

# L'Ecole des Petits, Fulham

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

Age group: 3–7

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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<sup>1</sup>, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection which focused 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

L'Ecole des Petits is an independent day pre-preparatory and preparatory school situated in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. It was founded in 1977 by the current proprietors to provide a bilingual French/English education based on the French educational system. It is an 'école homologuée' that operates under the auspices of L'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger and it is registered for pupils aged from three to seven years. There are currently 127 pupils on roll, five of whom are under three; the majority who attend are within the Early Years Foundation Stage and 33 are aged from five to six years. These are the oldest pupils in the school and they are still within the age range of an 'école maternelle' (French nursery). The school welcomes bilingual pupils of diverse cultural heritages and 22 languages are represented in the school. Pupils are at various stages of bilingualism when they join the school and none has a statement of special educational needs. None receives public funding under the nursery voucher scheme. Central to the school ethos is the involvement of families in the pupils' education. The school is inspected annually by the French inspectorate. It was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2007.

## Evaluation of the school

L' Ecole des Petits provides an outstanding quality of education. Parents are very positive about the school's work and one expresses the views of many when saying, 'This is an exceptional school that provides a nurturing environment, as well as good discipline and a wonderful education, and my child could not be happier and more confident about going to school.' The school is led by a passionate team that has secured good improvements since the last inspection, as a result of which children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning and in their personal development. It has tightened its safeguarding procedures, which are now robust and contribute to the outstanding provision for children's welfare, health and safety. The school complies with all the regulations for independent schools. However,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

despite the exceptional quality of the provision and outcomes for the children, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good rather than outstanding because the school does not comply fully with two requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Quality of education

The curriculum, formerly judged to be good, has further improved and is outstanding across the age range. It is exemplary in its provision for the unique child, for bilingual education and for children's cultural and personal development. The leaders are highly successful in modifying the curriculum to meet the varying needs of children who are at various stages of bilingualism. This is achieved through the provision of two main strands of curriculum, the French and British sections, and of varying proportions of either French or English language teaching in each section. The modifications are determined according to termly reviews of the assignment of children to language groups based on continuous assessment of their progress and of their specific needs. Each child's learning journey is planned in close partnership with parents right from admission to the school and mapped through the 'cahier de vie' that records the continuum of the child's learning experiences in class and at home.

The school provides the French nursery curriculum which includes the six areas of learning of the English Early Years Foundation Stage. It acquires a vibrantly creative dimension through the inclusion of the 'projet d' école'. Over the last three years, staff have planned a wealth of activities across all areas of learning around the theme 'to be a citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. This has resulted in very stimulating learning experiences that place very high demands on children and enable them to make outstanding progress in their language and personal and creative development, as well as in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, when focusing on cultural diversity, each class turned their room into a country and children could 'travel' from country to country using their 'passport', learning in the process a wealth of features about a wide range of countries and producing posters of very high quality. Children explore numbers, space and measure with growing confidence as they take part in both pre-planned and spontaneous activities. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection with the purchase of interactive whiteboards and computers for the older children. All children have access to robots, cameras and tape recorders. Although the outside play areas are small in size and access is limited, the school makes every effort to develop and extend high quality learning opportunities. However, outdoor activities do not fully complement the outstanding range of indoor learning opportunities. Provision for physical development is good and includes weekly sessions of dance, music and movement and gymnastics in addition to other physical activities.

Teaching and assessment are good, with much that is outstanding. The school successfully involves staff in the evaluation of their teaching, which has recently resulted in improved provision for children who need support and a wider range of bilingual resources. The use of puppets, pop-up books, the well-resourced school library and visiting story-tellers all help to stimulate children's love of reading and the development of their speech and language, which is outstanding. Coordinators help to disseminate the best teaching practice across the school but not always sufficiently robustly. Teaching is characterised by excellent knowledge of the children and their needs, facilitated by the small-sized classes and informed by excellent assessments that are used to plan very effectively for the individual child. Teachers are skilful in listening to the children and promoting their language development and thinking by asking open questions and modelling high level vocabulary. Where the teaching is outstanding, it sets very clear learning objectives for each activity, frequently checks on each child's learning even if working within a group and ensures children remain highly engaged by asking a wide range of stimulating questions. Teachers use target setting and individual education plans effectively for children who need specific support. Classroom assistants support children's learning and welfare effectively. Staff establish excellent relationships based on respect for others and for the learning environment. They prepare stimulating classrooms that motivate children to learn, practise their independence and make choices, enabling them to flourish and excel. As a result, children of all ages make outstanding progress in their personal development and across the range of subjects.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children

