

Le Hérisson School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	205/6387
Unique Reference Number	100376
URN for registered childcare and social care	EY317246
Inspection number	329580
Inspection dates	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie

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). The inspection of childcare was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of registered provision¹ was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focussed principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Le Hérisson school is an independent nursery school opened in 1989 which caters for up to 64 children between two and six years of age. There are 64 pupils on roll, aged between two and five, of whom six are part-time. It operates under the auspices of *L'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger (AEFE)* through the French Embassy in London. The aim of the school is 'to offer a French education in a caring environment, which will encourage the growth and development of each child'. Activities are conducted in French with English as a second language. The school follows the French national curriculum while incorporating some English teaching. Most pupils leave to take up places in independent French Primary Schools in London. It was last inspected by Ofsted in 2005 and by the French Inspectorate in May 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Le Hérisson School provides its pupils with an outstanding start to their education in a vibrant bilingual learning community. It has progressed since its last Ofsted inspection and fulfils the high praise given in its recent inspection by AEFE. Where the school has evaluated its own performance, leaders have an accurate view of its work. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the children is outstanding. Pupils and parents hold the school in high regard. 'My child loves the class and the teachers.' It complies fully with the regulations for independent schools. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding, based on an outward looking, progressive approach and effective teamwork.

¹ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

Quality of education

Curriculum provision for children of all ages is outstanding. The school has worked extensively to develop high quality curriculum planning which combines the French *maternelle* curriculum with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), providing a high quality experience in keeping with the school's aims of bilingualism. Curriculum policy is clear; schemes of work are meticulously detailed and fully meet the needs of pupils. The principal language of instruction is French and most children come from bilingual families. Support in English is provided where necessary. The curriculum leads to children's outstanding progress through its variety of activity and the balance between skills, activities and languages. Children are taught writing skills from an early age, practising the control of pen and pencil which will enable them to write in a range of styles as they progress through the school. The curriculum includes a personal development programme, encouraging children to work cooperatively and appreciate how to learn. Information and communication technology (ICT) is available in classrooms providing extension work, which children can access independently.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage, including arrangements for the youngest children, is outstanding. The headteacher is a specialist in learning through play and has applied her expertise in the school's learning programmes. Learning through activities in art, music and games supports development in basic skills and an awareness of the world around them. There is provision for ICT and programmes which teach skills, such as manipulating a mouse, 'drag and drop' and selecting items.

Children make outstanding progress throughout the school. They make especially good progress in literacy, matching sounds and writing, learning the alphabet and extending this learning into new vocabulary. This is often consolidated by songs and rhymes, with children taking part with real enthusiasm. They make progress in printing lower and upper case letters and prepare to learn cursive handwriting through acquiring the control of pen and pencil. Children are at ease in both French and English and switch naturally from one to the other.

In numeracy, they learn to count in different ways, as dots, drawings and then to relate them to numbers expressed as figures. This enables them to progress to simple mental arithmetic. They use these numbers to express the date, the numbers present and absent at registration and similar practical tasks.

They can explain what they are doing and often use their understanding to help other children. They enjoy simple rewards, such as smiley faces and the responsibility for carrying out simple tasks. They enjoy learning and experience the joy of achieving. They learn rhymes and songs as an aid to memory.

In the Foundation Stage, they learn much through constructive play activities. They enjoy drawing, painting, collage and musical activities. They are remarkably focussed and have good control, for example, they make very little mess when using paint and glue. By four years of age, they are already beginning to acquire good literacy and

numeracy skills. They begin to develop skills in French and English together, each enriching the other. They are curious and have vivid imaginations.

