

La Scuola Italiana a Londra

154 Holland Park Avenue, London W11 4 UH

Inspection dates	9–10 December 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have improved the school's work since the previous inspection.
- All pupils have English as an additional language and as a result of good teaching they make good progress.
- A rich and innovative programme of English and Italian ensures all the required areas of learning are met.
- Most children in the early years make good progress and are able to communicate fairly fluently in both English and Italian by the time they enter Year 1.
- Pupils are well behaved, and enthusiastically join school activities. Pupils feel safe and relationships with peers and staff are strong.
- Governors and senior leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Governors have not made sure that the school only admits its maximum number of 75 pupils. However, the welfare and safety of pupils is not affected by this.
- The school is not helping middle leaders enough to monitor and improve the quality of teaching.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not set tasks at the right level so that all children can make rapid progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The governors must work urgently with the Department of Education (DfE) to address the difference between the registered number and the current number of pupils on roll.
- Senior leaders should support middle leaders to take more active responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school is well led by the governors, deputy headteacher and the school director. They ensure that all the independent standards are met. However, the leaders increased the number of pupils from 75 to 92 without getting permission from the DfE. Despite this, the increased number on the roll does not in any way compromise the safety and welfare of pupils. The governors have contacted the DfE to resolve this issue.
- The deputy headteacher makes an invaluable contribution to improving the work of the school. He checks the quality of teaching rigorously and provides good support and training opportunities to further improve it. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- Regular meetings between middle leaders and teachers have ensured that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and they are safe and secure. However, senior leaders have not yet supported the middle leaders to take a more active role in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school is successful in teaching all subjects in both English and Italian. The majority of pupils learn English as an additional language. Targeted support is provided to pupils who join the school in older year groups with little or no English. This support is highly effective and results in pupils making very rapid progress.
- The rich and innovative range of subjects, taught mostly in both languages, meets the requirements of both the Italian and English National Curriculum. All subjects are taught with an international dimension where pupils learn about different countries, religious beliefs and cultures. There are many extra-curricular activities, including trips, clubs and religious celebrations. During the inspection, pupils sang hymns and songs melodiously in both Italian and English in their Christmas concert.
- The school's system for tracking pupils' progress is highly effective, and uses the best of both the Italian and English curriculum requirements. The school has taken the approach of providing curriculum according to both age and ability.
- The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Fundamental British values are actively promoted through taught subjects and through enrichment activities, such as visits to places of educational interest.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are not sufficiently rigorous. This is because teachers' targets are not directly linked to pupils' progress.
- The welfare, safety and security of pupils are a high priority. All policies and procedures are effectively implemented and updated as required; this ensures that the quality of provision is good. Policies are well communicated to parents via the school's website.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet current statutory requirements. The designated safeguarding leads have received training to the required level. All senior staff have received training on how to support pupils in recognising the dangers of radicalisation. Checks on the suitability of the staff to work with children are carried out rigorously.
- Parents and staff are highly pleased with the school. All parents who replied to the online questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to others and agree that their children are kept safe. Pupils are very happy and know how to keep safe from any bullying if it happens.
- The school improvement plan identifies areas for development, action taken and further action required. However, it does not clearly state the time scales, resources needed and how the progress will be measured.
- Leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are met for leadership and management, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are highly committed to improving the school.
 - They have the necessary skills and expertise to challenge and hold leaders to account and to bring about further developments.
 - They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have made sure that the right balance has been achieved between the English and Italian curriculum requirements.
 - Governors did not check that the number of pupils on the school roll had exceeded the maximum number registered with DfE. They have subsequently been in correspondence with the DfE to rectify this mistake.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Many conduct their lessons in English or Italian, depending on the subject being taught. They explain what pupils are going to learn and what they need to do in order to succeed. In one religious education lesson, the teacher introduced the topic of 'United Nations Day of Human Rights' by asking pupils to write down what they knew about human rights. Pupils came up with many ideas such as the 'right to play; right to food and the right to have a religion'. In conclusion, the teacher linked the theme extremely well with their previous learning about Mary and Joseph's travels to Bethlehem. As a result, most pupils made very good progress.
- Staff are skilled in questioning pupils to check their understanding and deepen their learning. They encourage pupils to work collaboratively and to discuss their learning with each other. They enjoy learning and show high levels of motivation. However, occasionally when the same work is given to everyone, pupils who are new to learning English or who learn more slowly cannot keep up with the most able. As a result, progress slows and they do not achieve as well as they should.
- In a mathematics lesson, pupils were having a competition in answering the times tables questions. This motivated pupils hugely and they were encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary in both English and Italian. However, the teacher had to make consistent efforts to keep pupils focused.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is strong. This helps pupils to sound out more complex words such as 'decorations' and 'chocolate'. This was evident in Year 1, when pupils were writing their Christmas poems.
- Teachers take full advantage of trips to places of interest to motivate pupils. After visiting the British Museum, in a history lesson conducted in Italian, pupils were enthusiastically engaged in writing a time line from Mesopotamian civilisation to the current times.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that they make good progress. Pupils receive regular and helpful feedback on their work.
- Systems to check pupils' progress are rigorous. Pupils' work is assessed termly in all subjects and reports of progress are sent to parents.
- Pupils who need additional support because they either learn slowly or are new to learning English receive effective support throughout the day. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- In almost all lessons relationships are good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage quickly with their lessons with little disruption. However, sometimes pupils do become overexcited and teachers have to remind them to focus so they can complete their work.
- Leaders have ensured that all independent school standards for teaching, learning and assessment are met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and most have positive attitudes to learning. Staff are skilled in reminding pupils to move on with their work if anyone becomes overexcited.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and are confident that it is rare and if it happens that staff would deal with it quickly. Pupils know how to keep safe, for example when crossing the road, or in case of a fire. They also know about how to stay safe while using the internet or social media.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and rates of attendance are in line with those of other schools nationally. Absence sometimes occurs when parents have to go to Italy for social or work reasons. Absence is followed up rigorously and each parent gets a termly report on his or her child's attendance.
- All the independent standards are met for pupils' personal development and welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, staff and pupils agree that this is the case. The school records verify that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff, for example when packing up, lining up or returning to their seats, so that they are ready for work.
- Around the school, pupils follow the rules and behave well during lunch and breaktimes.

