

# School inspection report

30 January 2024 to 1 February 2024

## **L'École Bilingue Élémentaire**

St David's Welsh Church  
St Mary's Terrace  
London  
W2 1SJ

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
AREAS FOR ACTION .....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS.....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	7
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	8
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	9
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	10
<b>SCHEDULE OF UNMET STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Safeguarding .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. L'École Bilingue Élémentaire is successful in giving children a strong, bilingual education which develops academic skills in both languages, whilst providing an environment in which they can develop as happy and confident pupils. Leaders promote effective relationships so that pupils feel well cared for.
2. Leaders combine their clear understanding of the French and English educational systems (both of which apply to the school) with knowledge of principles in teaching and learning. Teachers have appropriate skills and mostly plan effective lessons which include tasks tailored to the individual needs of pupils. This results in pupils making good progress, developing skills and learning new knowledge in all areas of the curriculum, particularly in their mastery of both languages. Teachers provide opportunities for most pupils to think for themselves and develop their independence, which pupils evidently enjoy. However, some lessons lack challenge, for example because of the overuse of worksheets, so pupils are less engaged in their learning, which in turn affects the progress they can make.
3. Leaders meet the pastoral needs of pupils effectively, promote high standards of behaviour and encourage kindness. As a result, classrooms are orderly and calm, which helps pupils to learn, and children play co-operatively in their recreational times. Pupils have a strong sense of their community and want to help and support their peers. They are inclusive and tolerant of one another. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare and, when they do occur, are handled well by the school. However, the recording of such incidents hinders consistent monitoring and tracking of behaviour.
4. Leaders are clear in their intention to ensure that children are kept safe at school, and adults know how to look for signs of abuse and how to pass on their concerns appropriately. Staff have a general understanding of procedures for reporting concerns about adults. However, leaders do not ensure that statutory guidance is implemented effectively. Leaders and staff have insufficient knowledge of the contents of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) for example, relating to low-level concerns and whistleblowing. Some pre-employment checks on staff have not been carried out as required by the regulations. For example, the school has not carried out medical fitness checks on all employees, nor carried out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on a new staff member when it should have done so.
5. The safeguarding lead has appropriate skills, knowledge and training to carry out the role effectively. However, the headteacher continues to directly undertake some aspects of this role, which is not in line with the statutory guidance.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are not met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

### Areas for action

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
  - actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, including children in the Early Years, have regard to statutory guidance, are fully understood and implemented effectively.

### Recommended next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders should ensure that all behaviour incidents are recorded in such a way that behaviour can be monitored consistently to inform action taken.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

6. Leaders have strong knowledge of both the French and English national systems of education and use this understanding to evaluate the approaches of both. Leaders reflect on the richness and diversity of this dual approach and strive to improve this continually. As a result, leaders ensure that both are delivered appropriately.
7. Leaders understand the key principles of how children learn effectively. They ensure that pupils can progress to both French-accredited and English senior schools. They monitor the delivery of the planned curriculum and track the progress that pupils make, for example, by looking at pupils' work and observing lessons. However, some embedded teaching methods remain, for example the repeated use of standardised resources in some lessons, which results in some pupils being disengaged from their learning.
8. Leaders understand most of the expectations in the regulations and statutory advice. Appropriate systems are in place regarding provision of information and responding to complaints. Leaders ensure that risks relating for example to school premises and school trips are identified and measures put in place to mitigate them. The school engages external expertise with the aim of providing support and challenge, and quality assurance advice. However, despite this, leaders do not have the required knowledge and understanding to ensure that all standards are met.
9. Leaders and staff have an inconsistent understanding of some of the requirements of statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, specifically related to low-level concerns and whistleblowing. Following the appointment of a safeguarding lead, the headteacher retained certain aspects of the role, including liaison with external agencies. This is contrary to the requirements of KCSIE. Additionally, leaders have not ensured that all pre-employment checks have been carried out in line with the regulations. Medical checks have not been undertaken in recent years. A DBS check was not made in respect of one new employee, as leaders incorrectly believed that this was not required.
10. Leaders and staff in the early years monitor the children closely. However, the safeguarding policy did not reference the use of mobile telephones in the setting. This was remedied during the course of the inspection.
11. Leaders understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act. A suitable accessibility plan is in place to support the admission and continued education of pupils with mobility issues, subject to the limitations of the school buildings.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

