

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO
SECTION 109(1) AND (2) OF
THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS ACT 2008**

Name of school:	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley
DfE number:	919/6109
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley Supporting Inspectors: Mr Ted Cohn Mr Tony Hubbard Lay Inspector: Mrs Julie Neale
Dates of inspection:	24 – 26 March 2015

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley		
Address of school:	Langley Hill Kings Langley Hertfordshire WD4 9HG		
Telephone number:	01923 262505		
Fax number:	01923 270958		
Email address:	langleyc@rssl.org		
Proprietor:	Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley Ltd		
Chairs of the College of Staff:	Anthony Arulanandam and Fiona Murray		
Chair of the Trustees:	Dr Sue Peat		
Bursar:	Carol Langley		
DfE number:	919/6109		
Type of school:	Independent school associated with the Steiner Fellowship		
Age range of pupils and students:	3 - 19		
Gender of pupils:	Male and female		
Total number on roll:	(Full-time)	Boys: 173	Girls: 144
	(Part-time)	Boys: 34	Girls: 36
Number of children under 5:	Boys: 18	Girls: 26	
Number of post-16 students:	Boys: 31	Girls: 20	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need:	Boys: 1	Girls: 2	
Number of boarders:	Boys: 2	Girls: 7	
Annual fees:	£4,965 - £9,120		
Type of inspection:	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008		
Inspection Team: Reporting Inspector:	Dr Martin Bradley		
	Supporting Inspectors: Mr Ted Cohn Mr Tony Hubbard		

Lay Inspector:

Mrs Julie Neale

Dates of inspection:

24 to 26 March 2015

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of 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, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by SIS and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector, who looked at agreed aspects of the school's organisation and maintenance of ethos and reported on these to SWSF. The lay inspector's findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley is an independent school for girls and boys aged three to nineteen. It occupies a large site in rural surroundings in Kings Langley in Hertfordshire. The school follows the philosophy and curriculum developed through the works of Rudolf Steiner. It opened in 1949 and is one of the longest established Steiner Waldorf schools in the United Kingdom. There are currently 419 pupils on roll of whom nine are boarders placed with local host families. Seventy-five children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and fifty-one pupils are in the sixth form. Formal aspects of learning are introduced a year later in the Steiner Waldorf curriculum and so pupils take national examination for GCSE, AS level and Advanced level (A2) a year later than usual. Admission is non-selective. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school seeks to follow Rudolf Steiner: "Our highest endeavour must be to develop human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives."

During the inspection Class 10 pupils were out of school on work experience and Class 12 were on a trip to Italy.

Steiner class names	National Curriculum	
Kindergarten	Nursery, Year R, Year 1	Kindergarten
Class 1	Year 2	Lower School
Class 2	Year 3	Ditto
Class 3	Year 4	Ditto
Class 4	Year 5	Ditto
Class 5	Year 6	Ditto
Class 6	Year 7	Ditto
Class 7	Year 8	Ditto
Class 8	Year 9	Ditto
Class 9	Year 10	Upper School
Class 10	Year 11	Ditto
Class 11	Year 12	Ditto
Class 12	Year 13	Ditto
Class 13	Year 14	Ditto

Summary of main findings:

Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley provides a good quality of education. Provision in the Kindergartens is outstanding. Across the school pupils are able to become confident and articulate young people who have been well-prepared for the next stage in their lives and education. Their spiritual and moral development is outstanding, and their social and cultural development is good. The curriculum and other activities meet the needs of the pupils satisfactorily and the curriculum is well-rounded throughout the school. Teaching and assessment are good overall with a significant proportion of teaching being outstanding. Pupils make good progress in their learning and the oldest ones achieve well in national examinations. Provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) is satisfactory and has been developed following the last report. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and they reported that they enjoyed coming to school and felt safe there. However, there are some elements of the school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety which require improvement, including risk assessments which are not completed consistently, and some open access to the site which does not meet the regulations. Parents are generally very supportive of the school although a minority stated that they were hesitant to raise concerns and to use the complaints procedure.

