

Europa School UK

Thame Lane, Culham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3DZ

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have a clear and compelling vision for multilingual education, which is shared by staff, parents, carers and pupils alike.
- Pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum. All pupils are taught in English and at least one other European language for the entirety of their time in the school.
- Teaching is effective overall because teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan interesting activities that motivate the majority of pupils to try their best.
- Pupils achieve well in most year groups and in most subjects. Disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also do well.
- A small number of pupils, in particular boys in the secondary phase, do not do as well as they could because teaching over time does not meet their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. They are proud to belong to this diverse school community. Pupils respect their teachers, are considerate to others and are polite to visitors.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, for example when online. Pupils say that there is someone that they can talk to if they are worried about anything.
- Students in the sixth form achieve excellent outcomes as a result of the highly effective teaching that they receive. They play a leading role in the life of the school and are well prepared for their next steps.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress from their starting points because teachers create a warm and nurturing climate in which children can learn and flourish.
- Governors hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and they carefully monitor the school's finances, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. However, they have not ensured that the website complies with current requirements.
- While pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, the school's approach to personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is not systematic enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of the small number of boys who do not do as well as they could by providing teachers with support and guidance on meeting pupils' individual needs.
- Ensure that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain by implementing a more systematic and planned approach to PSHE education.
- Update all statutory policies and ensure that they are published on the school's website.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in September 2018, the acting principal has quickly won the trust and confidence of the whole school community with her ambition for pupils' progress, her clarity of purpose and her willingness to listen.
- Staff morale is high. Most staff who responded to the online questionnaire indicated that they are proud to work in the school. Staff feel valued and trusted by their leaders. They say that leaders listen to their ideas and take account of their workload when making decisions.
- Leaders make good use of the training available from the European Schools network to ensure that new staff understand the requirements of the European Baccalaureate. Other staff welcome the opportunity to observe and learn from their colleagues. Teachers in the early years and primary phases benefit from moderation sessions with teachers in other local schools.
- On her appointment, the acting principal rightly recognised the urgent need to update policies and improve health and safety arrangements. Consequently, safeguarding is effective and site security has been improved. However, several policies have not yet been refreshed and many areas of the school are poorly maintained and shabby. Leaders have successfully applied for funding to improve the condition of the buildings and site, but this work has not yet started.
- A strong and compelling vision for a multicultural, multilingual education underpins the work of the school. Pupils follow a unique, challenging, broad and balanced curriculum. All pupils, from early years to the sixth form, are taught in at least two languages. By the time pupils start secondary school, they are fluent in English and at least one other language. In the secondary phase, pupils study for the European Baccalaureate, in which around 25% of the curriculum is delivered in French or German. Students achieve very strong outcomes at the age of 18 that enable many of them to move on to prestigious universities across Europe.
- Curriculum leaders, many of whom have been recently appointed, have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subjects for which they are responsible. They provide helpful advice to the teachers who report to them. However, arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and intervening quickly if a teacher needs support are in the early stages. Consequently, a small number of pupils, in particular boys in the secondary phase, do not do as well as they could because teaching does not meet their individual needs consistently well.
- Assessment arrangements are straightforward and effective. Teachers share information about every pupil that they teach so that leaders and teachers get a rounded view of pupils' progress in every subject.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, not least because the school community comprises pupils from many nationalities who learn and play together harmoniously. Pupils consider topical and ethical issues in religious education (RE) and moral education lessons. Pupils learn to be responsible citizens and enjoy raising money for charity.

- The school's provision for PSHE education is not well enough planned and does not cover the full range of issues pupils need to prepare them fully for life in modern Britain, particularly in the secondary phase. For example, while pupils receive timely advice to help them make decisions about their next steps for post-16 work or study, careers guidance for pupils below the age of 16 is less well developed.
- A small number of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Effective use is made of the pupil premium to support these pupils. Leaders are skilled in identifying barriers that may prevent disadvantaged pupils from reaching their potential. Leaders check the impact of any interventions rigorously. Consequently, there is no difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Leaders also make good use of funding provided to support the small number of pupils with SEND. These pupils make very strong progress because leaders make accurate assessments of the help needed and allocate support accordingly.
- Over 90% of parents would recommend the school to others. One parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, wrote, 'I feel really lucky that my child gets the chance to be in such a lovely school. She is happy, learning lots and in a safe environment.' Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they receive valuable information about their child's progress. However, some parents reported that communication between school and home is not always timely or clear.

