

Inspection of SIAL

154-156 Holland Park Avenue, London W11 4UH

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the positive working relationships that they have with staff and their peers. They feel safe and are kept safe. This is because staff care for them well and support pupils to behave in an exceptional way. Incidents of bullying are rare. Staff take concerns seriously and deal with any issues that arise effectively. Pupils are courteous, polite and keen to learn. For example, they debate and discuss complex issues with maturity.

Leaders are ambitious for, and have high expectations of, all pupils. The curriculum is rich and enables pupils to develop an understanding of both Italian and English culture. Extensive enrichment opportunities are provided to achieve this, such as the recent celebration of 'Carnevale'.

Leaders provide a variety of opportunities for pupils to take on additional leadership responsibilities. For example, pupils have organised a lemonade sale to raise money for a Ukrainian charity. Similarly, the eco-committee has introduced composting in the school grounds. Pupils are keen to make a positive contribution to the school community. For instance, members of the school council have purchased additional games for pupils to play at breaktime. Pupils regularly set up clubs and societies to develop their own interests, including an origami club.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum that combines content from both the English and Italian national curriculums. In most subjects, leaders have identified and sequenced the key ideas and subject knowledge that they want pupils to learn over time. For example, in mathematics, children in the early years learn to use a range of vocabulary such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'. This helps them later on in the curriculum when they learn to convert different units of weight and mass. Similarly, in science, children in the early years learn about different life cycles by planting seeds and measuring plant growth. Older pupils subsequently draw on what they remember about this when planning and completing practical work in science.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have not thought as carefully about the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that pupils do not develop as deep an understanding in these subjects over time.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They ensure that the tasks and activities set typically match the ambition of the curriculum. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. This helps to identify and address any misconceptions that arise.

Pupils enjoy reading and have the opportunity to read regularly in both English and Italian. All staff have been trained in how to use the school's phonics programme. Children learn to read from the start of the Reception Year. Leaders provide appropriate support for those pupils who need help to catch up in reading. Leaders

ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to become fluent, confident and enthusiastic readers.

Leaders are vigilant to the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have had appropriate training and seek advice and guidance to ensure that they can support pupils effectively. Important information is communicated with teachers. This ensures that they make appropriate adaptations to support pupils with SEND to access the planned curriculum wherever possible.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to learn and talk about all that they know and remember. Behaviour around the school is courteous and respectful. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and rightly proud of their school.

The extensive provision for pupils' broader development is of exceptional quality. The curriculum has been designed to help pupils learn about key issues. For example, teaching covers the importance of physical and emotional health and respectful relationships. This begins in the early years where children learn to take turns and play well together. Leaders have ensured the curriculum for relationships and sex education reflects the requirements of the statutory guidance.

Pupils appreciate the range of additional opportunities available to them. All pupils take part in school shows, such as the recent production of Pinocchio. The curriculum is enriched through a programme of educational outings and visitors. For example, pupils have recently interviewed their local MP and visited parliament as part of learning about the role of democracy.

Leaders engage well with parents and carers, who come into school on a regular basis. For example, they read with their children and have opportunities to share their experience and expertise in different areas.

The chair of the proprietor board and those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They have ensured that all the independent school standards and the requirements of the early years foundation stage continue to be met.

Governors are confident in holding school leaders to account and, as a result, have a secure understanding of many aspects of the school's effectiveness. However, their understanding of the quality of the curriculum and its impact on pupils' learning is less well developed.

Staff appreciate the opportunities that they have to develop professionally and the support that they receive to manage their workload and well-being.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a positive culture of safeguarding. Appropriate training ensures that staff are vigilant and understand how to report any concerns that may arise. Leaders make appropriate and timely referrals to outside agencies when required.

The curriculum has been designed to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online. This includes understanding healthy relationships and an age-appropriate understanding of important issues such as consent.

Leaders and those responsible for governance maintain effective oversight of safeguarding procedures. The published policy on the school's website complies with current guidance. Appropriate pre-employment checks are made on all staff. Leaders have ensured the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage continue to be met.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a small number of subjects, the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember has not been clearly identified. This means that pupils do not develop as deep an understanding in these areas. Leaders should ensure that the ideas that pupils need to secure are identified in these subjects. This will better support pupils to learn and remember more in different subjects.
- The proprietor and those responsible for governance have an underdeveloped understanding of the quality of the curriculum and its impact on pupils' learning. This means they are not fully aware of the priorities for improvement, and therefore they cannot hold leaders to account fully for their work in this area. Leaders must ensure that they share information about the quality of the curriculum with those responsible for governance. This will enable them to support and challenge leaders and to ensure that the priorities for improvement are appropriate.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136747
DfE registration number	207/6000
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10254658
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	77
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	La Scuola Italiana a Londra
Chair	Alberto Pravettoni
Headteacher	Ines Saltalamacchia
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,700 to £16,400
Telephone number	020 76035353
Website	https://sial.school/
Email address	Head.is@sial.school
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 October 2018

Information about this school

- SIAL (La Scuola Italiana a Londra) is a non-selective independent day school, registered for 160 pupils aged three to 14 years.
- At the time of the inspection, all pupils on role were aged three to 11 years. Leaders plan to cater for older pupils again in the future.
- The school provides a bilingual English and Italian education. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The current headteacher was one of two co-headteachers in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of staff.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of the board of proprietors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, early reading, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including records of governance.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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