



Swedish School in London

Governance and 2030 Vision

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1. Introduction and background

This document is the Board's governing document and sets out the overall direction for the school's operations for the period 2025-2030. This document must be re-evaluated continuously, and responsibility for this rests with the Board. Based on this and the curriculums set by Skolverket for all stages of primary/secondary and sixth form, the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher, in collaboration with the school's teachers, will prepare an annual action plan, School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP will clearly articulate how the vision and goals will be achieved, and the responsibility for monitoring and updating this action plan rests with the Headteacher.

The Swedish School in London has provided high-quality education for London-based Scandinavians children for over 110 years. The school currently caters to approximately 240 pupils aged two to 19. Parents choose the school for their children for a variety of reasons, with the main one being the opportunity for their children to become fully bilingual in both English and Swedish to a level sufficient for tertiary education in either language, which opens up the possibility to study at Swedish universities free of charge. Other reasons parents choose to send their children to the school are the excellent standard of teaching, the small class sizes, and the opportunity to become members of the broader Swedish community in London.

The Swedish School in London was founded in 1907, originally located at the Swedish Church on Harcourt Street. In 1976, the primary and secondary schools moved to their present location in Barnes, while the sixth form started in Barnes in 1995 and has been based at The National Archives in Kew since 2020.

The school serves the Swedish community in London, whether children of Swedes in the UK for shorter periods on behalf of companies back in Sweden or children of Swedish or Scandinavian families permanently settled in the UK. While the teaching at the school is primarily in Swedish, the school enjoys a rich cultural context, with many children coming from families with one non-Swedish parent. The high number of exchange students from Sweden to the sixth form also provides the students at the school with new perspectives.

2. School Governance

2.1 Regulatory standards

The school adheres to the Swedish national school curriculums¹ and the regulations laid out by the Swedish National Agency for Education, Skolverket². This means the school complies with all aspects of Swedish education as detailed in the Swedish government's School Act³ and School Ordinances for preschool, compulsory schooling⁴ and sixth form⁵.

As it is based in the UK, the school is also inspected by Ofsted⁶, which means it must comply with this regulatory framework to maintain its current 'Outstanding' status (June 2023⁷). Similarly, matters of Safeguarding⁸ and employee rights are governed by UK law.

2.2. Organisation

The Annual General Meeting

The school is a not-for-profit organisation, registered as a UK charity. As fee payers, parents are all members of the charity and elect a board of governors at the Annual General Meeting, AGM. The AGM is a forum where the members:

- are presented with the annual accounts
- confirm the governors of the Board
- elect new governors when required
- confirm the auditors for the next financial year
- grant discharge of the governors.

All members are encouraged to ask questions and raise any concerns with the board to ensure transparency and accountability.

Board of Governors

The Board currently consists of eight permanent members. At least one governor is required to be a member of the charity (i.e., a parent at the school). Each governor may serve up to six years on the board, with a one-year extension granted only in exceptional circumstances. To fulfil its obligations to the Swedish school system's regulatory body and to receive grants, the Board must have one member who acts as a representative of Skolverket. The Board meets once a month during term time.

The Board of Governors is responsible for holding school management to account, ensuring that action plans and policies for the school are up-to-date and adhered to, and, in the Chair, conducting

¹ <https://www.skolverket.se/sok#query/l%C3%A4roplan>

² The Swedish National Agency for Education

³ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800

⁴ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skolforordning-2011185_sfs-2011-185

⁵ https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/gymnasiefordning-20102039_sfs-2010-2039

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/inspections>

⁷ <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27/102948>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

regular update meetings and annual performance reviews with the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, and the Finance Operations Manager, FOM.

Another essential aspect of the Board's functioning is to ensure the school's financial security. In addition to approving the budget, this is done through regular contact of the Board's Treasurer with the FOM and financial reports presented at every monthly board meeting. This financial responsibility includes setting yearly school fees and increasing staff salary percentages. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the charity complies with applicable laws, regulations⁹ and good business practices.

Part of this good practice is maintaining a culture of trust and transparency in the organisation, with communication being key. The Board should ensure that it communicates any relevant information regarding the functioning or future of the school in a timely fashion to the management team, staff, and parents. The presence of two Staff Representatives (one from primary/secondary school, one from 6th form) at each board meeting makes this communication a two-way process. It gives the staff a voice at board meetings as these representatives can raise their colleagues' concerns and lend their professional expertise to discussions. These representatives are elected by their colleagues for a year, with the possibility of being re-elected.

Aside from its overall view of the school's operations, the Board must look to the future. Monitoring potential pitfalls economically or politically and being open to opportunities will ensure that the school is able to adapt and thrive moving forward.

School Management

The Headteacher takes executive responsibility for running the school, assisted in this operational function by the Deputy Headteacher and the Finance and Operations Manager. This management team works closely together to ensure the action plan for the school and budget are aligned. Management works across both schools, and the Headteacher may recruit additional support for the management team.

In addition to the day-to-day running of the school and implementing their action plan, the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant curriculums, School Act, Skolverket and Ofsted regulations, and UK employment law. As they are also responsible for maintaining a high standard of education, their own continued development of professional skills and knowledge is therefore essential, and opportunities to further these include courses and interactions with other school headteachers.

In addition to keeping the board apprised of developments and potential issues at the school, the management team has the main leadership role in supporting and motivating the school's staff. Annual development talks occur with each staff member and are conducted by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. It is essential to the school's thriving working environment and cohesiveness that they can unite the staff behind them and their leadership of the school.

Teachers and Support Staff

The school's greatest asset is its staff, and the quality of their work has a direct impact on the quality of the education received by our pupils. Ensuring that they feel motivated and supported in their

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/charity-commission-regulations>

working environment means that they will perform to the best of their professional abilities and are more likely to continue working at the school and sharing their valuable experience.