Children's progress is made possible by outstanding teaching and assessment. Teaching is based on excellent planning, based on a sequence of varied activities always leading to clear outcomes. Teachers challenge children to achieve, always listen to their questions and comments, and build on them. Children are encouraged to respect the teacher or another child who is speaking. Every opportunity is taken to consolidate learning or to introduce new opportunities. Time is very well managed to ensure that children are always extending their skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well balanced between plenary, group and individual activities. Children are given responsibility to learn independently and organise activities, which leads to responsible behaviour and productive learning. Parents think that the school and learning environment is 'creative, inclusive and fun'

Assessment procedures are thorough and planned in keeping with the school's *Projet d'Ecole* leading to thoughtful, detailed information. A teachers' group has been at the heart of developing the scheme, which draws assessment information together each month and builds to a whole year view of each child. Reports are issued to parents every six months but an essential part of the scheme is the availability of the teachers and headteacher, in particular, to meet any parents to discuss their child's progress. There is, therefore, a constant flow of information and support between school and parents. Assessment information is used to plan lessons and provide support based on the needs of each individual.

Teaching and assessment in the EYFS is well organised, focussing on the child as a unique individual. Teachers join in with children in a variety of outdoor play activities, observing and assessing the impact of play in early learning. They make full use of limited outdoor play space. Children develop high quality relationships with adults and other children, which form the basis of their good learning practices. In the classroom teachers understand the limits of children's concentration, providing a variety of challenging activities, rest and snacks at appropriate times. Children are taught about exercise, safety on their way to the playground and healthy eating. Teaching secures outstanding early progress in literacy and numeracy.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils of all ages is outstanding. In keeping with the secular nature of French schools, religious studies do not appear on the curriculum. Children's attitudes to learning are exemplary, resulting in outstanding behaviour. They really enjoy their learning and are keen to come to school and take part in lessons. They relate well to other children and their teachers, treating them with respect and understanding and learning respect for others' ideas and feelings through play and lessons. They are creative and without inhibitions.

Children's social development is outstanding, for example, within school and through links with local primary schools. They work productively in groups and as a class,

supporting others and showing good commitment. They take on responsibilities in the classroom, helping with registration, daily information about the weather, and preparing the dining room for lunch. Excellent cultural development includes a wide range of visits (including theatre, concerts and art galleries), visitors including a Chinese visitor to celebrate Chinese New Year and joining in the celebration of Eid at the school.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Policy and practice is fully in place to ensure outstanding attention to children's welfare. All staff of the school are committed to the welfare, health and safety of the children. Children eat healthy snacks and school lunches, and learn about the need to follow a healthy diet from a visiting doctor. They take regular exercise both indoors and outside. Risk assessments are fully in place, including for the regular walks to the playground. Children follow instructions and understand why. Recruitment procedures fully meet regulations. Regulations concerning the suitability of the proprietor and staff are fully met. The single central record is in place. Child protection and first aid training and accreditation are fully in place. All procedures for fire safety are followed. Recommendations from the fire officer have been implemented, there are regular practice evacuations and appliances are regularly serviced.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children in the school come within the EYFS. The high quality of provision and outcomes for all, including the youngest children, is the result of exceptional leadership from the Headteacher who has focused her personal development on improving observation skills, play through learning and pupils' participation in their own learning. She has embedded an outward looking and progressive approach throughout the school by developing a team ethos and fostering the development of teachers' skills. As a result, children make outstanding progress in the five Every Child Matters outcomes in a caring, supportive environment. The school is receptive to constant dialogue with parents to create a valuable learning partnership. The school fully meets its aims to foster a vibrant bilingual learning community.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	✓			
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?	✓			
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	✓			
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?	✓			

School details

Name of school	Le Herisson School		
DCSF number	205/6387		
Unique reference number	100376		
EY URN (for registered childcare only)	EY317246		
Type of school	French maternelle		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1989		
Age range of pupils	2–6		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 30	Girls: 34	Total 64
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 4	Total: 6
Number of pupils aged 0-3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 6	Girls: 13	Total: 19
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 (day pupils)	£6450 - £6540		
Annual fees (childcare)	£1620		
Address of school	c/o Lower Ground Floor Rivercourt Methodist Church King Street London W6 9JT		
Telephone number	0208563 7664		
Fax number	0208563 7664		
Email address	beatrice.rios@laposte.net		
Headteacher	Mrs B Rios		
Proprietor	Mrs B Rios		
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie		
Dates of inspection	30 September 2008		