Governance of the school

- Governors convey a sincerely held and clearly articulated vision for the school, a vision that they have spent many years bringing to fruition. They believe passionately in the value of a bilingual education that celebrates not only the language but also the culture, traditions and history of other European nations.
- Governors are acutely aware of their strategic responsibilities. They are currently working closely with external stakeholders to secure the long-term future of the school. They are proud that the school is the only one of its kind in the United Kingdom and are determined to oversee the next phase of its development.
- Through the work of their various committees, governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor finances carefully, including additional funds provided to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. They are ambitious for pupils' achievement and hold the acting principal and her team stringently to account for the progress that pupils make.
- However, since the incorporation of the secondary school into Europa School UK, governors have not acted with sufficient urgency to ensure that all policies and practices reflect current requirements and that information on the website is in line with the Department for Education's guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' welfare and well-being have a high priority in the school. Pastoral leaders know their pupils well and ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need.

Pupils say that they feel confident about talking to their teachers or to the school counsellor if they have any problems.

- Leaders are not complacent and constantly seek to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. They act swiftly on any advice received from external sources, including the local authority. Nearly all parents who responded to the online questionnaire believe that their children are safe in school.
- Arrangements for vetting the suitability of staff and volunteers are carried out diligently and accurately. All staff have received up-to-date training on child protection, including on the 'Prevent' duty. Staff confirm that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant and know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they have been given guidance on staying safe when online. Pupils valued the recent talk on bullying given by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).
- The school's designated leaders for safeguarding have undertaken relevant training. They are passionate about pupils' safety and welfare. They keep careful records of all child protection concerns. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils who may be at risk of harm get timely help and support, following up tenaciously if there are any delays.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and are ambitious for their success. They give pupils challenging work to do and encourage them to develop enquiring minds. As a result, pupils make good progress across the school.
- Teachers' planning meets pupils' needs in most subjects and in most year groups. When learning over time is most effective, teachers set activities that are well matched to pupils' prior attainment. For example, in English, pupils in the secondary phase relished exploring their changing views of the characters in Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. Pupils in Year 4 enjoyed finding out which would be the most suitable materials for making an umbrella through a series of well-judged demonstrations and activities.
- Where teaching over time has less impact on pupils' progress, the work set is not well enough matched to what pupils already know, understand and can do. This occasionally occurs in second language teaching, where teachers' planning does not always take account of the wide range of pupils' linguistic ability. In such cases, pupils' attention wanders and they are not able to play a full part in lessons. In addition, some boys do not make the progress of which they are capable when activities set do not build well enough on their prior attainment.
- Most teachers use their expert subject knowledge to ask probing questions which require pupils to think deeply and explain their ideas. In many subjects, teachers pitch the work at a consistently high level, while at the same time providing pupils with the support that they need to master new knowledge and concepts. For example, in secondary mathematics, searching questions enabled pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of algebra. In the secondary geography course, delivered in

German, pupils were given the background knowledge that they needed to discuss push-and-pull factors in urbanisation with insight.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and professional. Pupils feel confident in expressing their ideas because teachers have created a scholarly atmosphere in which pupils listen to each other respectfully. This was illustrated in a secondary RE lesson where pupils engaged in a lively discussion about their views of Moses' actions in the Old Testament.
- Most teachers know their pupils well and are quick to spot any misconceptions they may have, offering additional support if necessary. Pupils confirm that teachers take the time to explain a topic again if they haven't understood the first time.
- Most teachers follow the school's agreed approach to feedback. Pupils make efficient use of the time that teachers give them to improve their work. On the few occasions where the school's policy on feedback is not followed closely, pupils do not get the timely support they need because teachers do not know enough about their pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are highly confident, articulate and successful learners. They talk with genuine enthusiasm about the wide range of subjects that they study. They are rightly proud of the multicultural community of their school and of their fluency in at least two languages. They learn to be responsible citizens by, for example, participating in various charity fundraising projects organised by sixth-form students.
- Pupils in all year groups speak highly of the trips, visits and extra-curricular activities that staff organise for them. Some pupils have the chance to take part in debates and sporting competitions with pupils from across Europe. Many pupils recently enjoyed taking part in a school production of 'We Will Rock You'. At the time of the inspection, pupils in the early years were practising for their carol service, singing with gusto in English, French, Spanish and German.
- Pupils are ambitious for their futures and have appropriately high career aspirations. However, pupils in the secondary phase say that they would like more information about careers, universities and other post-16 options. The recently appointed careers officer has credible plans in place to meet pupils' desire for more information about next steps, but it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- In the primary phase, pupils learn about other cultures and their traditions in their second language studies. They also consider topics such as healthy eating in their Discovering Our World curriculum. In the secondary phase, pupils discuss moral and social issues in RE and moral education lessons. Similarly, the school makes use of visiting speakers, most recently representatives from the NSPCC, to raise pupils' awareness of important issues.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks. They have been taught how to recognise the signs of online grooming and they know to keep personal

information private when using the internet. Older pupils receive guidance in managing examination stress. A trained counsellor is on hand to support vulnerable pupils, and all pupils have a high degree of trust in her.

