



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR LONDON STEINER SCHOOL

DfE No: 208 6344

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	good	2
Pupils' personal development	good	2
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	inadequate	4
Leadership, management and governance	inadequate	4
Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision	inadequate	4

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school does not meet all the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Date of inspection: 16th – 18th October 2017

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The quality of education provided by London Steiner School is good. Pupils' learning and achievement is good. They are effective learners and achieve well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from a range of different starting points. The quality of teaching and assessment requires improvement as it is not consistent throughout the school and all pupils do not have the same quality of learning. Pupils' written work illustrates this inconsistency as it varies significantly in quality across different classes. While teaching is clearly rooted in the Steiner methodology, teaching in some lessons is slow paced and allows pupils to drift off task. This reduces their progress. Assessment requires improvement as not all teachers appreciate the need to track pupils' progress rigorously and systematically or to give pupils good quality advice on how to improve their work. The good quality curriculum is firmly based on Steiner methodology and provides a broad, balanced and consistent educational experience. Pupils' personal development is good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and based on Steiner principles of 'thinking, feeling, willing'. Pupils are committed to the values of British democracy and society. Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. While pupils and their parents say they are safe, secure and happy in school, there are significant weaknesses in safeguarding and recruitment procedures as well as the proper supervision of pupils. These do not meet requirements. There are also weaknesses in the management and oversight of health and safety and in the provision of information and the complaints policy. Leadership, management and governance including in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are inadequate. Trustees do not monitor closely enough the implementation of school policies to ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met. There is no appropriate plan in place to address these issues within a suitable timescale and to actively promote the well-being of pupils. The provision for the children in the EYFS department is inadequate. The personal development, behaviour and welfare of these children are inadequate overall because of the ineffectiveness of the provision for their welfare and safety. However, the children's personal development and behaviour are good. They enjoy their learning, clearly feel secure and behave well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

To meet the independent school standards, the proprietor must:

- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the secretary of state. (paragraphs 7(a) & (b));
- ensure that relevant health and safety statutory requirements are complied with by effectively implementing the written health and safety policy. (paragraph 11);
- ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory reform (Fire safety) order 2005. (paragraph 12);
- ensure that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff (paragraph 14);

- ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out to assess the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school. (paragraph 18 (1) to 18 (2) (e) inclusive and 18(3));
- ensure that a full and complete register (the single central record SCR) is kept of appropriate checks in relation to each member of staff.(paragraph 21(1) to 21(4) inclusive) ;
- ensure the school premises and accommodation and facilities provided are maintained to a standard that ensures the health, safety and welfare of the pupils. (paragraph 25);
- ensure suitable drinking water facilities are provided. (paragraph 28(1)(a));
- ensure that any information reasonably requested in connection with an inspection under section 109 of the 2008 as required for the purposes of inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection. (paragraph 32(1)(g));
- ensure the complaints procedure sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint and also make it clear that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school. (paragraphs 33(c) and 33(g));
- ensure that leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently. (paragraph 34 (1)(a));
- ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently. (paragraph 34 (1)(b)); and
- actively promote the well-being of pupils. (paragraph 34 (1)(c)).

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school should:

- ensure that practitioners review the progress of children aged between two and three, and provide parents with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas (paragraph 2.3);
- take the necessary steps to ensure that arrangements to protect children meet all statutory and other government requirements and promote their welfare (paragraph 3.2);
- in terms of staff ratios and qualifications for children aged two years who attend the kindergarten, ensure that statutory requirements are met (paragraph 3.32);
- include all staff working in the kindergarten on the single central record and ensure that all information required is recorded on it (paragraph 3.12);
- in respect of the use of mobile phones and cameras in the kindergarten, ensure that the school's safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (paragraph 3.4);
- within the kindergarten, ensure that all staff involved in preparing and handling food receive training in food hygiene (paragraph 3.48);
- ensure that the school's complaints policy meets statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (paragraphs 3.74 and 3.75).

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons, held meetings with staff, pupils and parents, examined the school website, documentation and records, looked at pupils' work and reviewed parents' and pupils' responses to the questionnaires. The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Dr Christine Jones
Team inspectors:	Mrs Elisabeth Linley
Steiner Community Consultant:	Mrs Sally Jenkinson

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

The London Steiner School is an independent co-educational school for pupils aged three to fourteen. It follows the international Steiner Waldorf curriculum developed by the Austrian philosopher Dr Rudolf Steiner. The school moved to its present site in 2012. There are 87 pupils on roll including those in the Early Years department (13 part-time). There are eleven pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) and one pupil with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The kindergarten classes include children aged from rising three to six plus. Those up to five years of age follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with agreed modifications and disapplications in respect of literacy, mathematics and technology.

