

The Swedish School

82 Lonsdale Road, London SW13 9JS

Inspection dates

12–14 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work effectively as a team. Their exceptional leadership has ensured that the school continues to improve and that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of respect, ambition and high expectations. Staff share leaders' high aspirations for all pupils.
- Governors are highly ambitious for pupils. They provide effective support and challenge to leaders to bring about improvements.
- The quality of teaching is excellent. Consequently, pupils make consistently strong and sustained progress across the curriculum and achieve very high standards.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They said that their children are safe, well cared for and make good progress.
- The sixth-form provision is exceptional. Students attain standards that are above the Swedish national average in a very wide range of subjects.
- The broad, balanced and rich Swedish and English curriculum is exceptional. The curriculum is highly engaging and contributes strongly to pupils' academic, personal and social development.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Their strong attitudes to learning have a positive impact on the high standards they achieve.
- Leaders have improved the provision in the early years since the previous inspection. Consequently, the early years provision is exceptional and children make excellent progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Sometimes, teachers' questioning is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and students.
- Planning for improvement is not sharply focused and governors are insufficiently involved in the process.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that the most able pupils and students are sufficiently challenged through questioning to help them extend their thinking.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that planning for improvement is sharply focused and that governors are involved in the process.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides exceptional leadership. Senior leaders work closely with governors to bring about improvements. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have created a culture of respect, support and high expectations that enables pupils and staff to excel. Consequently, staff morale is high and pupils' achievement is excellent.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work as an effective team. They have a continuous focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is typically exceptional. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provide teachers with effective feedback. Teachers are provided with effective support and training to improve their classroom practice.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. Consequently, these pupils make excellent progress.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Leaders and teachers know individual pupils well and their progress is closely monitored. Those falling behind are provided with timely and effective support to ensure that they make strong progress.
- The curriculum is excellent. It is broad, balanced, highly engaging and meets the needs of pupils extremely well. The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Music, art and crafts have a strong profile in the school. Pupils play a wide range of musical instruments and enjoy composing their own music. In addition to Swedish and English, pupils learn French, German and Spanish. There is a range of sporting opportunities for pupils to develop their physical fitness.
- The school promotes pupils' understanding and appreciation of equalities, diversity and the protected characteristics extremely well through the Swedish curriculum. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions and are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders and staff ensure that equal opportunities are promoted well and there is no discrimination.
- The school actively promotes British values through teaching pupils about respect, democracy and the rule of law. For example, pupils elect their classmates to the school council, carry out mock elections, debate current issues and visit the Houses of Parliament. Pupils are taught well how to protect themselves from extremism and radicalisation.
- The process of development planning lacks sharpness and governors are insufficiently involved in considering the school's future needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is interwoven into the life of the school and is promoted exceptionally well.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that the school is well led and managed. They would all would recommend the school to others. Some of the many

supportive comments that parents made to describe the school included 'fantastic', 'amazing', 'wonderful' and 'calm and welcoming'.

