pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their recent residential trip to Edinburgh.

Staff expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Children get off to a strong start in the early years. As they work their way through the school, they follow the full French national curriculum. Pupils learn a wide range of knowledge and skills. They become fluent and enthusiastic readers and writers in both languages. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Pupils attend well and are punctual. Pupils are safe here. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with any incidents appropriately. Pupils quickly learn to get along with each other and how to manage their emotions when things go wrong. They are positive about their learning and want to do well. However, sometimes they do not behave well enough. This is because there is not a clear and consistent system of rewards and sanctions.

Almost all parents and carers contributing to Ofsted Parent View would recommend the school. Most parents said how pleased they are with the school's work. Nevertheless, some expressed concerns about the effectiveness of leadership.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It covers all the required areas of learning. Pupils achieve well throughout the school.

Staff know children in the early years well. They have strong relationships with parents and ensure that children's well-being is prioritised. There is a clear focus on building children's self-esteem and developing their skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. Classrooms are vibrant and well resourced. Children respond well to clear routines. They learn to behave kindly to each other. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Leaders have planned the curriculum thoughtfully. Teachers' careful use of assessment ensures that pupils learn the French education system's requirements. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to debate, share their opinions, and consider philosophical questions. Pupils listen well to each other and often think deeply about their learning.

Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and skills successfully, including through problem-solving tasks. Pupils quickly learn to work independently and with their peers. They think carefully and work with each other to find solutions before asking for an adult's help. Pupils enjoy the thematic projects that connect subjects, including the arts and humanities. These help pupils to broaden their knowledge and

understanding. Subjects and activities such as dance, singing, music and swimming enhance the curriculum further.

Staff prioritise pupils' reading throughout the school. Even though leaders have not provided the teachers of English with up-to-date and relevant training, these teachers make sure that pupils are taught to read. Most pupils are fluent readers in English and French before they reach Year 6. Pupils read expressively and enthusiastically. They enjoy reading for pleasure in both languages. Teachers quickly identify and provide support to the very few pupils who need it. This ensures that these pupils catch up quickly.

Leaders do not have a strong enough understanding of how to identify and support the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, those pupils with education, health and care plans are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants. Despite the lack of training, staff provide effective support to these pupils and meet their needs.

Class teachers have established routines which are usually understood and followed by pupils. However, expectations for pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. Leaders have not written and implemented a suitable behaviour policy. Staff have not been trained to understand the school's approach to rewards and sanctions. This leads to differences in the way behaviour is managed. Sometimes, pupils misbehave or disrupt learning in lessons. These behaviours are not dealt with consistently well. Pupils know that they can misbehave in some areas of the school, and sometimes do. Most pupils spoken to said that low-level disruption sometimes affects their learning.

The school's focus on pupils' personal development is a strength. Pupils are taught to be respectful and open-minded. They regularly learn about cultural diversity. For example, parents are invited into the school to speak to pupils about their cultural heritage. Pupils are taught about the many ways in which people are different. They learn about how to stay safe, including online. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society. The school offers more than 20 after-school clubs and staff organise frequent educational trips and visitors. During this year, pupils created their own books during a workshop led by a published author. A visit from a Paralympian helped pupils to learn about overcoming barriers in life. Visits to museums, farms and forests are linked to the topics pupils learn.

Leaders ensure that relationships education is taught in line with the statutory requirements. They put their policy online during the inspection. However, parents were not consulted about the school's intended approach to teaching relationships education.

Leaders, including the proprietor, have an underdeveloped understanding of the independent school standards, and other statutory guidance issued in the United Kingdom. The proprietor has not put in place appropriate arrangements to check all aspects of the school, including whether the independent school standards are consistently met. Leaders completed a lot of work during this inspection to ensure

compliance with some of the requirements. Some of the independent school standards are not met.

Leaders' evaluation of the school's work is too generous and improvement plans lack rigour. Leaders do not provide staff, especially part-time specialist teachers and teachers of English, with suitable professional training. This has led to a lack of consistency in managing pupils' behaviour. It has also affected how well staff identify the needs of pupils who may have SEND. Staff were generally positive about the way in which leaders support them. They reported no concerns about their workload or well-being.

The school is compliant with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are trained in line with statutory requirements. Staff are vigilant and know who to report concerns to. Leaders follow up any concerns appropriately and ensure that suitable actions are taken to keep pupils safe. In some instances, aspects of leaders' record-keeping lack detail and rigour, for example documenting actions taken in light of concerns. This is because leaders' understanding of the latest 'Keeping children safe in education' guidance is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, these weaknesses do not compromise pupils' safety.

The school's safeguarding policy is available online and has been updated to reflect the most recent statutory guidance. Pre-employment vetting checks are carried out in accordance with requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The proprietor has not established suitable arrangements to oversee the work of leaders. Leaders do not know about the range of statutory guidance which they should understand and ensure compliance with. The proprietor should realise their plans to introduce governance and strengthen leadership. They should ensure that leaders know and understand all the requirements and make sure these are all met, including all the independent school standards.
- Leaders have not written a suitable behaviour policy. Staff do not have a behaviour management procedure to follow. This means that pupils' behaviour is managed inconsistently and so pupils' behaviour is variable. Leaders should write a suitable behaviour policy that clearly outlines the school's intended approach to rewarding positive and sanctioning negative behaviours. They should train all staff to implement the policy consistently. Leaders should check that the policy is applied throughout the school.

- Leaders do not provide staff with a consistent programme of professional development. Some teachers, such as external specialist teachers, receive no training at all. Teachers, such as those responsible for teaching reading in English, rely on training they had many years ago. This means that staff do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their teaching or their subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that professional training is provided. This training should include all staff and enable them to have a consistent understanding of how to implement the school's policies and procedures. Training should include the identification of and support for pupils with SEND, the management of behaviour, and subject-specific training, as required.
- Leaders have not consulted with parents about the school's relationships education policy. They should consult parents to develop and review their relationships education policy, ensuring that it meets the needs of pupils and parents' views are taken into account.

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	100545
DfE registration number	207/6387
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10210756
Type of school	Primary day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Devika Malik
Headteacher	Fabiola Heitz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£9,900
Telephone number	020 8960 1278
Website	www.lapetiteecolefrancaise.co.uk
Email address	lapetiteecolefrancaise@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	28 February–2 March 2018

Information about this school

- La Petite Ecole Française is an independent French primary day school that follows the French national curriculum. The majority of pupils speak French as their first language.
- The school caters for pupils aged three to 11 years and is located in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- The school is part of the AEFÉ (Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger) and has homologation status that confirms that the school follows the learning objectives of the French curriculum.
- Since the previous inspection, the Department for Education approved the school's request to make a material change to its registration agreement. As a result, the school's maximum capacity is now 190 pupils.
- The headteacher took up her position in September 2021. The deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2022. The school has a sole proprietor. There are no arrangements in place for governance.
- The school is exempt from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework.
- The school provides pupils with care and clubs before and after school. The school's staff provide this additional support. In addition, four external organisations are commissioned to provide some of the after-school clubs.

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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- This standard inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the curriculum leader, visited some lessons, spoke to teachers, and spoke to pupils about their learning and their work. For the reading deep dive, the lead inspector also heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence to consider pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. They spoke with a range of pupils.

- Inspectors met with the sole proprietor and headteacher throughout the inspection. They also met with several staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the pre-appointment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards and the early years welfare requirements.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sean Flood

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

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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