- Pupils are polite to each other and to visitors. They enjoy their playtime sharing the very small play area outside and the school hall. This provides good opportunities for pupils to talk and play together amicably. Pupils demonstrated very good behaviour during their Christmas concert.
- In lessons, pupils behave well but, as one pupil said, 'we get excited and get loud'. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and ensure they get engaged with their work quickly.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met for this aspect of the school's work.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- According to the school's records, pupils make good progress in most subjects. This was also confirmed by pupils' work in their books and the progress made in lessons.
- Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points, in reading, writing and mathematics, in both English and Italian. Pupils' progress has improved from previous years.
- Pupils' speaking skills in both English and Italian are good. For example, some pupils in Year 1 can hold a good conversation in English with their classmates and adults. Despite the number of pupils leaving during the school year and new ones arriving, Year 1 pupils' phonics screening checks were at the expected level for 2014/15.
- Pupils who are completely new to learning English make rapid progress in all year groups because of the effective support they receive. Pupils who learn slowly are well supported and they make good progress from when they start school.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards related to pupils' outcomes are met.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are typical for their age. For example, they can listen and follow instructions in Italian. However, their skills in English are weaker, as most are learning English as an additional language. Also, their writing skills are weaker and lower than those found in most three- and four-year-olds.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning from their starting points. In 2015, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was just above average. As a result, children were well prepared for Year 1. This represented a marked improvement from the previous years.
- From the moment children start school, there are daily activities to help them to learn to speak English fluently. This was seen in a lesson where children were cutting out pictures of people who do different jobs such as a firefighter, a police officer, a doctor and a bus driver. While cutting these pictures children were talking about their experiences. One child said, 'I was scared when I went to the doctor. He gave me an injection and I cried, but my sister cried even more when she had her injection.' Also, bilingual staff supported a child who was in the early stages of learning English to construct a sentence. As a result, this helped to improve all children's communication skills.
- Daily sessions in phonics enable children to be confident at reading unfamiliar words. For example, children were making words using the initial sound of letter 'a'. The most-able children managed to write words such as 'art', 'arm', 'and', 'am' correctly and wrote neatly with joined-up writing. However, this work was too challenging for some who were still learning the sounds of the letters and were not able to make words using initial sounds. This slowed their progress, as work was not sufficiently well matched to their ability.
- There is a good focus on developing children's mathematical skills, with many opportunities to count and recognise numbers. Some children can count and recognise numbers up to 30 and know the value of numbers to 15.
- The range of subjects and teaching gives children the necessary experience in all areas of learning to meet the requirements of the early years.
- Children's welfare, health and safety are good. All four classes for Nursery and Reception are on the first floor, and children go up and down the stairs taking great care. They do not have access to an outdoor area, but have fixed periods to use the very small outdoor play area and the hall, which are used well. The long balcony outside the classes is not being used for supporting children's learning with hands-on practical experiences.

- Children settle quickly in their classes. They develop secure relationships with adults who help them to learn routines and grow in confidence. They take turns and share equipment when engaged in independent activities. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when the work is not matched to their abilities, they lose concentration and become disengaged.
- Staff work very closely with parents, and keep them informed about their children's progress through termly comprehensive written reports and open days. In addition, learning journals help inform parents about the progress their children make. The weekly bulletins to parents keep them informed about the school's rules and routines and of any special activities that are taking place in the near future.
- The leader of the early years is new but is exceptionally well supported by the deputy headteacher. She is given many opportunities to observe teaching and conduct meetings with the deputy headteacher, and as a result her role is developing.
- Leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards relating to early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	136747
Inspection number	10006122
DfE registration number	207/6000

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Bilingual Italian and English Primary School and Nursery
School status	Independent
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	La Scuola Italiana a Londra
Chair	Mrs Francesca Nelson-Smith
Headteacher	Laura Marani
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,800 primary and £11,800 for Early Years Foundation Stage
Telephone number	020 7603 5353
Website	www.scuolaitalianalondra.org
Email address	info@scuolaitalianalondra.org
Date of previous inspection	1–2 May 2012

Information about this school

- La Scuola Italiana a Londra is a non-selective independent day school registered for 75 pupils aged 3–11 years, but currently has 92 pupils in the school. The leaders have not registered with the DfE for a material change to increase the number of pupils.
- Since the previous inspection the age range has gone up from 3–6 years to 3–11 years. The number of pupils that the school takes has also gone up from 50 to 75.
- The headteacher has been working for two days a week for the last two years and is retiring at the end of the term. The current deputy headteacher and the director of the school are going to be the joint headteachers.
- The school has seven pupils with special educational needs, but none stated.
- The school has 29 children between three and five years who are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery and Reception classes. Twenty-one children are funded under the government's nursery scheme.
- The school provides a bilingual English and Italian education. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school has no religious affiliation and teaches all major religions practised in Great Britain.
- The school is a charitable organisation, managed by the governing body.
- The school building is rented from a private organisation that uses the premises over the weekend for supplementary classes and for celebrations. The next-door building is also owned by the same organisation, and the school is planning to rent it from the next academic year to extend provision.

- Its mission is to create an Italian school which is fully integrated with the British context in which it operates.
- The school aims to 'offer a safe and nurturing learning environment where pupils are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential; inspire a passion for knowledge in general as well as stimulating the personal interests and abilities of each pupil; promote self-discipline whilst encouraging freedom of thought and creativity'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 10 lessons (with six lessons observed jointly with the senior leaders) and carried out a learning walk in all classes jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors analysed pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with the senior leaders, middle leaders, two staff members, governors and pupils.
- School policies and other documentation were examined, including safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, assessment records and the curriculum.
- The inspectors attended the Christmas concert rehearsal and the concert.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspector talked to the parents when they came to school to drop off their children, and Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire was analysed.
- The views expressed in 19 staff questionnaires were considered.
- Discussions were held with a governor regarding the increase in the number of pupils from 75 to 92 with no permission from the DfE. Discussions were also held with the Chair of Governors regarding the urgency of liaising with the DfE regarding the numbers in school exceeding those allowed by the registration.

Inspection team

Kanwaljit Singh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Waite

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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