The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has further developed since the last inspection and is outstanding. Children enjoy school highly and their attendance is good. A three-year-old child says, 'My teacher is lovely and is always nice to me.' Children's outstanding spiritual and moral development is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, excellent attitude to learning, keen sense of responsibility and high levels of self-confidence. They have good opportunities to develop their imagination during role play as their home corner areas are adapted in line with planned themes. Their high quality art work is attractively displayed around the school, further promoting their self-esteem. Provision for their cultural and multicultural education is exemplary, greatly enriched by the 'projet d'école' and a wide range of educational visits. An array of clubs further extends children's linguistic, creative and physical skills. Children develop very positive relationships and play and work harmoniously together.

Children make outstanding contributions to their school and global communities which enhance their social, thinking and communication skills and further develop their self-confidence. They are highly responsive in class. They have classroom responsibilities and prepare presentations for weekly assemblies. They participate in class events such as the 'recycle fashion show' and end-of-year shows attended by families. As the 'projet d'école' focused on environmental issues this year, children contributed to an exhibition that illustrated their work and raised their parents' awareness. They are working with the school towards Eco-school status. The

excellent basic skills they develop, coupled with their very high level of competence as bilingual independent learners or team workers, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.

## Safeguarding children's welfare, health and safety

Provision for children's welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has addressed the weakness highlighted in the last report and safeguarding arrangements are robust. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that all the required checks are carried out on staff to determine their suitability to work with children. These are recorded in a central register. All the essential policies aiming at minimising risks in all circumstances are in place and implemented consistently. The staff's understanding of their responsibilities is supported by a broad range of training. Children settle in quickly and feel very safe because of the exceptional care they receive. They demonstrate that they know how to keep themselves and others safe in class and on the playground. They develop a good understanding of how to be healthy because there is a high emphasis on hygiene routines and they are encouraged to eat healthily. The canteen provides well-balanced menus and multicultural dishes. Children enjoy the wide range of physical activities on offer and the older ones relish using the local park. They are encouraged to walk to school. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school is highly effective in ensuring that the provision meets the needs of the individual child exceptionally well and is meticulous in promoting the welfare of all children. Safeguarding procedures are robust. The leadership takes exceptional care in providing a very inclusive environment in which diversity is valued and celebrated. The very close partnerships between parents and the school and good leadership and management ensure that children's needs are identified early and regularly reviewed. As a result of exceptional care, outstanding curriculum and good teaching, children make outstanding progress in their learning, personal development and all the Every Child Matters outcomes. The school has highly effective systems in place to monitor the quality of its provision and of outcomes for children. A process of continuous assessment of each child's progress in the six areas of learning informs the planning of daily activities. This culminates in the completion of a detailed annual report as required by the French education system. The leaders can demonstrate that the information provided in these reports matches that required by the new English Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Furthermore, the leaders work in very close partnerships with the schools to which children are admitted when they leave L'Ecole des Petits and have agreed with them on a range of assessment information to be provided. However, the school does not transfer this information on the English Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles for children coming up to the age of five and submit them to the local authority, as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Also, whereas the school says that it usually admits

children who have their third birthday in their first term of schooling, which is acceptable within the present registration, this academic year it has admitted five children who are two-and-a-half-years-old and require separate registration. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

In order to comply fully with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are assessed against the 13 scales in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and that this assessment information is communicated to the local authority.

In order to meet the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006, those who provide for children under the age of three must:

- ensure that the provision is registered separately for children aged from two to three years.

## 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 share the best practice to raise further the good quality of teaching
- further develop the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that outdoor activities fully complement the outstanding range of indoor learning opportunities.

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 good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?	✓			
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?	✓			
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		✓		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		✓		



## School details

Name of school	L' Ecole des Petits, Fulham
DCSF number	205/6386
Unique reference number	100375
Type of school	Day pre-preparatory and preparatory bilingual school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	September 1977
Age range of pupils	2–6
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 55      Girls: 59      Total: 114
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8      Girls: 5      Total: 13
Annual fees	£5,085 (part-time) to £8,310 (full-time)
Address of school	2 Hazlebury Road London SW6 2NB
Telephone number	020 7371 8350
Fax number	020 736 9522
Email address	admin@lecoledespetits.co.uk
Headteacher	Madame Frédérique Brisset
Proprietors	Mr and Mrs Otten
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Date of inspection	22 October 2009