- Pupils reject all forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. They told inspectors that bullying is infrequent and that it is handled well by teachers when it occurs. The school's own records confirm that recorded incidents of bullying are rare. However, although persuaded that this is not typical of pupils' attitudes across the school, inspectors noticed, and reported to leaders, the word 'gay' scrawled on a classroom wall.
- Despite the many strengths in the arrangements for pupils' personal development and welfare, there are some gaps in the school's provision of information that pupils need to be fully prepared for life in modern Britain. This is because leaders have not yet put in place a systematic and planned approach to the delivery of PSHE education, particularly in the secondary phase.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils are polite and respectful to their teachers, to visitors and to each other.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically good. In corridors and in the school grounds, pupils behave sensibly. Pupils arrive punctually to their lessons, have the right equipment with them and settle quickly to their work. Staff agree that pupils conduct themselves well and that leaders manage behaviour effectively.
- While the majority of parents express strong support for the school, a small number of parents voiced concerns about behaviour and bullying, particularly in the secondary phase. Leaders and governors have recently introduced a new behaviour policy, but it is too early to evaluate its impact.
- Attendance is consistently above the national averages in the primary and secondary phases. Leaders track attendance for all pupils and for groups of pupils so that they can act quickly if a pupil's attendance begins to dip. Leaders work closely with the families of any pupils whose attendance is a concern, and their efforts are invariably effective.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils enter Year 1 with below-average attainment. Typically, around two thirds of the cohort speak English as an additional language. They study in English for half of the week and then switch to a curriculum delivered entirely in German, French or Spanish for the rest of the week.
- By the time they leave key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with national averages. Similarly, by the end of key stage 2, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are at least in line with, and sometimes above, that found nationally, particularly in reading.

- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check remains below average, but improved by 11% between 2017 and 2018.
- Current pupils in the primary phase make strong progress from their starting points. In reading, teachers combine regular practice in reading comprehension with the consistent promotion of reading for pleasure both in English and in their second language. Pupils read aloud fluently and can work out the meaning of new words. Less confident readers use their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and do so with understanding and expression.
- Teachers in the primary phase make sure that pupils learn to write in sentences that are correctly punctuated and, increasingly, in paragraphs that contain vivid writing. Most pupils write carefully and neatly and take pride in their work, which improves in accuracy and sophistication as they progress through the school. However, some boys' progress in writing, and their presentation of it, is more variable. Because teachers have focused on it this year, spelling, in particular boys' spelling, is improving.
- Pupils in key stage 2 learn to design fair tests, make predictions and use evidence to draw conclusions in science. The good progress that they make in their scientific understanding continues into the secondary phase, where pupils engage well with the increasingly challenging science curriculum.
- During Years 7 to 11, pupils make sustained progress in a range of subjects, including those delivered in a second language. Pupils do particularly well in speaking and listening. They develop the ability to debate new ideas with confidence and to ask searching questions of their teacher and of each other. They listen intently and are quick to pick up on nuances in arguments.
- In English, pupils in the secondary phase make strong progress from their average starting points because the curriculum is challenging. Pupils use spelling, grammar and punctuation with increasing accuracy. Current pupils in Year 11 demonstrate a secure understanding of how writers achieve their effects.
- Pupils use and apply their mathematical skills with confidence, and so make rapid progress over time. In humanities, pupils have the unique opportunity to study and evaluate historical events from different European viewpoints.
- There are no differences in the overall rates of progress of the very few disadvantaged pupils in the school, those who have SEND and other pupils in both the primary and secondary phases. While additional funding is generally used wisely to identify barriers and put in place effective personalised support, a small number of boys with SEND continue to do less well than they could
- The attainment of most-able pupils in the primary phase is lower than that seen nationally, though it is improving over time. Most-able pupils in the secondary phase, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Most pupils take pride in their work and try hard at all times. This year, leaders have focused on boys' presentation of their work and on their overall progress. There are signs that this work is beginning to have an impact, as illustrated in the early years, where boys outperformed girls in 2018, and in recent improvements in boys' progress in key stage 3.

- Pupils in the school are prepared well for their next steps in education because they make good progress in English, mathematics and a range of subjects. The proportion of pupils who stay on to sit their European Baccalaureate in the sixth form is very high.