Leadership and management are satisfactory on a day-to-day operational level but the current arrangements do not provide the school with capacity to improve. At present the senior post of Education Facilitator is vacant and the school's administrative structure does not include an administrator as this role is currently undertaken by the Bursar. Whilst other staff have sought to undertake aspects of these roles, these are temporary arrangements which have supported the school's day to day operations rather than being able to promote developments and initiatives and drive forward improvement.

Since the last inspection the school has taken some steps to develop its planning, particularly using ICT. The School Development Plan addresses appropriate issues and is a work in progress. Following the recommendations in the last report, subject planning and schemes of work have been devised class by class, but are variable between classes and subjects. Some teachers have considered how to extend their teaching strategies to take account of the different levels of ability in each class, but again this has not been consistently implemented. Assessment has improved since the last inspection, but the school has not yet fully implemented a framework for assessment to evaluate the pupils' progress across the curriculum in relation to identified learning objectives.

What the school does well:

- spiritual and moral development are outstanding;
- the Kindergarten provision is excellent;
- the pupils are articulate and write well;
- the quality of work in art, music and eurythmy is high; and

- the curriculum is well-rounded throughout the school.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

- ensure that all risk assessments are reviewed and up to date, that they are countersigned and dated by a senior member of the teaching staff, as detailed in Part 3;
- ensure that all staff carry identification badges, as detailed in Part 3;
- ensure that appropriate checks are made on all staff and these records are kept on the Single Central Register, as detailed in Part 4;
- ensure that the premises and buildings are kept safe as far as is reasonably practicable, by preventing unsupervised access to any hazardous parts of the premises, and securing the access to the site from the adjacent allotment and staff car park, as detailed in Part 5;
- relocate the medical room so that it is near to a toilet and includes a washing facility, as detailed in Part 5; and
- appoint suitably trained staff to leadership and management positions and allocate sufficient time for them to discharge their roles effectively in order to ensure that all Independent School Standards are met, as detailed in Part 8.

What the school must do to comply with the mandatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school complies with the mandatory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Next Steps:

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following:

- ensure that the trustees have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and receive appropriate training so that they can carry these out efficiently and effectively; and
- complete the process of establishing a common scheme of yearly and termly planning, making sure that these can provide a transparent view of continuity

and progression over time in each subject identified in 'The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum'.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is of satisfactory quality. It has begun to make the improvements recommended in the last inspection, but management is aware that the process is still incomplete. It retains the good qualities noted at that time. The curriculum is broad and sustains all the curricular elements specified in the regulations so that pupils develop into well-educated young people. Moreover, by maintaining a balance between academic and practical subjects, and between these and attention to main lesson and the spiritual rhythms of the year it fulfils its aim of developing “head, heart and hand”.

The school has a written curriculum policy, whose spirit is well explained and implemented. Among other priorities, it places great weight on developing pupils’ sense of their own freedom and their respect for law and for the freedoms and democratic rights of others, and this evident in their attitudes and in the teaching they receive.

The integrated curriculum in the Kindergarten is developed in the Lower School, where the Main Lesson is the focus. English and mathematics are taught throughout the Lower and Upper schools. Speaking, listening and literacy are very well supported so that by the end of Class 5 pupils write well and throughout the school are highly articulate. The planning for mathematics enables pupils to achieve national expectations. Throughout the Lower School, pupils have a worthwhile experience of music and art are taught both as part of the Main Lesson and, from Class 3, as a separate subject. Practical subjects provide a distinctive and valuable element of pupils’ experience: they include handwork for the younger pupils, gardening from Class 6, and a rotation between handwork, woodwork, cookery and painting from Class 7. The study of history, geography and science are intended to emerge gradually through the Main Lessons and are not specifically identified on the timetable.