Governance

- Governance is effective. Governors are knowledgeable, skilful and experienced. They work well with senior leaders and provide them with strong support and challenge to ensure ongoing improvements. They know the school well, including its main strengths and areas for improvement. They are very ambitious for children, pupils and students.
- Governors undertake regular training, including on safeguarding, to make sure that they are effective in their roles. Governors are trained in safer recruitment of staff and they carry out checks on the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Governors receive detailed and regular reports from the headteacher on school improvement. They routinely visit the school to find out for themselves the impact of senior leaders' work.
- Governors have good links with parents, including the parents' council, to seek their views about the school. They also conduct staff and pupil surveys to obtain the views of staff and pupils about the school, including areas for improvement.
- Governors have worked closely with senior leaders to enhance staff's skills in digital ways of working to further engage pupils in their learning and share information more effectively with parents. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in the process of prioritising some of the main future needs of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have received up-to-date training on safeguarding and child protection procedures, including 'Keeping children safe in education', September 2018. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is published on the school's website.
- Leaders and staff place a very high priority on pupils' welfare and keeping them safe. There is a strong culture of vigilance to help pupils stay safe and protect them from harm, including extremism and radicalisation. Staff fully understand their own responsibilities and know the appropriate action to take if they have any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare.
- Leaders and staff work closely with parents, carers and external organisations, including the local authority, to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. They ensure that safeguarding records, processes and procedures are fit for purpose. All the relevant pre-employment checks are thoroughly carried out for all adults.
- Leaders ensure that buildings are well maintained to the appropriate safety standard. They ensure that all health and safety checks, including risk assessments, fire risks and hazards, are carried out to the expected standard.
- Pupils said that they feel safe. All parents who spoke to the inspectors and all those who responded to Parent View agreed that their children feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- There are very strong relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and provide them with excellent care and support. This, and the highly effective teaching, motivate and encourage pupils to achieve extremely well. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, they make exceptional progress in all subjects and across all year groups.
- Teachers have a strong subject knowledge to engage and enthuse pupils in their learning. They use their knowledge of individual pupils and progress information to plan learning carefully to meet the needs and interests of pupils.
- Teachers ensure that there are rich opportunities for speaking and listening so that pupils become confident and make excellent progress in Swedish and English. This was evident, for example, in a Year 9 lesson where pupils gave high-quality talks on the subject of the Second World War, making good use of presentation software.
- Teaching of English at the lower stages of the primary phase enables pupils to understand, practise, use and extend their knowledge of literacy, phonics and letter formation. Teachers help pupils to self-assess their work carefully and reflect on and consolidate their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils apply their numeracy and problem-solving skills across the curriculum.
- The teaching of science is very effective. As a result, pupils in the upper stages of the primary phase build their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts well. For example, they were able to explain that sound vibration is a movement of molecules through a material; and why they think that sound does not travel in space. Pupils use information technology well to present their ideas.
- The very strong teaching of art provides pupils with a rich, stimulating environment with a wide range of resources. Displays provide examples of excellent art work by pupils using different materials and techniques. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with different media. For example, in one lesson, pupils in the secondary phase explored different art forms using cameras and images.
- Crafts are also taught very well. Pupils typically acquire a wide range of skills, including knitting and weaving, and use a variety of fabrics and materials with great dexterity.
- The highly effective teaching provides pupils with excellent opportunities to acquire skills in music. For example, girls in the secondary phase rehearsed a cover song they had composed, skilfully playing their guitars and singing a tune. There was an impromptu sessional piece by pianist, drummer and guitarist. Pupils' performance is captured on video for evaluation and feedback.
- In line with the school's policy, pupils receive regular, appropriate and challenging homework. Pupils respond to their homework well, mainly online, and it enables them to reflect on and consolidate their learning.
- Although teachers' questioning is largely effective, sometimes it is not challenging enough for the most able pupils to extend their thinking further.

- An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are taught well and make good progress at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- There are strong relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils and among pupils. Pupils are confident, self-assured and show a thirst for learning. They are self-motivated and reflective and are keen to improve their work. This has a strong impact on the excellent progress they make. Pupils are proud of their school and their personal achievements.
- Pupils enjoy discussing and debating issues in Swedish and English in a considered and balanced way, showing respect for other viewpoints and ideas. Lunchtime provides further opportunities for pupils to interact socially with each other as they enjoy their healthy cooked meal. Pupils ensure that the tables and the floor in the canteen are kept clean and that plates and utensils are put away appropriately after mealtime.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils' welfare and well-being are given as high a priority as their strong academic achievement. They know individual pupils and their families extremely well. Leaders and staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure the safety, welfare and well-being of pupils.
- Pupils are taught well how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online; they understand the dangers associated with cyber bullying, extremist views and radicalisation. They know how to follow correct procedures in the event of fire. Pupils said that they always feel safe at school. They said that if they have any concerns about their safety, a member of staff would deal with it.
- Pupils enjoy being members of the school council and said that they discuss and debate issues concerning their school and any changes they would like to see. They said that their teachers listen to them so that, for example, they have influenced the code of conduct. Pupils are also involved in collecting money for various charities. These roles help pupils develop their confidence and contribute well to preparing them for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils know about healthy eating and how to lead healthy lives. They have access to a range of activities to keep themselves physically fit.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and equips them well to value equalities. Pupils show respect for and appreciation of diversity, including different beliefs, cultures and religions, represented in the British society.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, as well as all those who spoke to inspectors, said that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very friendly, polite and courteous. They respond well to the school's high expectations and take responsibility for their own behaviour accordingly. Their conduct in class and around the school is exemplary. No disruption to learning of any kind was observed by inspectors. Pupils are highly respectful to each other, staff and visitors.
- Pupils interact extremely well with each other. Pupils said that behaviour is typically 'very good' and that incidents of bullying, sexism, racism or homophobia are very rare. The school's behaviour records show very few incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders have created a strong atmosphere of care and respect.
- Pupils said that they enjoy learning and speak highly of their school. Consequently, their attendance is high and their punctuality is very good. Rates of persistent absence are very low.
- An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, as well as all those who spoke to inspectors, stated that school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. All staff responding to the staff survey agreed that pupils' behaviour is managed well and that their behaviour is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The exceptional quality of teaching, learning and assessment contributes to pupils' excellent progress in all subjects across the year groups.
- Pupils' attainment at the primary and secondary phases is outstanding. Their attainment is significantly above the national standards in all subjects in the Swedish national curriculum, including mathematics, science, Swedish and English. The school's assessment information and pupils' work indicate that pupils make exceptional progress. Pupils said that they learn and achieve very well, and their parents agree.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely and often. They use the school's library well to choose books to capture their imagination and interests. Pupils who read to inspectors in English were able to read with confidence and expression. Year 3 pupils were able to use strategies to read unfamiliar or difficult words.
- The most able pupils are provided with challenging work to enable them to achieve highly. However, sometimes teachers' questioning is not sufficiently probing to extend their thinking further.
- The small number of pupils with SEND make equally strong progress as their classmates and attain highly. This because there is strong provision for this group of pupils, with teachers providing additional individual support.
- Pupils enjoy music and are confident in playing a range of musical instruments. They are skilful, for example, in playing the guitar to their classmates and responding to the feedback they receive on how to improve. Pupils' artwork is strong and is displayed and celebrated around the school.
- Secondary-aged pupils make strong progress in modern foreign languages, including French, Spanish and German. They demonstrate excellent bilingual skills in Swedish and

