

Ecole Française Jacques Prevert

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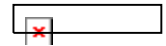
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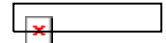
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Introduction and summary

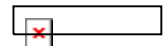


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



The Ecole Française Jacques Prevert is a French school, which caters mainly for the local community of French nationals. There are 249 pupils aged between four and eleven years. The great majority come from French-speaking or English/French bi-lingual backgrounds.

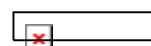
The school is situated in a quiet residential part of the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. It was founded in 1974 with the support of private finance and is now registered as a non-profit, limited company and has charitable status.

The school is subject to the authority of the French Ministry of Education, exercised through the Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger (AEFE) and the French embassy in London. This includes visits from the French inspectorate.

The majority of the teaching staff gained their teaching qualification in France and the English teachers are also suitably qualified. The teaching staff has a significant amount of teaching experience and expertise. Every year the French teaching staff attend courses to enable them to continue their professional development. This helps them to remain up-to-date with the latest educational initiatives.

The school aims to provide an education based on the French primary school curriculum. The main language of instruction is French except for the substantial amount of time devoted to the teaching of English. The vast majority of pupils continue their education in the Lycée Français in London or in a school in France or another country. A small minority of pupils transfer to English independent schools.

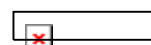
Summary of main findings



This is a good school which provides education based on the French national curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning are generally high and include very good cross-curricular links and a range of effective strategies which enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils' achievements are good for the French national tests in Cours Elementaire (CE) 2 when pupils are eight years old. They are encouraged to work independently from an early age and to think for themselves. The school is improving its strategies for providing additional support for lower attaining pupils; however, its procedures to monitor and assess the progress of pupils with special education needs (SEN) are not rigorous enough. The very good relationships which exist in the school between staff and pupils contribute to providing a warm and friendly atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and valued. The board of directors and parents' association play an important role in contributing to the school's ethos, the quality of extra-curricular provision and the school's overall success.

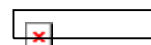
As they progress through the school pupils develop very good language and social skills and leave as confident, courteous young people. They are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to continue to be successful in the next phase of their education.

What the school does well



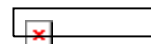
- the behaviour of its pupils is very good and there are very good relationships between pupils and staff;
- its early years' curriculum in cycle one provides pupils with very good foundations for the next phase of their education;
- its curriculum for the three cycles and the quality of teaching make very good provision for the development of pupils' linguistic, moral and social development;
- its pupils make very good progress in reading and with handwriting; and
- the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good when used as a tool to support and enhance pupils' work in French and for research projects.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

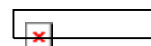


- maintain the attendance registers as required;
- ensure that, prior to confirmation of the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks are carried out to confirm their medical fitness;
- improve the suitability of the accommodation as indicated in Section 5 of this report;
- provide parents with the required information as stated in Section 6; and
- ensure the complaints policy is available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils.

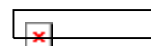
Compliance with the regulations for registration



1. The quality of education provided by the school



The quality of the curriculum



The quality of the curriculum is good. It has been amended to provide pupils with opportunities to learn about British culture, but most lessons are in French except for English and swimming lessons. The latter also provides teaching in both languages where appropriate.

The curriculum for pupils in cycle one, 'Maternelle', which is the equivalent to the Foundation Stage, places a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' personal, social, emotional, communication and physical skills. Pupils participate in a broad range of exciting activities, some of which are directed by the teacher and others which allow pupils to explore and learn collaboratively and independently. These experiences help to secure pupils' subsequent growth, development and success.

The curriculum for pupils in cycle two, which equates broadly to Key Stage 1, and cycle three, which is Key Stage 2, is largely underpinned by a good range of schemes of work (SoW) called 'Progressions'. These provide clear guidance to teachers and include a detailed range of competencies which promote continuity and progression as pupils progress through the school. There are currently SoW for the teaching of reading and writing, French, mathematics, English and science.

The curriculum makes very good provision for the development of pupils' linguistic and social development. The provision for all other curricular areas is good. A particular strength of the school is the use of cross-curricular links. These are often found through themed work as well as in subject lessons. A good example of this was seen with the study of Japanese culture which included pupils learning about Haiku, producing their own Japanese artistic designs and prints, and learning about Japanese numerals in mathematics. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the library to support their work in French as well as research projects in science and history.