Main Lessons continue through the Upper School; at this stage they include history, geography and science. Science and history and a range of other subjects are offered as specialist subjects for GCSE. Practical subjects continue in Class 9 with rotations between pottery, metalwork and art, and between drama, graphics and ICT. There is planned experience of ICT for all pupils in Class 9 and it is an option in Class 10 & 11.

Pupils take their GCSEs and A levels a year later than most pupils nationally. They study a core of English Language and Literature, mathematics, science and a choice between French and German. Pupils can choose to study ICT to a GCSE equivalent level. In addition they have a modest range of options, including history, practical and aesthetic subjects. Pupils can choose from a range of sixteen subjects to A level.

Following a recommendation made in the last report, the school has been working to improve the detailed planning of schemes of work for the curriculum, storing these

on an IT *hub*. Whilst progress in this area has been slow, a helpful structure for yearly plans has been developed for the Lower School, indicating content, differentiated activities and planned outcomes for pupils. At their best, and particularly in English and mathematics, plans include specific skills, making it possible to track progression in Main Lessons and some other subjects, particularly French. The schemes of work vary considerably in quality and detail from class to class. Some plans are much briefer than others and do not include sufficient consideration of aspects such as differentiation. Plans relating to history and geography do not provide for the specific subject skills in a manner that would allow progress to be tracked through a pupil's career in the school. The plans for science cannot readily be identified on the *hub*. Progress in implementing the planned schemes has been slow because it has only recently been agreed that all should implement it. Schemes for the Upper School are based on individual classes and consist in many cases of collections of termly and individual lesson plans. These arrangements give teachers, and particularly class teachers, a high degree of flexibility in the planning and delivery of learning, but balance, consistency and progression in subject skills over time is unclear, as is the implementation of the otherwise sound policies for PSHEE.

The curriculum is suitably extended by a wide range of external visits to relevant places, such as the British Museum. More extended trips occur every other year, such as the trip to Italy for Class 12, undertaken at the time of the inspection.

Provision for pupils in need of learning support or extension remains a strength of the school. The department for special needs is substantial and well organised, with strong links to outside specialist agencies and within the school to staff and parents. Statements of special educational needs are properly implemented and kept under review. There are comprehensive arrangements for identifying a wide range of learning needs, making use of observation by both parents and teachers and of batteries of tests on literacy and numeracy. Suitable Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are drawn up, communicated effectively to class and other relevant teachers. Where needed, effective in-class support and one-to-one and group support are provided. Targets are set and closely monitored. Teachers are familiar with IEPs and plan their lessons to take account of them. Arrangements for high performing pupils are at an earlier stage, so that practice in catering for these pupils varies. Pupils already fluent in the foreign language being taught feel that they are not provided with work at the right level.

The scheme for careers is satisfactory. Pupils receive planned one-to-one interviews about their intentions and two separate weeks of work experience, of which one, for Class 10, took place during the inspection. These take place in the community although they are not targeted to any specific interests of pupils. A further opportunity in Class 12 allows for a more individual choice of experience.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall, with a significant proportion of teaching being outstanding. During the inspection, Classes 10 and 12 were out of school on organised activities. As a result some classes had supply staff. Also in many classes Main Lessons had completed their cycle and lessons were focussed on preparations for performance or other aspects of Easter celebrations. In the Upper School revision lessons were being provided; 75% of the lessons seen in the Lower School were outstanding.

Examination results at GCSE, AS and A2 levels are good, often above national averages. Although the relatively small size of the cohorts, especially for AS and A2 examinations, make accurate national comparisons difficult, the results reflect the good progress pupils make through the school. Where GCSE subjects are taken by nearly all pupils, the results are well above national averages, especially for English and English Literature.