English, changing from one language to the other with much confidence and ease. This was seen in some of the presentations they made to their classmates.

- Pupils' excellent communication and bilingual skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education and their future careers, either in Sweden or the United Kingdom. Pupils are provided with comprehensive careers advice and guidance. Pupils typically chose to continue with their studies.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The school has exemption from the standards in the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Children are taught in Swedish and follow the Swedish curriculum, and learn English as an additional language.
- Children join the school with varying levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in Swedish. They receive high-quality care and support and benefit from teaching that is exceptional. Consequently, they make excellent progress across the different areas of learning. Children develop the skills and attributes that prepare them well for Year 1.
- There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening, with adults using questioning well to extend children's thinking and understanding. Staff ensure that children begin to gain confidence in being bilingual and that they acquire skills in communicating in both Swedish and English. Most children in the Reception Year demonstrated their skills in both languages when talking about their work.
- The leadership of early years is excellent. Leaders know the main strengths of the provision and areas for further improvement. Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed and revised the systems to evaluate their work. Consequently, parents and children are more involved in the design of and feedback on the curriculum and learning experiences. Activities are planned carefully to meet the needs and interests of children. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that there is greater focus on specific activities for individual children to address any further gaps in their learning.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and show good levels of concentration. This was seen in their work on the theme of ducklings. Children in Reception had their paintings of ducklings displayed on the walls. They discussed the different features of ducklings with captions, including what they do and eat. Children were inquisitive, for example, 'How long can ducks hold their breath under water?' Children have visited a duck pond and taken pictures of their visit. In a circle time, they talked about and selected their favourite photos. With help from adults, children built a large 'house' with fencing to accommodate the ducklings that were to be delivered imminently when hatched.
- Children are encouraged to write letters in both Swedish and English. There is strong one-to-one support for children to read and write letters using their phonics skills.
- Children in both Nursery and Reception make choices about their learning. For example, they chose the materials and paint colours when making a Valentine card. They show independence by ensuring that they put on their own coats and footwear when going to the outdoor play area. Children are skilfully supported to develop their confidence and self-esteem by speaking in front of other children and adults. Children are happy to contribute in both Swedish and English.

- Leaders provide strong support and feedback to staff to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have introduced an online assessment tracker to check children's progress and provide those falling behind with additional support. This information is shared with parents so that parents receive 'live feedback' on their children's learning.
- The engagement with parents is highly effective. They are kept informed about the progress of their children. The parents who spoke to the inspectors were delighted about the support and provision for their children. The early years environment is calm, welcoming and open and parents often accompany their children into the classrooms.
- Children have extremely positive attitudes to their learning. They interact and cooperate well with each other and share resources readily. They are keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. This has a positive impact on the exceptional progress they make.
- Staff ensure that children's health and safety needs are met. Children are well supervised and kept safe, and safeguarding is effective.
- The school meets the independent school standards in relation to the early years provision.