The subject matter of the curriculum is appropriate to the ages and aptitudes of pupils. There is good support for lower attaining pupils as well as pupils identified as having SEN. This is implemented effectively through the use of additional work in small groups and through activities which present different levels of challenge. Teachers make effective use of individual education

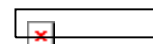
plans called 'Programme Personnalisé d'Aide et de Progrès' to identify and meet the specific needs of SEN pupils. However, the school is not yet mindful enough of the SEN Code of Practice when monitoring and assessing pupils' progress and future needs.

The syllabus for English is detailed and enables pupils to work in different ability groups according to their needs. Most teachers work closely together to provide a consistent approach across year groups. However, the quality of the provision is not always of an equally high standard.

The school parents' association organises a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enhance the curriculum. These include football, dance, drama, rock climbing, chess, and arts and crafts. Individual teachers take responsibility for organising residential weeks in France. At the beginning of this academic year pupils benefited enormously from a field trip to Brittany. The trip supported pupils' learning when they returned to school, for example in science and geography and provided valuable stimuli for written work.

The curriculum provides for all pupils to make good progress and they achieve very well in reading and handwriting. This is particularly significant as they are not taught these skills formally until they are six years of age. By the end of CE1, when pupils are seven years old, the vast majority can read simple passages, accurately, fluently, with confidence and good expression. Their handwriting is joined, legible and letters are clearly shaped. By the age of 11, the standards pupils reach in English, French and mathematics are good.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Some teaching is very good and a small minority is judged to be satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result of the good quality of teaching, the pupils make at least good progress over time. The school makes effective use of teachers' subject specialisms and interests, for example, in science, history and geography. This enhances the curricular provision for older pupils.

In the best lessons, teaching is characterised by clear learning objectives and pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and what they need to do. Lessons cater for the different ability levels of pupils either by the range of activities or the level of teacher support. This provides the lower attaining pupils with sufficient structures to be as successful as the rest of the class and a good level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The teaching in these lessons is based on high expectations that the pupils will apply intellectual effort and use a wide range of skills and strategies to meet objectives. For example, in French in CE1 the higher attaining pupils wrote sentences using complex structures and high level vocabulary, while the lower attaining pupils conjugated verbs and used phonics to help them with their spelling.

The vast majority of teachers plan appropriate tasks for the full range of pupils' ability. A particular strength in many good lessons is the planned opportunities for pupils to problem-solve and think imaginatively. A good example of this was seen in a Foundation Stage class for an English lesson for four year olds, when during story-telling the teacher asked "What could happen next?" and "What if?" The pupils responded with much creativity. A further feature of good and very good teaching is the effective use of cross-curricular links. In an English lesson in Cours Moyen (CM) 2, for 11 year olds, pupils were asked to remember the names of mathematical shapes encountered in a previous lesson and to use them to describe a bicycle. This helped to make learning even more meaningful and purposeful and enhanced the pupils' knowledge and understanding of new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

In lessons judged to be satisfactory, key words are not always displayed or sufficiently well taught. This limits the ability of some pupils to respond to questions using the correct terminology. Another common feature in these lessons is the lack of opportunity for pupils to engage in discussions to

rehearse and share their ideas prior to engaging in written work. As a result the lower attaining pupils struggle to begin their written work and do not make as much progress as they could.

The vast majority of teachers make effective use of time and resources and as a result the good lessons progress at a brisk pace and pupils work enthusiastically and conscientiously. Relationships in all year groups are very good and pupils feel respected and valued. Praise is used judiciously and appreciated by pupils. Teachers strive to enable the pupils to become independent learners through research projects.

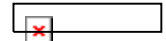
Teachers' long and medium term planning follows closely the prescribed curriculum and is completed conscientiously, including the two Foundation Stage classes. Appropriately detailed planning is provided separately for pupils in each class for whom extra support is needed. There are some good examples of short-term planning, but the quality is inconsistent throughout the school.

The school's framework for assessing pupils' attainment and progress is detailed and thorough. There are examples of very good practice, which extend beyond the whole school policy. Teachers assess and record individual pupils' achievements against the requirements of the curriculum. Some teachers note what must be done to improve any individual pupils' weaknesses. This forms a useful basis for their planning. However, the marking of pupils' work, although often encouraging, is insufficiently diagnostic. Teachers provide pupils with good oral feedback. However, pupils would benefit from more written comments in their workbooks which they could use as prompts to help them to improve subsequent work. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers have good questioning techniques to assess pupils' understanding and extend their learning.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and a strength of the school. This is clearly demonstrated by pupils' attitude and behaviour. Pupils' cultural development is good. While there are some opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, for example through science, music and the arts, this aspect is less well developed as religious education is not included in the French curriculum.