From the youngest classes the pupils are encouraged to be self-motivated and to make physical, emotional and creative efforts. This was evident in a history of art lesson in Class 7 where the pupils showed extremely good awareness of Michelangelo's sculpture techniques, being adeptly encouraged by the teacher's excellent knowledge and drawing on their past work on Donatello and Leonardo da Vinci. In a Class 4 eurythmy lesson the pupils showed considerable concentration when moving and clapping to a careful piano accompaniment, developing sequences of movement and an awareness of the importance of the quality of their movement. In the minority of less satisfactory lessons little or no account is taken of the range of abilities or achievements amongst the pupils, instead requiring all to follow the same activities often at the same pace. In such cases, the more able pupils complete the work quickly and wait for others to catch up, and those finding the task more difficult do not complete it or produce much less work. Despite the recommendation made in the last report, the school has yet to establish ways of developing all teachers' skills to meet the range of pupils' capabilities in each class, despite most teachers having a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of their pupils. Teachers generally have at least a good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught.

Classroom resources are of a good quality, quantity and range. Some older pupils expressed concern at their limited access to computers for school work and projects.

The school has sought to develop its framework for assessment as recommended in the last report. This remains work in progress and the framework is not yet fully applied across all classes. Work is discussed with the pupils during lessons, although the teacher's comments are often not recorded. In some older classes weekly review sessions are held to celebrate successes, review learning and to discuss any problems. This practice is not used in all classes and along with other assessments, consistent use of common assessment practices and frameworks remains an issue for further development. This relates also to the need to continue to develop a consistent view of what constitutes good teaching practices within and across subjects, so that assessment informs teaching styles with a view to raising pupil's attainment. The school's policy for marking is clear and the quality of marking is good overall, but again varies from class to class.

Behaviour is generally good both in classes and elsewhere. Pupils are very clear as to which areas of the grounds are out of bounds to their year groups and the great majority respect this. This awareness of and respect for rules reflects the ways in which the teaching supports fundamental British values, including mutual respect, tolerance and the rule of law.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall, with some outstanding features particularly related to moral and spiritual development. Through the values and expectations of teachers, the educational experiences of pupils and the ethos of the school, British democratic values are actively promoted. Teachers regard the development of pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence as a key aspect of their role, particularly class teachers lower down the school. From an early age, pupils often demonstrate self-esteem and self-confidence because of the opportunities teachers create for them to succeed and, for instance, to take on roles, such as in the singing of mathematical tables, where one pupil in turn led the singing of individual tables. As well, teachers are generally very effective in creating an ethos of support and encouragement in the way in which they interact with pupils.

Spiritual development is a key precept of Steiner education and many opportunities to achieve this occur across the curriculum in areas such as art, English, music, eurythmy, religious education and the introductory activities in Main Lessons. It was evident in the verve and intensity of the Class 6 orchestra, which included all pupils in the class. Spiritual development is enhanced through the very many trips and visits which are made to art galleries and museums. The two-week visit to the great Renaissance cities of Italy in Class 12 is a notable example of enhancing spiritual and cultural development, as one pupil who went last year commented, a 'life-changing experience'. The emphasis on observing and enjoying the natural rhythm of the seasons in the school grounds makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of the younger pupils.

From an early age pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong as part of behaving in an appropriate manner and, as they move through the school, they become increasingly able to relate this to broader aspects of civil and criminal law in England. Behaviour is now more consistently good than at the time of the last inspection, reflecting a better understanding of personal responsibility amongst pupils. Older pupils have a good understanding of national government and the role of Members of Parliament, including issues related to the upcoming election. They are looking forward to the mock election that is planned. Pupils are less familiar with how local government and services are organised to serve the needs of the community.

Tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions are strongly encouraged through the curriculum and the celebration of cultural and religious differences through time and place. Pupils enjoy the diversity of human experience they encounter in the curriculum, which is enhanced by the diverse backgrounds of pupils in classes. Under-pinning this celebration of difference is a respect for and interest in other traditions and a more general respect for people generally, inculcated from an early age.