Professional development, including training opportunities and regular development talks, is essential. We actively ensure that every teacher at the school is qualified, giving the curriculum both depth and breadth. The ability to adapt to new teaching methods allows the school to continue to evolve. To best facilitate their pupils' individual learning journey, the staff need to ensure that they evaluate progress consistently and maintain excellent communication with parents.

Communication is also similarly important, allowing for a cohesive and collaborative group of colleagues aligned with the school's goals. This communication, at and between all levels of the school's structure, also builds trust throughout the organisation. Without this trust, uncertainty and demotivation are unavoidable consequences. Delivery on promises is a natural trust-builder, but consistency of professional treatment throughout the staff is also a priority.

2.3 Community engagement

The school should actively engage with its broader community and external Scandinavian organisations to raise its profile, raise funds when appropriate, and continue to serve as an anchor for many Swedes in London. The Headteacher is responsible for informing the Board of activities and actions taken.

2.4 Quality & Evaluation

The Board expects the school management to continually maintain and monitor the school's high standards across its provision of education and pastoral care, as well as the satisfaction levels of pupils, parents, and staff. Monitoring further outcomes, such as when pupils leave either the primary/secondary school or 6th form for further education, is also an essential part of this continuous assessment. The Headteacher and the school management team are responsible for informing the Board.

2.5 Marketing

Considering the specificity of its educational offering and location, the school has relied on an effective marketing strategy for several years. However, the new, ongoing challenges posed by, for instance, cost of living crises and Brexit mean that boosting the school's profile in London and internationally while continuing to improve quality, learning outcomes, student acquisition and retention is more critical than ever. While the Headteacher drives the marketing strategy, it is essential for the Board to stay regularly apprised of this strategy and to be ready to approve further resourcing where appropriate.

2.6 Fundraising

The impact of the pandemic and Brexit on student numbers will be a significant focus of the Board and Management Team over the coming five years. In addition to having an effective marketing strategy, fundraising initiatives, especially for the school's facilities, will be launched and driven. Fundraising at this level is a Board responsibility and will involve reaching out to the fundraising community, Swedish institutions in London, and the immediate school community.

3. Our Mission - where we see ourselves today

The Swedish School in London is a leading institution that fosters excellence in education, promotes Swedish language and culture, and nurtures global students/allows students to reach their full potential.

The school's mission of mutual respect, inclusivity and civic responsibility filters through all areas of its activities, and pupils of the school emerge as true cosmopolitans, having interacted with a host of different languages and cultures within the school population. While Swedish culture is celebrated in many ways, the large number of parents from other countries further enhances a truly international world view, which is only fitting in a city famous for its rich cultural mix.

4. 2030 Vision – “Nurturing global citizens”

A high-quality Swedish education with London as a classroom, providing bilingual education from ages three to 19, benefitting from small class sizes, dedicated teachers, and a deeply engaged school community of pupils and parents.

5. Goals

5.1 Make the SSL the most attractive option for parents moving to or living in London with a child or children in preschool to 6th form.

Ambition:

To be the most sought-after school option for our target group.

To increase the number of applicants and admitted students at SSL.

5.2 Continue to have qualified teachers providing high standard education

Ambition:

To maintain and recruit highly qualified teachers and staff.

To continuously develop staff professionally according to the Swedish curriculum and use different pedagogics methodology.

To improve staff through external training and collegial learning opportunities, constant self-assessment is important.

Benchmarking with other Headteachers and educational developments continually.

5.3 Strive for a Swedish education within a multicultural and multilingual setting.

Ambition:

To continuously develop the areas of multilingual and multicultural education.

To create and implement an organisation that allows SSL to offer places to help students with different levels of Swedish or Swedish as a second language.

To be able to support sixth form students with their applications to English universities.

To interact with other multilingual schools to broaden our understanding of teaching methodologies.

5.4 Aiming to prepare pupils for a digital future

Ambition:

Implement, monitor and assess the progress of digitalisation, including AI.

Ensure that the usage and benefits of any new technology or software introduced in the classroom are fully understood by pupils, teachers, and parents, to ensure its full potential is utilised.

Being aware of the huge benefits and overall efficiency of a digital future.

Critical thinking and the use of a pencil and paper and reading real books, introduced at the right age, still remain crucial.

5.5 To create confidence through creativity

Ambition:

A safe workplace for adults and children, where the atmosphere is characterised by creativity, flexibility and willingness to change, respect and tolerate.

Continue to offer a broad range of extra-curricular activities to create confidence through the arts/relating to music and creative arts.

5.6 Continue to offer London as a classroom

Ambition:

Continue to utilise London as a classroom, utilising all opportunities to enhance the learning of our pupils and students.

Ensure that this unique element of the school is well-communicated to potential pupils, students and staff.

To expose our students to people from different socioeconomic backgrounds to increase their compassion and empathy for others.

5.7 Strive for a happy and healthy school

Ambition:

Continue to ensure the physical and emotional welfare of all students enrolled at the school, including awareness of mental health issues.

Strive to create an inclusive teaching environment that enables most pupils to thrive and fulfil their aspirations.

Continuously assess and maintain the school both the primary/secondary school and the 6th form making sure they are welcoming and safe for both pupils and staff.

Actively embrace the different cultures that the school brings together, and not only tolerance but understand and support each other's differences.

The school takes a strong anti-bullying stance, with a focus on pupil wellbeing across the board, including in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

The school has a zero-tolerance policy to drugs and alcohol.

The school aims to make the transition into London life and the school as comfortable as possible for the students.

The school should always aim to make the most environmentally sustainable choices in all areas of its functioning.

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