Early years provision

Good

- Children's stages of development when they enter the Reception year are broadly typical for their age. Although the figure varies from year to year, around two thirds of children speak English as an additional language. Over the last year, leaders have improved the systems for tracking children's progress from these starting points. These systems are helping to improve the quality of provision.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was below the national average in 2018 but was 9% higher than it was in 2017. Boys did better than girls. Many children do not speak English when they arrive at the school. For half of the week, children follow a curriculum delivered entirely in French, Spanish or German.
- Current children are making good progress towards meeting their early learning goals. The small number of disadvantaged children, and those with SEND, make strong progress because adults identify their needs promptly and ensure that effective interventions are in place.
- Children enjoy the wide range of interesting and exciting activities that adults provide for them, both indoors and outside. For the most part, activities are carefully planned to match children's interests and to support their early reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children enjoyed learning about the story of St Nicholas in German. At other times in the year, they learn about a range of European festivals and celebrations.
- Relationships between children and adults are warm, friendly and positive. The environment is nurturing. Adults are generally effective in helping children to develop and extend their thinking. Children's achievements are carefully noted and praised by adults. Consequently, children behave well and take pride in their work.
- Leaders manage transition effectively. All children and their parents spend a day in the school in the summer before they start school. There are events throughout the year to which parents are invited to discuss how their children are getting on. Towards the end of the year, the Reception teachers and the Year 1 teachers meet, together with the special educational needs coordinator, to discuss and identify the needs of each child.
- In summary, children are ready for Year 1 by the time they leave the Reception class.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Published outcomes for 2018 show that students, including disadvantaged students, those with SEND and the most able, achieved outcomes in their European Baccalaureate examinations that were well above average compared to those attained by students nationally.

- Students are very well prepared for the next steps in their lives and education. They follow a wide and challenging curriculum, studying 10 subjects, at least two of which are delivered in European languages. All students study mathematics to at least AS level equivalent standard. Most go on to selective universities in the United Kingdom or high-performing universities in Europe.
- Current students in their final year confirm that they have received timely and helpful advice on the options available to them after their examinations, including on alternatives to higher education such as apprenticeships. They are highly ambitious and have in place well-thought-out plans for their future careers.
- Current students, including the most able, those who are disadvantaged or those with SEND, make sustained progress. Effective support is in place for any students who are experiencing difficulties with their academic programmes.
- Teaching in the sixth form is highly effective. For the most part, teachers are experts in their subjects. Students respond well to the high levels of challenge that they receive. This is illustrated in chemistry, where the teacher's clear explanations and well-designed practical activities led students to a sound understanding of types of isomers. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not take sufficient account of students' starting points when setting tasks and do not check often enough that students understand the work.
- Rates of retention from Year 11 into Year 12 are high, and almost all students stay on between Year 12 and Year 13. Students' attendance and behaviour are excellent, and they act as strong role models for other pupils in the school. Students say that they feel safe and that their teachers give them the information that they need to stay safe in and out of school, including online. They were appreciative of a recent session organised by the school counsellor on tackling exam stress.
- Students seize opportunities to play a leadership role in the school. Through the committees that they run, sixth formers organise events such as the annual prom, the junior and senior balls and a musical soirée.
- Students engage in a range of cultural and sporting events, some of which are made available through the network of European Schools. For instance, a group of students will compete in an inter-European Schools sporting tournament in Italy in May. Others take part in debates and seminars with students from around the world as part of the Model United Nations project.
- While work experience is available, only around one third of students currently take it up. Leaders are currently planning to implement further opportunities for work-related learning, so that all students benefit. These plans are credible.

School details

Unique reference number	138269
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10053293

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	857
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Parker
Acting Principal	Lynn Wood
Telephone number	01235 524060
Website	https://europaschooluk.org
Email address	principal@europaschool.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- The Europa School UK opened in 2012. It was designated to take pupils between the ages of 4 to 19. Until 2017, the school operated as a primary school, educating pupils from the age of 4 to 11. The school shared a site and some facilities with a secondary school, the European School, Culham. At the end of the academic year 2016/17, the European School closed, and its site and pupils transferred, as planned, to the Europa School UK. Staff in the European School were invited to apply for posts in the Europa School UK with effect from September 2017 through an open recruitment process. Under half of the current complement of secondary phase teachers worked in the European School.

- The founding principal retired in 2018. The current acting principal took up her post in September 2018.
- In the primary school, pupils are taught for half of the week in English. For the second half of the week, all teaching is conducted in either French, Spanish or German. In the secondary section, pupils follow the European Baccalaureate up to the age of 18. Some subjects are taught in either French or German.
- The school does not offer GCSE courses and is exempt from doing so.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 48 lessons to observe learning in every phase and across the curriculum. The principal or other members of the senior leadership team accompanied inspectors on some of these visits.
- The lead inspector met with the principal to discuss her self-evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders responsible for various aspects of the school’s work.
- Inspectors also met formally with groups of staff, pupils and governors, as well as talking informally to pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority designated officer on the telephone.
- The inspection team considered a wide range of additional evidence, including information and documents on the school’s website, samples of pupils’ work, and leaders’ records of pupils’ attendance, behaviour and academic standards.
- Inspectors took account of 62 staff survey responses and 53 replies to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire. Parents’ views were also considered via 203 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, which included 176 free-text comments.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding procedures at the school.

Inspection team

Gary Holden, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Harry Kutty	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bullen	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Harty	Ofsted Inspector

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