The promotion of partisan political views would be a clear breach of Steiner philosophy and the school is careful to ensure that any activity involving political issues offers a balanced presentation of opposing views. This balance is reflected in material promoting the school and in its extra-curricular activities.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their education and greatly enjoy what they do. They are generally well prepared for their future economic well-being and are very keen to

make a positive contribution, such as through their work in the community and fundraising for charities. By the time pupils move towards the end of their time at the school they have become mature and confident young people with a set of values that will serve them well in their adult life.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The quality of the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils acknowledge that they feel safe and well cared for, including boarding pupils. Whilst policies are in place to support welfare, health and safety, aspects of their implementation, notably risk assessments, have not been adequately maintained and updated, especially where these are general assessments for areas of the school. Many have not been properly reviewed since 2010 or earlier and some still retained are no longer applicable. Other assessments for specific events, such as trips and visits outside school have not always been countersigned or have been signed by administrative rather than teaching staff. Not all adults working in the school carry identification badges. A specialist company provides good health and safety checks for the school workshops. Fire safety and protection procedures are up-to-date.

The school promotes healthy eating and life styles very effectively. The prepared lunches take full account of the Food Standards Agency requirements for publishing lists of potential allergens on the menus.

Policies for child protection, including e-safety, and for first aid are up to date and, implemented appropriately. Pupils in Years 5 and 8 indicated that they were familiar with the e-safety policy. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications. The anti-bullying policy is understood by pupils who reported little bullying but regarded bad behaviour as an issue at times. Sanctions are appropriately recorded. The admissions register is suitably maintained, but attendance registers are at time casually maintained. They contain the necessary information, but several have unused pages or information recorded in the wrong place. The information is transferred onto an electronic database which is accurate, but the paper copies of attendance registers form the original record.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do in order to comply with the regulations?

- *the school should ensure that all risk assessments are reviewed and up to date, that they are counter signed and dated by a senior member of the teaching staff (Paragraph 16(a)); and*
- *ensure that all staff carry identification badges (Paragraph 11).*

PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for the safer recruitment of staff, which has regard for the latest guidance. This provides for all the necessary checks to be carried out and recorded on the single central register. Some minor clerical errors pointed out during the inspection have been remedied. An appropriate policy and procedure for recruitment and background checks is in place. There is an isolated case where the school's procedures for full background checks were not followed and the Single Central Register was not correctly completed, although a DBS check had been seen.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do in order to comply with the regulations?

- *ensure that all necessary background checks are carried out without exception, and fully recorded in the Single Central Register (Paragraphs 18(a-c) and 21).*

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

Overall, the premises and accommodation are of a satisfactory quality and many aspects are of good quality. The large site has ample outdoor space for sport, recreation and adventure. The teaching accommodation meets the needs of pupils very well, and includes a good range of specialist classrooms and facilities. In addition to the three science laboratories and computer room, there are good spaces for eurhythm, a good library which is well stocked but short of modern material, a large gymnasium with boys' and girls' showers, and facilities for art, woodwork and metal work. The ample grounds are extremely well organised to encourage vigorous climbing, balancing, camp making and other activities. They include a well-managed garden fully and effectively used in pupils' learning. The kitchen is clean and has been inspected for hygiene since the last school inspection. The school's medical room is suitable in most respects, but is at too great a distance from the nearest pupil toilets.

Most areas of the school are adequately maintained and decorated, with an appropriate regard for safety. However, both kitchen doors were left unlocked in the absence of any staff. Similarly, the gymnasium was left unlocked where a main power switch is in easy reach. Though the school is kept generally tidy, the metalwork provision is cramped for some purposes, and is cluttered with unused tools and material in a way that impinges upon safety. The school took steps to address the issue of security at the last inspection. However, the site is still not secure. There is no barrier between the school's garden and the adjacent allotment and despite an electric gate leading to the front entrance of the building, the well signposted car park to the side gives easy access to the whole site.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do in order to comply with the regulations?