The trustees have management and oversight responsibilities similar to those of a governing body. The school has no headteacher and so the responsibilities of senior management are exercised by the college of teachers, in consultation with the trustees. The school was last inspected 9th-11th December 2014.

The school uses the Steiner Waldorf system of naming classes and these names are used throughout the report. Their corresponding National Curriculum years are shown below.

Steiner class name	National Curriculum
Kindergarten	Nursery, Reception, Y 1
Class 1 (Lower School)	Year 2
Class 2 (Lower School)	Year 3
Class 3 (Lower School)	Year 4
Class 4 (Lower School)	Year 5
Class 5 (Lower School)	Year 6
Class 6 (Middle School)	Year 7
Class 7 (Middle School)	Year 8
Class 8 (Middle School)	Year 9

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils' learning and achievement are good. All pupils make good progress from a range of different starting points and individual learning needs. The pupils love to learn and are able to learn quickly.

Samples of pupils' work show that, over time, pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding that are appropriate to their age and ability. For example they have a thoughtful approach to incorporating new learning into their existing work and make connections between different aspects of a topic. Their well-developed creative, imaginative and descriptive writing skills enable them to produce high quality work which is well written and illustrated. Speaking and listening skills develop well through their confident and fluent reading as well as reciting poems and verses. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and like to be focused and engaged with their work. For example in a geography lesson pupils said they really enjoyed learning about plate tectonics.

Pupils' work clearly shows how their reading, writing numeracy and communication skills develop within the Steiner curriculum framework. As pupils progress through the school they also develop effective learning skills both as individuals and as members of teams. They can work independently or as part of a group and can focus on their work for sustained periods of time.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment requires improvement as it is not consistent throughout the school and all pupils do not receive the same quality of provision.

Where teaching meets the pupils' needs they are keen and enthusiastic learners. In the highest quality lessons, especially in the kindergarten, teachers know their pupils well and join with them on their learning journey. With older pupils the best teaching develops a learning dialogue that allows pupils to contribute to the direction of the lesson within the context of the teachers' planning. Teachers reshape the task and provide clear explanations during lessons in response to pupils' growing understanding. The flow of learning progresses smoothly throughout the lesson and this ensures all pupils know what they are doing and why. Consequently they apply themselves effectively to the tasks they are given and make good progress. Lively and active presentations keep the pupils interested and engaged. In the best lessons pupils receive good quality individual guidance from their teachers.

Where a brisk pace in lessons is not maintained pupils lose focus, and sometimes slow presentations fail to maintain the pace of learning. This reduces their progress. Pupils usually behave well in lessons although they talk amongst themselves when the teaching is too slow and does not keep up with their keen

interest in learning. Assessment is not used consistently by teachers to track progress and monitor the impact of their teaching on learning. Where teachers give good quality feedback to their pupils this enables them to make good progress. Pupils' work is marked in a variety of different ways by different teachers and the quality of marking is variable. Sometimes feedback does not give pupils enough information and advice on what could be done to improve their work. In line with Steiner philosophy individual teachers keep the same class throughout the school. Consequently they know their pupils very well and keep track of their progress. These individual class records show that the pupils are making good progress. However, there is no central overview or tracking of the progress pupils make as recording their progress is not systematic and individual teachers use different methods.

Teaching and assessment of pupils aged over five years of age in the kindergarten are effective. The pupils experience a wide range of planned activities that enable them to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment of their progress is detailed and ongoing.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. The curriculum throughout the school is in line with the Steiner principles of intellectual, physical and spiritual development, especially in the main lesson sessions. This allows for the effective combination of a variety of subjects and activities while threading themes such as British values across the curriculum.

The curriculum provides a broad, balanced and consistent experience that ensures pupils make good progress. It is well supported by a range of external visits and activities that broadens pupils' learning by setting it in relevant and interesting contexts. Pupils loved the visit from Percy the Bee Man as part of their studies of farming. Trips out of school took pupils to Hadrian's Wall and others went to Norway.

Music, eurythmy (an art of movement) and crafts make an important and significant contribution to the pupils' intellectual, physical and spiritual development. Health and economic education are also covered thoroughly and threaded throughout the curriculum. Curriculum planning supports pupils with SEND and EAL very well as it meets their needs and allows them to make good progress. Procedures are in place for the effective referral of pupils who may need additional support.

The curriculum for the five and six year olds in the kindergarten enables them to develop a range of skills required for their transition to Class 1. Although aspects of literacy, mathematics and technology are not directly planned there are many supporting activities for these areas of the curriculum. As a result, they develop good fine and gross motor skills, and effective hand-eye coordination. Planned activities provide opportunities to practice these skills, such as counting as they throw bean bags into a basket. Pupils refer to books and, if they choose to do so, write their name. Weekly visits to local parks enable pupils to explore the outdoor environment and nature, while they develop scientific understanding of how

materials can change through for example, the making of dough and preparing food for snack time.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of pupils' personal development is good. They grow into confident and articulate young people who are polite, thoughtful and caring. Pupils are very tolerant of each other's views and will listen to each other. Older pupils act as 'guardians' for younger ones giving them personal and individual help and support. This creates a strong sense of belonging amongst pupils. Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils play well together in the small play area and cope well even when it is wet.