12. Standards are not met consistently with respect to leaders having the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure that requirements relating to safeguarding are understood and implemented effectively.
13. As a result, Standards relating to leadership and management are not met.
- 14. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. The school follows the French national curriculum, which is verified through regular external accreditation so that pupils can transfer between schools within the French educational system. Leaders adapt the curriculum to also meet the regulatory requirements in England. As a result, the school has created an appropriate, bespoke bilingual curriculum with an emphasis on linguistic skills in both languages, and mathematical fluency.
16. Pupils develop excellent bilingual language skills. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their verbal command of both languages, for example through poetry performance in Year 2, and through an international French language reading competition in Years 5 and 6 in which all pupils take part with great enthusiasm. Teachers prioritise spelling and grammatical accuracy in both French and English which is assessed through dictation exercises. The quality of pupils' handwriting is a particular focus through the teaching of a cursive style, which is modelled by the teachers. As a result, pupils' work is well-presented.
17. Leaders provide breadth in the curriculum through scientific and creative learning, as well as physical education (PE). Leaders create, monitor and revise planning, with clear expectations of the progress pupils should make. Cross-curricular project work, spanning both languages, allows pupils to make connections between subjects whilst enjoying the opportunity to develop their particular interests. They also learn to analyse sources and data, developing their knowledge and understanding, as well as developing their independence through self-directed learning. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, are highly motivated to learn and behave very well in lessons. The ordered, calm learning environment enhances pupils' ability to make progress.
18. Through training, observation and sharing of best practice leaders promote high expectations and responsiveness to pupils' learning. Despite this, some lessons do not meet these expectations, for example through teachers' overuse of worksheets. As a result, some pupils are insufficiently challenged in their learning.
19. In the early years, an appropriate curriculum and range of resources allows children to take their first steps in formal learning with confidence. They develop communication skills and confidence, for example through singing and roleplay activities, and develop numeracy skills through counting games. By encouraging them to become more independent, teachers promote children's strong personal development.
20. Leaders have developed an appropriate framework of regular assessments which evaluates and monitors pupils' progress and performance effectively. They are mindful of pupils' wellbeing and schedule these assessments carefully. Appropriate support is provided for entrance tests to schools within the English school system.
21. Equality is central to the ethos of the school and leaders are alert to the risks of unconscious bias. As a result, leaders promote an environment in which teaching does not discriminate. The headteacher monitors the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Targets for pupil progress promote structured support in the classroom and through additional intervention. Leaders encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for meeting the needs of all pupils during lessons. Effective support is provided for pupils for whom either English or French is an additional language.

22. There are suitable opportunities for recreation, which is appropriately supervised. Although the size of the playground limits the extent of certain types of games being played, pupils have plenty of resources and find creative ways to enjoy playing co-operatively.
23. The school delegates responsibility for the organisation of a suitable range of after-school activities to the parent association, a separately registered entity, with appropriate risk assessments and checks in place. Some musical performances during the year are directly organised by the school, which gives the pupils additional opportunities to perform and develop their skills.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation**

**24. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

25. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are positive. Behaviour is generally excellent, promoted by a system of rewards and sanctions which is clearly understood by pupils, who feel that these are fairly implemented. Children in the early years play and co-operate with each other successfully, showing an ability to share toys and consider each other's preferences. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem, whether through classroom discussions or public speaking. As a result, pupils are confident and can engage adults in conversation. Pupils, including the youngest children, demonstrate excellent table manners during mealtimes, enjoying each other's company in relaxed conversation.
26. Pupils have suitable access to PE, including swimming, using local facilities within a short walk of the school. These lessons, which are appropriately planned and delivered, are appreciated by pupils. For example, pupils enjoy a range of activities such as skipping, step-ups and press-ups.
27. Relationships education is thorough and in line with statutory requirements. It is an integral element of the bilingual curriculum together with personal, social and health education (PSHE). Age-appropriate aspects of sex education are introduced in Year 6. Teachers delivering this content are confident in their knowledge and experience. Positive relationships with the children enable teachers to introduce these topics effectively. Parents are suitably consulted and informed of the right to withdraw their children from this aspect of the curriculum.
28. Pupils have a strong understanding of their community. They are supportive of each other and are mindful of each other's needs. They encourage their peers, for example if they are taking part in a competition. The school engages parents in their children's learning, for example, when assemblies relate to PSHE or relationships education topics additional resources are given to pupils and shared with parents online. This facilitates further discussion and enables pupils to develop their skills and confidence.
29. Staff know pupils well and understand their needs. They use this knowledge to prevent disagreements escalating. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare. Where these occur, pupils and their parents report that they are generally managed well. All incidents are recorded through class record books, however the recording of some incidents lacks sufficient detail. This system also makes it challenging for leaders to track and monitor issues effectively across the school. During the inspection leaders began collating this information centrally.
30. Pupils' attendance is high and recorded appropriately in line with the regulations. Leaders monitor attendance to mitigate the impact of any absence on an individual pupil's progress.
31. The school's premises are used creatively and all aspects of health and safety are thoroughly monitored. This includes appropriate measures to ensure fire safety. First aid is administered as required and training is carried out for all staff. The site is secure, and adult supervision is sufficient.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