- *ensure that the premises and buildings are kept safe as far as is reasonably practicable, by preventing unsupervised access to any hazardous parts of the premises, and securing the access to the site from the adjacent allotment and staff car park (Paragraph 25); and*
- *relocate the medical room so that it is near to a toilet and includes a washing facility (paragraph 24 (1) (b)).*

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The quality of information for parents is generally good. School governance is clearly outlined on the website and in the Parent Handbook and key staff members and Trustees are named. All statutory policies are in place and are available via the website or the parents' handbook, although some need updating due to changes in staff. Key policies are also accessible for inspection on request from reception. The website is informative and is easy to navigate. A calendar is sent to all parents at the beginning of term, containing dates for Parents' evenings, festivals and events. A weekly newsletter is emailed or given to parents with details of forthcoming school events and community notices.

Parents are given information about their child's progress through individual teacher parent consultations. In the Lower School termly parents' evenings provide an opportunity to learn about child development and the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum. A written report is sent annually to the parents with comments from the class teacher and subject teachers. Upper School pupil reports sent twice yearly, at Christmas and at the end of the Summer Term. The reports include an account of what has been taught and a section on each child's progress in all subjects. In the Upper School they also include suggestions and recommendations for the pupils progression in their GCSE and A level subjects.

The great majority of parents who returned questionnaires were very supportive of the school and appreciate the education their children are receiving. The quality of the teaching is generally highly valued, and parents feel that children are treated fairly and with respect. A minority of parents have highlighted concerns about the efficient running of the school and how complaints, questions and suggestions are dealt with.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school has a comprehensive concerns and complaints procedure, last reviewed in February 2014. This is available to parents via the website and on request.

There have been four formal (stage 2) complaints in the last academic year. In all cases, complaints were followed up within the timescales of the procedures and complainants notified of outcomes.

A number of parents expressed an unwillingness to make a formal complaint, but have concerns about how informal complaints, questions and suggestions are dealt with.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 8 - The quality and effectiveness of leadership in and management of schools

The quality and effectiveness of leadership in and management of the school is satisfactory, in enabling the school to run smoothly on a daily basis, but there are some important deficiencies which the school needs to rectify in order to ensure that all the Independent School Standards are met. While committed to the principles and practice of Steiner education, the trustees have not ensured that there are sufficient well-trained staff with enough time and resources to manage the school effectively and promote its development.

The Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley (RSSKL) Association is the proprietor of the school. It meets once a year and delegates full leadership and management authority to a Council of Trustees, whose members are elected and re-elected at the annual meeting of the association. The trustees have a wide range of relevant and helpful expertise, including management experience in various educational institutions, business and the National Health Service, together with a deep understanding of the philosophical principles underpinning Steiner education; anthroposophy. A common feature of the trustees is their strong commitment to the principles and practice of Steiner education and its effective delivery at the school.

A number of the trustees are relatively recent appointments. They have had helpful informal training and support from more experienced trustees, but have not undertaken any formal training for their role. The Council of Trustees sees its primary responsibility as to ensure the school provides a Steiner Waldorf education of the highest quality. It identifies its role as strategic, leaving the day-to-day management of the school to the College of Staff and college managers. The definitive document identifying the organisational structure, governance and management arrangements clearly identifies various aspects of provision where the trustees have overall responsibility, but these do not include the education of the pupils, their curriculum, or the quality of teaching, learning and achievement which are key aspects of the Independent School Standards. Nevertheless, one trustee with extensive experience in school management has informally assumed a role with regard to these essential aspects of the school and is working closely with college managers in a productive way. Other roles and responsibilities have not yet been allocated, but trustees have recognised this and are in the process of ensuring that all trustees have clearly defined and appropriate roles.

In the organisation document a key role in the leadership and management of the school is the post of educational facilitator. This very wide-ranging and demanding

role is currently unfilled. Whilst the school recruits someone for the role, many of the educational facilitator's key tasks have been given to other staff in management positions, but with no additional time to carry out them out. This places considerable extra stress on the staff and makes it more difficult for the tasks to be undertaken effectively.

Trustees have also only been partially successful in ensuring a rapid and effective response to the issues raised the last inspection and so progress in addressing these issues has been variable. The school meets the great majority of the Independent School standards, but there are a few standards where this is not so. Insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that the school has robust evidence to support the achievement of the new standards in the significant revisions in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in the new section on leadership and management.

The trustees have continued to promote the well-being of pupils since the last inspection, but in a few areas they have not exercised close enough oversight. The school has clear and appropriate policies to protect the pupils from harm and neglect, but they are not always implemented effectively, as in the case of risk assessments and the thorough checking of staff. The educational experiences of the pupils help them to develop intellectually, morally, socially and spiritually, whilst enhancing their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They give pupils self-confidence, enhance self-esteem and prepare them well for adult life.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do in order to comply with the regulations?

- *Ensure that there are suitably trained persons in place with leadership and management responsibilities, and that these persons have sufficient time to fulfil their roles effectively so that all independent school standards, including those for pupils' welfare, health and safety, may be consistently met (Paragraphs 34 (a), (b) and (c)).*

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

This section is not a requirement of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The business organisation and maintenance of the school's ethos were inspected by the Lay Inspector, who has written this section of the report.

The quality of the organisation and maintenance of the ethos of the school

Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley (RSSKL) is an independent, self administering Steiner Waldorf School. It is a member of Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF) in the UK. The whole school is familiar with the SWSF Code of Practice.

RSSKL Association Ltd is a registered charity. Membership of the Association is limited to 50 people drawn from current staff, the parent body and external friends of the school.

The Council of Trustees is elected by and is formally accountable to the RSSKL Association Limited. New trustees are appointed at the Association AGM. The primary responsibility of the Council of Trustees is to ensure that the school fulfils its mission to provide a Steiner Waldorf Education, while also being responsible for the financial and legal welfare of the school in compliance with legal regulations. However the delegation of responsibility for pedagogy to the College of Staff restricts its oversight of this significant element of the regulations.

The Council of Trustees includes three members of the College of Staff, three parent members and three external representatives. Three new Trustees were appointed in February of this year, and have yet to be given defined roles and responsibilities. The Trustee body currently has nine members. A complete list of current roles and responsibilities of the Trustees was not available.

The Council of Trustees devolves responsibility for the pedagogical management of the school to the College of Staff, but retains overall responsibility for finance, health and safety, child protection, site and buildings, SEN, recruitment and employment, staff assessment and appraisal and school improvement (Development Plan). Trustees are provided with a job description and an 'Induction Pack' when appointed.

The PTFA are a vocal and active group of friends and parents who have a range of skills and areas of expertise. The PTFA aim is to support the school and the education and to be active in fund-raising. Some parents have expressed concern on how the school is run.

The College of Staff (previously the College of Teachers) has the overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, and pedagogical decisions that have long term implications for the school. Membership of the College is voluntary and applications to join are encouraged from key mandate holders, teachers and support staff. College delegates responsibilities as mandates to individuals or groups of staff and oversees these mandates.

The College of Staff maintains good links with the SWSF, of which the school representative is a member. The representative has a weekly opportunity to report the college from Fellowship Council meetings. Steiner Waldorf advisors are used by RSSKL at key points to support new teachers. A new appraisal system for teachers

is being planned. There are currently no teacher appraisals. The College of Staff oversees a system of peer mentoring for teachers, which involves visiting each others' lessons. From these observations teachers are able to carry out curriculum research. However, there is not a point of accountability for staff assessment and appraisal as there is not yet a delegated Trustee for this area.

The finance, legal, organisation and work (FLOW) group carries day-to-day management responsibility and meets fortnightly. It consists of the Bursar and teachers representing different areas of the school.

The school has a strong team of administrative staff who support the school's educational provision. The key post of Education Facilitator is currently vacant and has been since May 2014. This pivotal role is currently being shared by teaching and administrative colleagues, but inevitably some issues are not being addressed while this role is not filled.