Personal, social health and economic education (PSHEE) as well as pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are promoted effectively. These issues are threaded throughout the curriculum and lesson planning so that pupils receive a well-rounded education.

Pupils are able to form their own opinions and understanding of moral issues through discussions on topics such as homelessness and human rights. Throughout the school different faiths and traditions are studied in a variety of ways including stories and poetry as well as observing different religious and cultural festivals. Pupils enjoy being involved in charity fund raising events such as the Macmillan Café, Spires Homeless, Red Nose Day and public carol singing events. The broad curriculum promotes British values of democracy and the rule of law, tolerance and individual liberty effectively. The curriculum develops this across the school through historical studies. Younger pupils learn about the origins of democracy in Ancient Greece and then move onto the role of the senate in the Roman Empire. Older pupils look more closely at the developing British systems from the Magna Carta, the civil war and how the modern Parliamentary system began. The school is introducing appropriate career sessions for classes 6, 7 and 8 to help them think about the next stage in their education.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and arrive on time. Attendance in the last academic year was well below average overall due to the impact of long term absences of a number of pupils, but this has improved significantly this year and attendance currently is above average.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The provision and procedures to ensure pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety are inadequate. There are considerable inadequacies in recruitment and vetting procedures. The single central record of appointments (SCR) is incomplete and it is not possible to be certain that all required checks have been carried out on all staff and other adults who regularly spend time in the school. The school is not able to provide evidence of these checks in staff files, such as prohibition orders, overseas checks and enhanced criminal record certificates.

Other aspects of safeguarding are in place. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is trained appropriately and works hard to maintain and complete records of child protection issues should they arise. The DSL also makes sure that staff are given regular, up-to-date training in safeguarding, and that they know how to identify when pupils may be at risk and what to do about it. This includes keeping pupils safe from extremism and radicalisation.

Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school and parents support this. Pupils are happy in the family atmosphere of the school 'where everyone knows everyone else'. The school's code of conduct underpins behaviour with pupils and staff working together to implement this policy. Where pupils do not adhere to the code of conduct the school is prepared to act firmly so that there were two fixed-term exclusions and one permanent exclusion last year. Pupils know there is a firm anti-bullying policy and say that bullying is rare. Pupils are not clear about the risks associated with using information and communication technology, including the internet and cyber-bullying. The school does not do enough to ensure that these issues are systematically documented in curriculum planning or covered appropriately during lessons.

The school website lists policies covering most aspects of school life but these are not always up-to-date or complete. Not all aspects of the health and safety policy are implemented. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and fire drills are held each term but the drills have not covered all available exits. Fire risk assessments have not been regularly carried out. The first aid policy meets requirements with appropriately trained staff and equipment. Pupils are not always properly supervised as they are allowed unsupervised access to the kitchen to fill their water bottles. Wider risk assessments such as those for practical activities and off-site visits are thorough and appropriate records are maintained. Admissions and attendance registers are maintained appropriately and absence tracked to promote good attendance.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders and managers have not ensured that the independent school standards are consistently met. They have not made sure that the SCR and the accompanying personnel files used to verify the register are accurate or complete. They have not verified that all safeguarding protocols have been followed and have not actively promoted the well-being of pupils.

The education aspect of school life is led by the college of teachers. They are effective in developing the Steiner approach to education and create the culture of respect and tolerance that leads to a positive ethos, care and good learning in the classrooms. Teachers are trained appropriately in Steiner methodology. Peer observations are used to share good practice although there are no formal arrangements for the appraisal and performance management of teachers.

The lack of effective overall management has led to inadequate leadership and management of other aspects of the school. Some improvements have been

made, for example recent changes to emergency and other lighting have improved visibility of fire exits and lighting around the school. There are no suitable drinking water facilities so pupils fill their water bottles in the kitchen on the lower ground floor. This is a potential health and safety risk.

Parents are very supportive of the school and say their children are well cared for. There are good relationships between staff and the parents and they receive generally accurate information from the school. There are differences between the school policies available to parents on the school website and those versions in use in the school. The school was not able to put together the complete set of information reasonably requested and required in connection with the inspection.

The policy for handling complaints is on the website and available to parents. However it does not meet requirements as the time scale for managing complaints is not made clear and the required membership of the panel for a final complaint hearing is also not clearly stated.