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

- The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is exceptional. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and what could be further improved.
- Leaders have high aspirations for students. They ensure that the curriculum is engaging and meets the needs and aptitudes of all students. Leaders work closely with teachers to plan, manage and evaluate programmes of study to ensure that they meet students' needs. Students can select individualised programmes from a wide range of options. The curriculum is enriched by a range of educational visits, both in England and abroad.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly and provide strong feedback and support to bring about improvements. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very high expectations of all students. Consequently, the quality of teaching is excellent.
- Students make strong and sustained progress in all aspects of their learning. Their attainment across all the subjects is well above the Swedish national average. Students are very well prepared for their future lives.
- Students are provided with mentoring time to discuss any concerns or issues they may have. Students have an active student council through which they discuss and debate issues and make recommendations to their teachers on changes they would like to see. Students said that teachers listen to them and are supportive. Leaders and staff ensure that students' welfare and well-being are promoted effectively.
- Students are confident and self-assured and take responsibility for their own learning. The working relationships between staff and students are exemplary. Teachers help students to extend and deepen their understanding and develop their independent research skills. Students enjoy designing their businesses and products, which they present to a group of independent 'judges' to evaluate in the style of 'Dragon's Den'.

- Students' exceptional attitudes to their learning and excellent behaviour contribute well towards the exceptional progress they make.
- Students show a great deal of confidence in speaking in both Swedish and English when presenting their work. In a social science lesson on famous people, for example, pupils made presentation slides to put forward their views about Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela.
- Although teachers' questioning is largely effective, sometimes it is not challenging enough for the most able students to extend their thinking further.
- Students take part in a range of physical activities, including tennis and badminton and regular physical education lessons.
- Students know how to keep themselves safe in the world, including when online, and from extremism and radicalisation.
- All students typically move on to universities, mostly in Sweden and some in the United Kingdom.

School details

Unique reference number	102948
DfE registration number	318/6076
Inspection number	10067123

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	All-age school with post-16 boarding arrangements
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	115
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Swedish School Society in London Ltd.
Chair	Caroline Bar
Headteacher	Annika Simonsson Berqvist
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,900–£9,900
Telephone number	0208 741 1751
Website	www.swedishschool.org.uk
Email address	office@swedishschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- The Swedish School is a non-selective independent school that provides Swedish education with a considerable proportion of lessons in English.
- The school is one of a number of Swedish schools abroad. It opened in 1907 to provide education to the children of the representatives of Swedish organisations and companies

located in Britain. This was to ensure that the children could continue their schooling within the Swedish education system while living in London.

- The school moved in 1976 to its current site in Barnes, in the Royal Borough of Richmond, which now houses the pre-school, primary and secondary schools. The sixth form is located in Richmond at the American International University, which is a drive of 30 minutes from the main school.
- The school admits boys and girls from age 3 to 19 years.
- Around three-quarters of sixth-form students board locally with host families. These are exchange students who spend six months to one year in the sixth form. Very few sixth-form students stay for more than one year.
- There are no pupils who are disadvantaged, or pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- There are small numbers of pupils with SEND.
- The school aims to 'produce sociable, independent, responsible and academically motivated students in a safe and secure learning environment'.
- The school follows the Swedish curriculum and the Swedish grading criteria in accordance with the requirements of The Swedish National Agency for Education.
- The school is registered for a maximum of 330 pupils but currently has 277 pupils on roll.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who is also the sixth-form leader, form the senior leadership team.
- At its previous standard inspection in March 2016, the school's overall effectiveness was judged as outstanding. At this inspection, the school's request to increase the number of pupils on roll to 330 pupils was considered and later granted by the Department for Education in April 2018.
- The school has boarding arrangements for post-16 students. At the time of the previous boarding inspection in October 2016, not all of the national minimum standards were met. The school's proposed action plan to address the unmet boarding standards was evaluated and found to be acceptable in March 2018.
- The school does not use any off-site provision.
- The school has no religious affiliation.
- The school is a charitable organisation run by the Swedish School Society in London Ltd.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in all classes. Nearly all were joint observations with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with primary- and secondary-aged pupils and students in the sixth form to discuss their learning and views about the school.
- Discussions took place with two governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, early years practitioners and staff.
- Inspectors checked the school's welfare and health and safety arrangements, and toured the premises at the main school and sixth form sites. All the relevant independent school standards were checked.
- The inspectors checked the work in pupils' and students' books. Inspectors scrutinised the school's pre-employment checks on staff and looked at pupils' and students' attendance and behaviour records. The inspectors also examined policies and documents in relation to the independent school standards, including information on safety and safeguarding.
- The inspection took account of the 55 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. There were also 36 free-text responses to Parent View. In addition, inspectors spoke to some parents during the inspection about their views.
- The inspectors considered 32 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Debono	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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