Teachers are good role models, which contributes to the pupils' social and moral development. This fosters a pleasant, relaxed working atmosphere based on mutual respect between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. As a result, relationships are very good, and pupils develop good self-esteem. The culture of creative thinking and independent learning that permeates lessons is conducive to making pupils very confident in themselves. Where there are opportunities for paired and group work, this promotes very good social skills as pupils learn to discuss debate, argue, challenge and agree with their partners.

More formally, moral and social education is taught through the citizenship programme that contains strong moral elements such as respect for rules, peers and adults. Older pupils reflect more deeply on the balance between personal freedom and social constraints.

Pupils aged eight to eleven have weekly, structured debates through which they learn to draft an agenda, argue their point, and draw conclusions and record minutes of the proceedings. They choose their topic and recently pupils in CE2 have had debates about school uniform, safety in school and pollution. This practice enables them to have an active experience of democracy. Their social skills are also evident in the canteen where they sit in a relatively peaceful atmosphere and

converse with their friends through lunch.

Pupils' sense of responsibility and contribution to the community is developed through the daily roles of 'coat' and 'door' monitors which they take seriously. Through a formal process of elections, pupils can also be elected to the prestigious post of class representative. Their high standard of behaviour in class shows that they successfully exercise self-discipline, even at a young age.

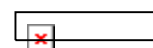
The structure of the citizenship programme provides pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in France. Younger pupils learn about local government whereas older pupils gain knowledge and understanding of the Declaration of Human Rights and the election system. They have opportunities to make comparisons between France and England when learning about the republican form of government and monarchy, the role of the President and that of Parliament. This was recently enhanced by a visit to Parliament. Through history and geography, their learning extends to Europe and the international community. For instance, pupils in CM2 learn about French-speaking countries throughout the world. They explore environmental issues and social inequalities through the way children live in different countries, with links to the United Nations Charter of Children's Rights. They also look at artists and writers as witnesses of their time. Knowledge of public services is enhanced by visits from the police and firemen.

The cultural aspect is more centred on the French and English cultures, although pupils have opportunities to learn about other cultures through history. For instance, pupils in CE1 look at the various writing scripts and pictograms used by the Chinese, Ancient Egyptian, Aztec and North American Indian civilisations. There are 30 nationalities represented in the school but there is no evidence that their cultures are celebrated. Furthermore there are insufficient dual language books to extend pupils' respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. Pupils have a good cultural programme taught through French, English, music, drama and art. For example, older pupils have started to prepare for an Easter show based on two tales by Jacques Prevert. Activities include script writing and playing and extending music pieces.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The school makes good provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety. All appropriate policies are in place, although some are in draft form awaiting final approval.

The policy for "Safeguarding Children in Education" has been updated recently and the staff have had training this term on child protection.

A member of staff with current First Aid qualifications is always on site when pupils are present. Appropriate record books for minor or serious incidents are kept efficiently. First Aid boxes are maintained correctly and taken on all visits out of school. Appropriate procedures are in place for visits away from the school, including risk assessments and obtaining parental approval.

The school has very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour. It has never had to impose sanctions for serious disciplinary offences, but is aware that records should be kept if these occur. The vast majority of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire state that pupils behave well in school. Rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with effectively by the staff who liaise closely with parents. Good relationships between teachers and pupils contribute to the good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning that are evident from the pupils' earliest days in school. The pupils are supervised closely at all times, including lunchtime. They are encouraged to eat healthily and are

provided with an interesting, attractively presented variety of meals including fruit salads and vegetables.

The health and safety policy and procedures, including relevant fire safety matters, receive good attention. All appropriate processes, such as fire drills and risk assessments are undertaken regularly and recorded.

The admission register meets requirements, but the attendance registers, although taken conscientiously twice daily, are not kept in accordance with regulations. The registers do not currently include a mark to indicate that a pupil is actually present and do not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence.

The school has produced an appropriate accessibility plan in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

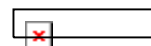
The school meets all but one of the requirements.

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- maintain the attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (paragraph 3(9)).

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school has a committed, supportive and effective board of directors. They meet regularly and take account of issues raised by staff and parents. They assist with the overall management of the school by acting as a critical friend and undertaking essential roles.

The school carries out almost all of the required checks before the appointment of staff, except for those necessary to ascertain medical fitness.

The staff are appropriately qualified for the age range they teach. They work effectively as a team and many of them have been with the school for a significant number of years. This has been influential in maintaining standards as well as stability for the pupils.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

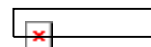
No

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, carry out appropriate checks to confirm their medical fitness and take such information into account when determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The quality of the premises and accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is housed in a Victorian property kept in a good state of repair and decoration.

The basement has been refurbished to accommodate a canteen divided into an attractively furnished dining room and a purpose-built serving area. The library and music room share the ground floor with a spacious multi-purpose room and one of the Foundation Stage classes. The large and well resourced library includes an ICT suite. The majority of classrooms are distributed over the upper floors. A second, well stocked library supports the English curriculum. Some classrooms are just adequate in size and do not lend themselves easily to practical activities. However, teachers manage their restricted space effectively. Although the accommodation offers limited possibilities for physical education, the school makes good use of local public facilities.

There are toilets on all floors except the third floor, all equipped with washbasins of suitable sizes. The school has plans to fit electric hand driers next April. However, the number of toilets and washbasins is insufficient for the number of pupils.

The school has tried hard to improve the safety of play. It has resurfaced the playground and padded the frames of the outside windows looking out onto the playground. It has sought to provide alternative play areas and makes effective use of the local green situated just outside its premises. It has contributed to the upgrade of the play facilities on the green. However, despite the school's best efforts, the provision for outside space for pupils to play safely is unsatisfactory. The playground is far too small to accommodate the varying numbers of pupils who use it during the staggered break times and this puts pupils' safety at risk.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

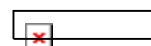
The school meets nearly all the requirements for premises and accommodation.

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs, which take account of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(k)); and
- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



The school communicates effectively with parents and staff. A prospectus provides details related to the organisation of the school and the admissions policy. However, it does not include the full details of the school proprietor, those of the Chair of Directors, a statement of the school's ethos, and particulars of the policies on discipline, exclusions, SEN and English as an additional language.

The school has data on staffing, French national test results, as well as policies on bullying, child

protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, and a complaints procedure. However, parents are not made aware that this information is available on request.

Parents and staff are informed of a wide range of school issues through regular newsletters, summaries of relevant issues from the board of directors and minutes of the 'Conseil d'école' (School Council for parents and staff). There is also a very informative and attractively presented journal published by the parents' association. Class teachers meet pupils' parents at the beginning of the autumn term to explain their teaching strategies and to answer any queries parents may have. Parents communicate with teachers through the home-school diaries which are frequently and effectively used, as well as through arranged meetings. They receive detailed reports about their child's progress. Parental response to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicates that the majority of parents feel well informed of their child's progress.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

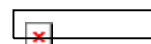
No.

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- the full name, the address and the telephone number of the registered office of the school's proprietor (paragraph 6(2)(b));
- the name and address of the Chair of the board of directors (paragraph 6(2));
- a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims (paragraph 6(2)(d));
- particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)); and
- particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).
- school should also make it clear to parents and others that the following documents are available on request:
 - particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(h));
 - particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(i));
 - details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(j)); and
 - the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(k)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



The school is currently in the process of updating its complaints procedure. The policy now complies with almost all regulations except that it is not yet available to parents on request.

The draft policy has yet to be shared with staff or ratified by the school. It has been updated so that it includes clear time scales and stipulates that parents can be accompanied at panel hearings if they wish.

At present approximately half of the parents understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. This should be taken into consideration when finalising the wording of the new policy and in considering how the updated information will be communicated to parents.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

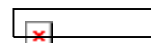
The school complies with all but one of the requirements.

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

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- make the newly updated complaints procedure available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b)).

School details



Name of school:	Ecole Française Jacques Prevert
DfES ref number:	205/6359
Type of school:	Foreign National
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 112, Girls 137, Total 249
Annual fees (day pupils):	£3,305
Address of school:	59 Brook Green London W6 7BE
E-mail address:	info@ecoleprevert.org.uk
Telephone number:	0207 6026871
Fax number:	0207 6023162
Headteacher:	Mr Rene Salva
Proprietor:	Ecole Française De Londres LTD
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Gehane Gordelier
Dates of inspection:	24 - 27 January 2005