Leadership and management of the kindergarten are inadequate because of deficiencies in the school's provision for pupils' welfare and safety. In respect of pupils over five years of age in the kindergarten, they are given appropriately challenging work and effective teaching which enables them to make good progress in readiness for their transition to Class 1.

Governance

The quality and effectiveness of governance are inadequate. Trustees have a thorough understanding of Steiner education and are supportive of this in many ways, but they have not held senior leaders closely to account for all aspects of the school's performance. They have not ensured that all the independent schools standards are met. The small number of trustees, along with recent difficult changes, means that each has a heavy load of responsibilities. This makes it difficult for them to cover all the roles necessary to ensure that all the independent school standards are covered effectively. Trustees rely too much on the college of teachers and administrative staff to devise, implement and monitor policies and procedures rather than informing themselves independently, as the statutorily responsible body, of the impact of those policies. As a result, policies are not always up-to-date or complete and oversight of the effective implementation of these policies is not secure.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

The EYFS provision is inadequate overall. School leaders are not sufficiently effective in their provision for the welfare and safety of the children. As a result, the leadership and management of the EYFS are inadequate. By contrast, the planned curriculum is effective and delivered well; this enables children to make good progress in their learning.

Leadership and management of the EYFS are inadequate. This is because kindergarten staff are not routinely included in the school's SCR. When checks are carried out, prior to appointment, the information received is also not always included and supporting personnel files are not in good order. Leaders and managers have not ensured that the statutory ratio and qualification requirements have been applied when children aged two years 10 months attend the kindergarten. The school's safeguarding policy does not include information on the use of mobile phones or cameras in the kindergarten. As in the rest of the school, arrangements to develop children's awareness of internet safety are not sufficiently developed. The school's complaints policy does not make clear that, following receipt of any written complaints relating to the EYFS, the complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days. Nor does the policy provide details of how to contact Ofsted if parents or carers believe the kindergarten is not meeting requirements. The kindergarten prepares healthy food and snacks with the children; however, not all staff involved in the preparation and handling of food have received training in food hygiene.

Leaders and managers work well as a team. They reflect on the children's learning and their own practice every week and note where improvements can be made, such as in the development of a formal approach to staff appraisal. They place a strong emphasis on care and community which underpins the promotion of British values such as fairness and justice. These values are reflected in the work of the kindergarten staff and their high expectations of the children to enjoy their time at school and achieve their best. The staff work effectively with parents to ensure that their children settle into the kindergarten well and regularly involve them in their child's learning. Parents reported through questionnaires that they are happy with their children's education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment overall require improvement. This is because the statutory progress check for children aged two has not been completed. In other respects teaching and learning are good. The staff have a clear understanding of the Steiner Kindergarten curriculum and the requirements of the EYFS. Assessment records are detailed and the information gathered tracks the children's learning and informs planning of the next stage of learning effectively. The staff ensure that diversity and equality are promoted through well-planned activities and opportunities for independent learning. The kindergarten classrooms are calm and inviting and promote children's independence as they explore and investigate; for example, by using natural objects that reflect the changing seasons. With great perseverance, children were observed to thread leaves and to help each other if needed; 'this is getting tricky', said one three-year old child. As a result of good quality provision, children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

The children's personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate overall because of the ineffectiveness of the provision for their welfare and safety. However, the children's personal development and behaviour are good. Children enjoy their learning; they clearly feel secure and behave well. They have a good understanding of the need to keep safe and healthy. This was observed as the children used a knife to cut pieces of apple and butter for the apple crumble made for their snack. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is enhanced by for example, visits to a local park and swimming lessons that the children enjoy. Relationships

between the children and staff securely underpin the children's developing independence and well-being. The staff have high expectations of the children to cooperate with each other and to respect each other's differences. Children were observed to work and play together well; they helped others regularly and the very youngest learnt to share and take turns with the encouragement and gentle intervention of their teacher.

Outcomes for children are good. They achieve well in relation to their different starting points particularly in their communication, social and dexterity skills. Children, including those with SEND, make good progress in their learning and personal development. Of particular note is the progress made by children who join the kindergarten with EAL. They benefit from the priority placed on communication and language and the confidence that children develop to socialise and talk with each other.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	London Steiner School			
Address of school:	9 Weir Road Balham SW12 0LT			
Telephone number:	02087723504			
Email address:	office@londonsteinerschool.org			
Web address	www.londonsteinerschool.org			
Proprietor:	Philip Martyn			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Philip Martyn			
Head Teacher:	Chair of College, Helen Kinsey			
Early Years Manager	Diana Buonaparte			
DfE Number	208 634			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£3967 - £8412			
Age range of pupils	3.5 - 14			
Gender of pupils	mixed			
Total number on roll	full-time	74	part-time	13
Number of children in registered nursery				
Number of children under-5	Boys:	8	Girls:	7
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	40	Girls:	31
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	1	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	5	Girls:	6
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk.