

Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle

Independent school standard inspection report

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle provides an education for 3,857 boys and girls aged from 3 to 19 years. It opened in 1915 and is located in southwest London. The school serves the French community in London and a smaller number of pupils of other nationalities. The British section provides opportunities for pupils to take English GCSE and Advanced level examinations. The school is situated on four sites.

The main site in South Kensington educates pupils of all ages, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the sixth form. There are three primary school annexes in Hanwell (André Malraux), Clapham (Wix) and Fulham (École de Fulham). The school has been granted exemption from the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements and these aspects of provision were not inspected.

On leaving school, the great majority of pupils take up places in British and international universities as well as French universities. Most pupils study for the Baccalauréat through a curriculum taught in French. The school was last inspected in 2009 and received an unannounced inspection in 2011.

The school is responsible to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with its educational provision under the control of the French Ministry of Education. Day-to-day supervision of the Lycée is provided by the French Embassy in London. The school appointed a new headteacher (proviseur) in September.

It aims to offer academic and personal fulfilment within a multinational and multilingual community, where pupils are taught respect for others and to value diversity.

Evaluation of the school

The Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle provides a good overall quality of education supported by a good curriculum with excellent features. Pupils' academic progress is outstanding because they work extremely hard through an extended school day. Teaching and assessment are good, with staff displaying good subject knowledge. Since the unannounced inspection the school has successfully improved the provision

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

and quality of staff child protection training to provide more rigorous safeguarding arrangements. Procedures to maintain pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The school meets all regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and provides pupils with high-quality learning experiences in a broad range of subjects. While the school's curriculum has several exemplary aspects so that the vast majority of pupils make excellent progress, the overall quality of the curriculum is good because the provision for pupils with additional needs is less well developed. Staff training has increased awareness and produced a more confident approach to the identification of pupils with reading difficulties. The school aims to support pupils by providing assistance from a teaching assistant or another student where there are indications that pupils are likely to need to repeat a year. The school plans to appoint a member of staff to coordinate the support and provision for pupils with special educational needs across all sites. A psychologist and a speech therapist provide further support to pupils. Personal, social and health education is taught throughout the school but more systematically in the primary sector.

The school follows the prescribed curriculum documentation issued by the French Ministry of Education. Schemes of work detail clear progression routes through from primary to secondary education. There are considerable strengths in the school's provision of a rich choice of foreign languages. From the age of 11, Russian, Italian, Spanish and German are available; this offer increases to include Latin from Year 8, Arabic in Year 9 and Greek from Year 10. Students of Latin have recently visited Rome. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to continue their studies through to English GCSE and Advanced level qualifications in the British section of the Lycée.

The school has adapted the curriculum to ensure that pupils receive an increasing proportion of lessons each week in English as they move up the school. The school has developed innovative partnerships with local schools to provide bilingual teaching and curriculum for primary-aged pupils. Primary-aged pupils and older pupils in the British section are taught by native English speakers. These initiatives provide good opportunities for pupils to make rapid progress in developing their English speaking, reading and writing skills from an early age. English classes in the French section of the College and the Lycée are generally taught by French nationals rather than native speakers. Any native speakers teach those who are fluent in English or bilingual as opposed to those pupils who are intermediates or beginners.

Careers provision is a particularly strong feature, with staff at the school offering helpful advice on accessing university places in America and Europe as well as France and the United Kingdom. The majority of pupils leave the school and take up places in British Universities. They are well prepared academically to make the progression required to obtain places, including in their basic skills. Virtually all pupils in the French section gain the Baccalauréat and an exceptionally high proportion gain a higher level '*Mention tres bien*'. The achievement in the British section is

equally high; over 95% of students gained five A*–C grades at GCSE and nearly half of grades gained at Advanced level are A grades in the subjects they study. However, the school recognises that the style of teaching and style of critical thinking which allows for success in the French Baccalaureat do not thoroughly prepare students for the demands of the most elite British universities. In response, the school runs an Oxbridge interview preparation programme which is helping a small but increasing minority of pupils to gain places. In 2012, eight students gained places at either Oxford or Cambridge University.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. Where teaching and assessment are good and outstanding, teachers' expert subject knowledge, energy and enthusiasm inspire students to high levels of debate and intellectual enquiry. In lessons, teachers use questions well to identify inaccuracies in pupils' responses and reinforce their learning. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson on symbolism in poetry, the teacher's lively approach and stimulating questioning led to a lively exploration of ideas. In the small number of satisfactory lessons observed, a lack of pace and work that does not closely match pupils' abilities caused the progress of some to slow. As a consequence, pupils were somewhat passive and not always fully engaged. Teachers have a sound understanding of exam requirements and use these to set demanding targets. Planning is tied tightly to the French state curriculum that demonstrates clearly how pupils are expected to progress. Teachers frequently challenge pupils to produce their best work, with a strong focus on handwriting, so that standards of presentation in pupils' work are high. Resources in some lessons are sparse, with students sharing textbooks, and there is limited access to computers and interactive whiteboards to demonstrate key points and for pupils to complete research. However, pupils are strongly motivated to work hard and achieve aspirational academic targets through their own good behaviour and excellent attitudes to work.

