

Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	207/6391
Unique Reference Number	100547
Inspection number	330443
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

The Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle provides an education for 3,728 boys and girls aged from 3 to 19 years. It continues to grow in size. 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 for those whose main language is not French to take English 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), which also have Early Years Foundation Stage provision. On leaving school, the great majority of pupils take up places in French, British and international universities. Most pupils study for the *Baccalauréat* through a curriculum taught in French. The school was last inspected in 2006.

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. 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 education for pupils of all ages. There are outstanding features, such as in pupils' attitudes to work and in the progress they make between joining the school and leaving it. Pupils reach the highest standards of any French school in France or abroad. The combination of the full French and English National Curricula, good quality teaching and pupils' eagerness to learn quickly ensures that they make excellent progress. The school is very successful in fostering and broadening pupils' personal development. The school meets all but one of the regulations. It has successfully addressed all the issues

raised by the last inspection, such as to ensure that the complaints policy fully meets regulations.

A significant minority of parents raised an issue about communication between school and home. The school management team has quite recently changed the way that information is shared with parents. Some do not feel well informed and that the process is impersonal. In response, the school management team realises that this is an urgent concern and is actively seeking to change parents' perceptions.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good in all sections of the school. The curriculum for pupils of all ages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. The good quality of provision in this key area has been maintained since the last inspection.

Most pupils follow the French National Curriculum from the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress to take the *Brevet des Collèges* and the *Baccalauréat*. Pupils in the smaller British section follow a curriculum that leads to GCSE and A level examinations. Subjects include the humanities, sciences and languages, with art as an option. Other arts subjects are not offered, but pupils and parents are aware of this when they choose to follow the courses.

Pupils' learning is extended well by a wide range of enrichment activities, such as visits to places of interest in the locality and clubs run by staff and parents. Pupils in the Lycée enjoy many opportunities to extend their interests as the school is alert to events in the locality and promotes them, as well as providing many activities on-site. All pupils are taught how to live healthy lives. A number of pupils and their parents say that the amount of exercise they do is too limited at South Kensington. Space is restricted, but the school makes good use of what is available, for example, by facilitating table tennis and ball games in the grounds.

Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well. The provision of information and communication technology (ICT) has increased since the last inspection, but the extent of its use across the curriculum varies. Older pupils benefit more from the improved facilities. Pupils gain good knowledge of the institutions of France and Britain through courses in civics and also through history and geography lessons, such as when debating the French Revolution.

A strength of the curriculum is the bilingual programme, especially on the Wix site, which is innovative and is improving results in English. Standards and progress of primary pupils in English are also improving across the school because of greater co-ordination across the sites. Native English speakers have been appointed to support the work and a cross curricular approach to history, geography and English consolidates learning well.

Teaching and assessment are good in all sections of the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good quality of the school's work has been maintained since the last inspection. The effective teaching, combined with pupils' excellent attitudes to work, provides opportunities for all pupils to achieve exceptionally well. They reach much of their potential. The teaching is motivating for pupils and there are very high expectations of pupils' self-motivation. The most able pupils benefit from accelerated groups, take exams early and have extra support through individual attention in small groups. Most lessons are carefully planned and build well on what pupils know and understand. Some teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards to add interest to their lessons, such as when a class watched Charlie Chaplin's 'Modern Times' to help them understand industrial mass production techniques. The best teaching enthuses pupils, makes them want to know more and to carry on researching at home. In most lessons, pupils make rapid gains in knowledge and skills.

Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge that they impart with authority. In the best lessons, pupils enjoy being involved so that they can explore their ideas and respond to key lesson points. In some lessons, this facility is not offered. Just occasionally, pupils who have not understood an idea are reticent to say so and help is not always forthcoming to ensure they continue to make good progress. In the few less successful lessons observed, teaching was mundane, lessons and resources were not sufficiently well prepared and the opportunities to engage pupils in learning were not fully utilised. Consequently, pupils were unable to sustain interest and their progress was limited.

There are excellent systems for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' attainment and progress in this very large school. There are formal tests and examinations and pupils have comprehensive assessment records. The effective *conseil de classe* is a termly meeting between parents and teachers, where every pupil's progress is studied in detail and programmes for improving their achievement are agreed. Pupils are very clear about what they have to do to reach the grades they need.

Pupils' progress is outstanding overall and they start by making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Virtually all pupils in the French section gain the *Baccalauréat* and an exceptionally high proportion gain a distinction. The achievement in the British section is equally high. Two thirds of the grades gained at GCSE are A* and A and nearly half of grades gained at Advanced level are A grades in the subjects they study.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and begins from an early age. This aspect has improved over the last three years. Pupils are welcoming and curious and, across the school, behaviour is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes are exceptionally positive, as shown in their high levels of attendance and enthusiasm for learning.

They approach lessons with high levels of interest, co-operation and concentration, which help them to achieve so well. Pupils respond effectively to praise and co-operate enthusiastically with their teachers. Their levels of participation in extra-curricular activities are very good.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is enhanced well through the *education civile* programme and philosophy courses. Pupils enjoyed discussing the moral implications of globalisation in an economics lesson, showing considerable knowledge of how the world works. In their questionnaires, the majority of pupils said that they enjoy school. Many, too, have lots of ideas about how the school could be improved.

Pupils make a good contribution to the wider world through extensive fundraising. The excellent fashion show, raising funds for disfigured children in the third world, demonstrated how creative and able older pupils are. Forums enable pupils to express their views to the administration and pupils feel that their voices in the main are heard. A good programme of visits and visitors encourages pupils' awareness of British institutions, such as Parliament, London art galleries and concert halls.

Pupils' cultural development is excellent. There is a high degree of racial tolerance and harmony. Pupils, who come from a very wide number of cultures, are immersed from their earliest days in the school in French language and culture. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions. When pupils embark on life after they finish school, they are confident young citizens able to make informed decisions about their lives. The curriculum prepares pupils of all ages well for the next stages in their education.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The safeguarding of pupils' and young children's welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. This aspect was judged good at the time of the last inspection. There are many continuing strengths in the provision. The quality of lunches is good on most sites and pupils eat healthily. They are taught about the health benefits of eating well in biology. Good behaviour is very well promoted. Following an emergency earlier this year, when the South Kensington site was successfully evacuated, the school has improved procedures further. Staff carry out risk assessments before all visits off site. The school meets the requirement to plan to improve accessibility to and within the school sites. The school's single central record of staff suitability shows that staff recruited in France join the Lycee with all French checks fully in place. For such staff continuing to work in the school, the process of making further relevant checks to comply with English regulations is incomplete. The records for the British section fully comply with regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage has a good level of effectiveness in helping children learn and develop on all four sites.

The staff are eager to become better informed about the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the school is planning to put in place further training to bring all staff up to date. The staff have a good understanding of child development and put this knowledge into effective use by devising activities appropriate to the children's ages and developmental stages.

There is a good balance of play and exploration indoors and outdoors, with both adult-led and child-led activities which result in active learning. There is no suitable dedicated outdoor area on the South Kensington site and this limits outdoor learning. The school has identified a suitable site.

Children play well together and on their own and understand and communicate their learning, sometimes in both languages. As one child said, 'I am telling him how to say it in English.' Comprehensive assessment procedures are in place to record and monitor children's progress. Each child's *cahier de vie* is very informative and gives parents a good pictorial view of activities throughout the year. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points; they have a good understanding of what they are learning and opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They have good support from staff who are very good at extending their vocabulary in both languages. Relationships are positive at all levels and day to day care is good, though staff suitability checks are incomplete. The children's excellent personal development and enjoyment is reflected in their high levels of confidence, respectful relationships, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. The children report that they enjoy school. Each child is very well known individually. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed on all four sites. The school has established effective links with the parents and carers who responded positively to the provision in the pre-inspection questionnaire.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of that listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that an enhanced criminal record check has been made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school (paragraph 4(2)(b)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- increase training opportunities for staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn about the new curriculum
- improve the outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage at the South Kensington site
- work to improve parents' perceptions of communication with the school.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?			✓	
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle
DCSF number	207/6391
Unique reference number	100547
Type of school	French Government day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1915
Age range of pupils	3–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	Boys: 1,860 Girls: 1,868 Total: 3,728
Annual fees	Up to £7,476
Address of school	35 Cromwell Road London SW7 8DG
Telephone number	0207 584 6322
Fax number	0207 823 7684
Email address	rnichol@lyceefrançais.org.uk
Headteacher	Monsieur B Vasseur
Proprietor	French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Reporting inspector	Mr Roger Fry
Dates of inspection	1–2 April 2009