**32. All the relevant Standards are met.**



## Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

33. Pupils know right from wrong and understand the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. They are actively encouraged to respect and treat equally people of all backgrounds, with particular regard to protected characteristics, which the pupils understand. For example, pupils consider gender representation in sport in a class discussion, and present balanced and thoughtful arguments, and participate in a cross-curricular project about the paralympic games.
34. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their economic awareness. The youngest children in the early years roleplay buying and selling in shops and older pupils learn about how to use money responsibly. Representatives of the financial sector talk to pupils about their roles and how their institutions work.
35. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of how individuals contribute to society. Pupils take turns to undertake duties on behalf of their class, serving one another and the school community as a whole. Pupils appreciate this inclusive approach. Pupils engage in charitable activities throughout the school year. An eco-council has introduced a number of initiatives such as composting food waste from school meals. Pupils show a positive attitude towards recycling and the environment.
36. Pupils learn about the rule of law and democratic processes, about society, and how societies and cultures have developed over time. Elections in both Britain and France are used as opportunities to learn about government. Pupils appreciate both the opportunity to stand for election to the school council and their role as voters. Parents who work in the legal sector are invited to talk to the pupils about their work. Pupils also learn about society, and how societies and cultures have developed over time. These themes are developed across the curriculum, for example in music pupils learn a song related to the topic of the 'Windrush generation'. Pupils, including children in the early years, learn about festivals of all the major world religions, and enjoy sharing their knowledge of the many cultural traditions represented at the school. This diversity is celebrated and appreciated by the pupils. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in both British and global society.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

38. Leaders are aware of the requirements to keep children safe. However, the requirements of statutory guidance in KCSIE relating to safeguarding are not fully understood. For example, staff understand how to look for signs of abuse in children. They know how to report concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe online, and appropriate filtering and monitoring of school devices is in place. However, staff do not receive appropriately thorough training to ensure that they know and understand safeguarding regulations and expectations. Steps were taken during the inspection to rectify some of these issues. It will take longer for all requirements to be implemented effectively.
39. Prior to the inspection, the duties of the safeguarding lead were shared with the headteacher. This arrangement does not meet the requirements of KCSIE, which states that it is not appropriate for a proprietor to act in the role of safeguarding lead. As a result, the proprietor should not have responsibilities normally undertaken by the safeguarding lead.
40. It is not sufficiently clear to all staff when they are being given safeguarding training updates. As a result, staff are uncertain regarding aspects of safeguarding related to low-level concerns and to what constitutes whistleblowing. The safeguarding policy did not reference the use of mobile telephones in the early years setting. This was remedied during the course of the inspection.
41. Some pre-employment checks had not been carried out in accordance with the regulations. Checks of medical fitness had not been carried out for a number of staff. In one case, an existing DBS certificate was incorrectly accepted by the school, rather than carrying out their own checks as required by the regulations.
42. Processes and systems are in place to handle the recording of safeguarding concerns and sharing these with external agencies. However, these have yet to be tested as no safeguarding concerns requiring such recording have been raised. Meetings or telephone conversations with outside agencies are not always recorded with sufficient clarity or detail.
43. The school meets its safeguarding obligations in respect of the after-school activities, by seeking and receiving confirmation from the parent association that appropriate safeguarding policies are in place and that the necessary checks have been completed on those adults who come into contact with pupils at the school.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

44. Standards are not met consistently with respect to staff training on the knowledge and implementation of KCSIE, pre-employment medical fitness and DBS checks.
45. As a result, Standards relating to safeguarding are not met consistently.
- 46. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

## Schedule of unmet Standards

### Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 8 paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

### Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3 paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 4 paragraph 18	The standard in this paragraph relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff.
18(2)	The standard in this paragraph is met if—
18(2)(c)	the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
18(2)(c)(ii)	the person’s medical fitness
18(2)(d)	the proprietor ensures that where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person’s employment.
EYFS 3.5	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.7	Providers must take into account the government’s statutory guidance ‘Working together to safeguard children’ and ‘Prevent duty guidance for

	<p>England and Wales'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to read this guidance.</p>
EYFS 3.9	<p>Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Providers must take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced. Providers must also ensure that any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises the early years provision is provided), is suitable.</p>
EYFS 3.24	<p>Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.</p>

## School details

<b>School</b>	L'École Bilingue Élémentaire
<b>Department for Education number</b>	213/6393
<b>Address</b>	L'École Bilingue Élémentaire St David's Welsh Church St Mary's Terrace London W2 1SJ
<b>Phone number</b>	020 7224 8427
<b>Email address</b>	admin@lecolebilingue.com
<b>Website</b>	lecolebilingue.com
<b>Proprietor</b>	Miss Veronique Ferreira and Mr Franck Lourans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Veronique Ferreira
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	121
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 28 February 2019

## Information about the school

47. L'École Bilingue Élémentaire is a co-educational day school located in Little Venice, London. The school is bilingual and follows both the French and English education systems. The school is inspected periodically by inspectors from the French educational system. The school is owned by the headteacher and head of administration, supported by external advisors.
48. The school includes an early years setting which accommodates children from age three. There are currently 32 children in the setting, in two classes, Petite Section (3+) and Moyenne Section (4+).
49. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
50. English is an additional language for four pupils.
51. The school states that its aims are to provide a high-quality bilingual education in a non-religious setting.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

30 January to 1 February 2024

52. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

53. Inspection activities included:

- Observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- Observation of registration periods and assemblies
- Discussions with a member of the advisory board
- Discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- Discussions with pupils
- Visits to facilities for physical education
- Scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school

54. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

**How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)