Assessment across the school is good. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' abilities and their good use of assessment in lessons ensures that pupils' misconceptions are quickly corrected. Formal tests and assessments are completed regularly and these are shared with parents. In the Lycée, parents and pupils keep track of progress through the school's website. Homework is set regularly, tied well to lesson content, marked and fed into succeeding lessons where appropriate. In discussion, pupils felt confident that they knew how they were progressing and what they needed to do to improve.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show good levels of enjoyment in their education and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes to academic achievement are exceptionally positive and they regularly complete copious quantities of homework. When given the opportunity, pupils make a strong contribution in lessons and participate well in response to teachers' questions and when confidently explaining their ideas. Good levels of concentration and perseverance are a consistent feature

across the school. Pupils are well mannered and polite to adults, and older pupils demonstrate disciplined and mature attitude in lessons. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are given frequent opportunities for spiritual reflection through art, history, literature and music lessons.

Pupils from a wide range of cultures are encouraged to socialise with each other and they behave well in a supportive school community. Pupils show a good understanding of different cultures, beliefs and faiths. Year 12 pupils (première) participated in a lively discussion in a Spanish lesson over the translation and definitions of the infringement of human rights, racism and immigration. Younger pupils have undertaken a significant amount of work on anti-bullying. For example, they have made series of short film clips as part of the anti-bullying campaign and have been encouraged to provide thoughtful contributions and suggestions about how to stop bullying.

There are discrete sessions to develop pupils' personal, social and health education across the primary sector but this is not continued systematically through the senior sector. Nonetheless, the school helps pupils make good progress in developing their social skills and encourages pupils to behave responsibly. Regular trips within the United Kingdom provide pupils with a good understanding of local institutions and public bodies. The school provides regular sessions to develop citizenship in the secondary sector. There are excellent opportunities for pupils in bilingual schools to learn about British culture and for pupils at these schools to learn about French language and culture.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school's provision of welfare health and safety is satisfactory. The essential policies have been established in line with legislation. The school staff show care and consideration for pupils and there is evidence of good relationships across the school. The school has reacted positively to address parental and pupils' concerns over behaviour and bullying. Teaching about bullying and pupils' understanding about how to deal with it are better in the primary phase than in the secondary sector. Health and safety procedures are in place and provide a satisfactory level of monitoring. Checks on fire fighting equipment and electrical appliances are completed annually and the school holds fire drills across all sites. A recent fire safety assessment identified some potential hazards. The school has been slow to address all of the suggested actions.

Appropriate health and safety procedures are in place to assess the risks to pupils inherent in educational trips and residential activities. Across all of the school's sites, a suitable proportion of staff are trained in first aid. The child protection policy meets requirements. All staff are trained in child protection procedures. They are aware and more responsive to the needs of more vulnerable pupils.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are in place. The school completes appropriate recruitment and vetting checks on all staff, including staff newly arriving in the United Kingdom and supply staff.

Premises and accommodation at the school

Premises and accommodation are suitable for the subjects taught and the number, age and needs of pupils. A well-equipped medical centre is situated on the main school site and allows for prompt treatment of pupils by qualified medical staff. Teachers and pupils have access to a limited number of interactive whiteboards and computers. The main site has an impressive canteen and pupils are able to select from a wide range of options to eat healthily. However, the school's timetabling does not allow time set aside for a small minority of older pupils in the British section, to use it.

Provision of information

The school provides a range of suitable information for parents, including regular newsletters. The required policies are on the school's website and available under headings in the British section and are available in English. Further information on the list of staff and their qualifications is available on request.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils obtaining places at their preferred university.
- Make more systematic provision for personal, social, and health development, particularly for older pupils.
- Strengthen support for pupils with additional needs by developing and coordinating provision across all of the school's sites.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	French National School		
Date school opened	1915		
Age range of pupils	3–18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 2,007	Girls: 1,850	Total: 3,857
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,185–£10,791		
Address of school	35 Cromwell Road London SW7 2DG		
Telephone number	020 7584 6322		
Email address	admin@lyceefrançais.org.uk		
Headteacher	Monsieur Oliver Rauch		
Proprietor	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 November 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lycée Francais Charles De Gaulle, London SW7 2DG

Thank you for the kindness and hospitality you showed to the inspection team. We enjoyed meeting you and spending time in your school. Your school provides all of you with a good quality of education from the time you arrive. The curriculum has many strengths and helps you to make outstanding academic progress. The school has adapted the curriculum well so that you make rapid progress in developing your speaking, reading and writing skills in English. You also have a very wide and rich choice of foreign languages as you progress through the school. We very much enjoyed listening and watching as you spoke Russian, Spanish and Arabic.

We were impressed by the outstandingly high level of examination and test results that you achieve. You play a major part in your success with your positive attitudes to work and in completing homework. You make a strong contribution in lessons and are confident in your answers and explanations. You are provided with personal, social and health education regularly during the primary phase of your education but this decreases as you move through the school. We have asked staff to provide a more systematic approach to developing these skills and knowledge when you are in the secondary phase.

The school helps prepare you well for the next phase in your education by providing you with helpful advice on accessing university places in a range of countries. The careers advice is a strong aspect of the school's support and advice. We have asked the school to look to increase the numbers of you obtaining places at your first-choice university.

We wish you well.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector