

L'Ecole Bilingue Élémentaire

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	213/6393
Unique Reference Number	134192
Inspection number	299747
Inspection dates	17 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

L'Ecole Bilingue Élémentaire is an independent, non-denominational school for boys and girls which opened in September 2006. It is a sister school to L'Ecole Bilingue Maternelle in South Kensington which opened in 2004, which takes pupils from the age of 3 to 6 years. This second school was opened by the proprietors mainly at the request of parents to extend the age range to 11 years. There are currently 20 pupils on roll in two classes aged 6 to 8 years. The school is located in recently converted premises close to Little Venice in west London. Both schools were opened with the purpose of providing a bilingual education by immersion. This is a method of foreign language instruction in which the curriculum is taught through both the chosen languages, in this case French and English. This is the first inspection since the school opened.

Evaluation of the school

L'Ecole Bilingue Élémentaire has made a purposeful start. The quality of education is good. The pupils are fully immersed in both French and English languages and alternate confidently between the two, enjoying aspects of both. As a result of using a well-planned combination of both the French and English curriculum and good teaching, pupils make good progress. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. They are happy at school and feel part of the small community. The pupils are very well cared for in an attractive learning environment, which combines the best of both cultures. Apart from appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, the school meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. The school provides both the French and English approved curricula successfully. The French National Curriculum is effectively taught, as was confirmed by the inspection in October 2006 by the education services of the French embassy in London. The French curriculum is divided into three key stages called 'Cycles'. Cycle 2 is taught in L'Ecole Bilingue Élémentaire for the current age range of 6-8 years. As the school grows and takes pupils up to the age of 11, Cycle 3 will be taught. This planned curriculum is already in place and meets the requirements of

the French government. It is planned that the school will grow from the lower age range upwards with one new class each year. The school has devised appropriate plans to show how it will develop in the future as it grows.

The English National Curriculum for both Key Stages 1 and 2 is followed for literacy, numeracy, science and geography; these subjects are taught in English. Mathematics, history and French are taught through the French curriculum in French. Additional subjects such as physical education, information and communication technology, art, design and technology, personal, social and health education (PSHE), music and drama are currently taught in both languages. The curriculum emphasises the importance of speaking, listening and numeracy. In this way the school fulfils its aims of immersing the pupils in the language and they alternate easily between both languages. PSHE is integrated throughout the curriculum. There is specialist sports teaching using local sports facilities.

The school has worked hard to develop its specialist curriculum using both the French and English curricula and this has resulted in a range of schemes of work, which ensures that the pupils have a comprehensive coverage of all subjects. The school is aware that continual monitoring will need to be maintained to ensure its effectiveness as it develops through the age range. This combined curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and enables them to make good progress in their learning. For such a new school the pupils have already been on several educational visits to extend the curriculum and are planning more for the future. They have visited *The Lion King* musical and the local environment as part of their studies.

The teaching is good and has some outstanding features. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to engage the pupils in active learning. The lessons are mostly conducted at a brisk pace, especially those in French, which are run using French methods. Pupils concentrate and respond positively to the kind, encouraging staff. There is a good combination of structured lessons for subjects such as English and mathematics, with more investigative learning, as for example in science, where pupils learned about the properties of materials. Teachers know their pupils very well and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They use this knowledge to plan their lessons and match the activities to pupils' capabilities. Pupils enjoy their learning, especially in music, where they join in very enthusiastically in singing in both languages, preparing for the summer concert for their parents. Pupils cope very well with the transition between the two languages and they are very clear about why they are learning both. Many pupils belong to French families spending a relatively short time in London and they are continuing with the French curriculum in preparation for their return to France. Other parents wish their children to be proficient in both languages and possibly to then attend the French school in London. The majority of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the school.

Parents are kept very well informed about the progress and attainment of their children. The school provides very detailed assessment information. The subjects

taught in French are assessed and recorded regularly using French methods, which are very detailed and specific. The assessment of the English National Curriculum is based on continuous assessment. This information, which includes helpful detail to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work, is combined into two detailed written reports. These are shared with parents twice each year.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. It is a small, friendly community where all the individuals are known very well by the staff and nurtured with care. Pupils are self-confident. Their attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils are aware of the simple school rules. They report that they like the school and say that '*it is fun learning in French and English*'. They are happy at school, enjoy the playtimes and the wholesome school lunch which they eat together.

The school is non-denominational. In line with French education, which is secular, there is no collective worship and no religious education taught. However, pupils are introduced to other cultures and faiths. The school tries to ensure that each pupil's cultural background is celebrated through a range of activities, such as *Galette des Rois* and fun activities for Easter, when a *chocolatier* came to the school and helped them make a chocolate rabbit.

The pupils are made aware of others less fortunate than themselves and take part in raising money for charity, for example on the recent Red Nose Day. They have been on several visits in the locality and more are planned to extend their knowledge and understanding of public institutions and how the world around them functions.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Health and safety and behaviour policies are implemented effectively. The school is aware of the latest guidance for safeguarding children and staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding matters. All pupils are encouraged extremely well to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. The school is vigilant with regard to fire safety. All areas of the school have been risk assessed and detailed risk assessments are carried out before each visit outside school. Staff are trained in first aid, well-stocked first aid boxes are located where needed, and accidents are diligently recorded. Pupils are very well supervised at all times. The school fulfils its duties with regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are robust, and meet all current requirements.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located on the ground floor of the Welsh Church, which was converted for such use in 2006. The accommodation is spacious and the attractive classrooms are decorated with examples of pupils' work, celebrating their achievement. The building will accommodate the full age range up to 11 years as the school grows with a new class admitted each year. The building and outside area has been converted to a high standard. There is a suitable room for use when pupils are ill but this does not comply with regulations, as it has no running water supply. The proprietors live in an adjacent building, which was the former vicarage for the church; the ground floor rooms are used for administration, meetings and a library. There is a large grassed area and a paved play area beside the school.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents through a helpful brochure, informative website and daily communication book. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress through regular contact with staff and twice-yearly more formal extended meetings during which the detailed written reports are discussed.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a set of procedures, which meets the regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- continue to refine and monitor how the curriculum is planned and delivered across the two languages
- evaluate the impact of the extension in age range on the curriculum and on teaching .

School details

Name of school	L'Ecole Bilingue Elémentaire		
DfES number	213/6393		
Unique reference number	134192		
Type of school	French/English Bilingual Primary School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2006		
Age range of pupils	6-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 12	Girls: 8	Total: 20
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees	£6,600		
Address of school	St David's Welsh Chruch St Mary's Terrace London W2 1SJ		
Telephone number	0207 8351144		
Email address	lecolebilingue@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Ms Veronique Serreira		
Proprietors	Ms Veronique Ferreira & Mr Franck Laurans		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton AI		
Dates of inspection	17 April 2007		