Could the organisation and maintenance of the ethos of the school be improved?

Yes.

- trustees should have specific roles and responsibilities, shared with the school community;
- staff should be given appropriate time in the school day to carry out the management tasks, roles and responsibilities associated with the Educational Facilitator post, until such time as that post is filled;
- the School Development Plan should become a regular working document driving all aspects of school development. Trustees need to take ultimate responsibility for this working document. The Trustees should be involved in all areas of the production and close monitoring of its progress;
- the College of Staff should focus on all areas of future planning and development for the school. Trustees should take ultimate responsibility for this work, including teacher appraisal; and
- clarify for the whole school community the procedure for becoming a member of the Association and a Trustee.

SECTION D: EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision

The overall quality and standards of the Early Years' provision are outstanding. The children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. Careful planning by the staff ensures that they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. The learning and care provided is extremely well matched to the individual needs of the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The children feel safe and are secure and happy. They enjoy coming to the Kindergarten and their personal and emotional development is very well supported. The requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met. The overall leadership and management is a strength of the provision. It consistently evaluates its practice and is effective in securing continuous improvement to sustain and promote children's life chances.

How well the Early Years' provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The Early Years' provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend extremely effectively. The educational programmes for the prime and specific areas of learning help all children to reach expected levels of development and frequently to exceed these. The Kindergarten staff make outstanding provision for the full age range attending the provision, including seeking to promote the learning and development needs of those aged over five. Particular care is taken to consider such factors as how well children are developing skills when using their right or left hand, and are able to use crayons to make marks and begin to form letters. This is very carefully developed within the context of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum and its view of work in the later Class 1. This prepares the children very well for the next stage of their education, and to use their skills and capabilities appropriately.

The staff have high expectations, whilst sustaining and promoting the children's enthusiasm and motivation. The children concentrate extremely well and show considerable persistence in tasks both indoors and out. They settle well. Parents are engaged in their children's development and learning and the preparations for Easter celebrations formed much of the focus during the inspection. This illustrates the close attention paid to the rhythms of the seasons as well as to the daily rhythm and routines. This was celebrated by Easter gifts made by the children, some of whom had made Easter bread rolls in the shape of rabbits – the 'Easter bunny' - whilst others had made clay 'baskets', filled them with soil and planted cress to grow at home over the holiday. The children were rightly proud of their high levels of achievement. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress and achievements.

The contribution of the Early Years' provision to children's well-being

The provision is outstandingly effective in its contribution to the children's well-being. They quickly form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their carers. They are happy and enjoy what they are doing. They learn to behave well and the older children provide the younger ones with excellent examples of sharing and cooperative play. Their speech is particularly good, using complex sentences to

express appropriate abstract ideas where appropriate. As one story session was being prepared the older children spontaneously began to sing 'Frere Jacques', helping the younger ones to join in and to sing tunefully. Especially in the extremely well-maintained outdoor areas, which offer an excellent range of well-planned activities, the children develop their independence, explore their surroundings and use their imagination very well.

The children develop an understanding of the importance of physical exercise and the Kindergarten snacks support their healthy diet. They are very well supported to manage their own hygiene and personal needs. The kindergarten staff are particularly careful to ensure that the children are extremely well prepared for their transition within the school as well as to other settings and later provision.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years' provision

The leadership and management of the setting are excellent. Oversight of the educational programmes is detailed and rigorous and the EYFS is carefully related to the later Steiner Waldorf curriculum to ensure that the programme for the oldest children supports but does not overlap with the Class 1 curriculum. The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS are fully met and consistently implemented. The environment is welcoming, safe and stimulating.

Self-evaluation is good and is well used to inform the priorities for further development and to set challenging targets for improvement. Partnerships with parents are excellent, as are those with external agencies where children may need particular interventions to help them to succeed.

Does the school meet the mandatory requirements?

Yes.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools accredited as members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. Further copies of the report are available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk