

Collège Français Bilingue de Londres

87 Holmes Road, Kentish Town, London, NW5 3AX

Inspection dates 10–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good** **2**

Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- The personal leadership of the Principal is outstanding in securing the highest levels of achievement and personal development for pupils.
- The broad and rich bilingual curriculum, coupled with a high proportion of good or better teaching, enables pupils to achieve extremely well in several subjects.
- Pupils' performance in the Diplôme National du Brevet (DNB) has been exceptionally high in the last three years.
- In the primary department, pupils' standards of speaking, reading and mathematics are well above French and European norms. Standards in writing are above these norms.
- Most pupils have made excellent progress. Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good or better progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding, owing to excellent pastoral care. Their attendance is very high. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceedingly well through enrichment activities.
- Overall, leadership and management of the school are good. The senior leaders work hard with the teachers to ensure that teaching is mostly good despite high staff turnover.
- Governance is good. Trustees deploy resources very effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being, and have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and the vast majority would recommend it to others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few pockets of weaker teaching. The outstanding practice that exists in the school is insufficiently shared.
- Systems are not refined enough to track pupils' progress year on year with precision.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities for writing at length across all subjects, particularly in some classes and some subjects in the primary department.
- The written feedback pupils receive does not always show them exactly how they can improve their writing.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 28 lessons or part lessons. Two inspectors heard pupils read in French and in English. Two inspectors conducted learning walks, focusing on pupils' behaviour and learning in various subjects. Inspectors observed break times and lunch times, as well as childcare arrangements.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: safeguarding policies and procedures; curriculum plans and teachers' assessment records; the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress; and pupils' work. They also examined the school's self-evaluation and development plan; and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, the school nurse, human resources managers and the site manager.
- The inspectors took account of 67 responses to the staff questionnaire and 86 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire). They also took account of information contained in a letter from the parents' association. The views of pupils were sought, both informally and through formal meetings.
- At the request of the Department for Education, this inspection looked into an application for a material change to raise the age range from five to 16 years. This is solely to take into account a very small minority of pupils who repeat a year, as is accepted practice in French schools in exceptional circumstances.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Callaghan	Additional Inspector
Mike Gaunt	Additional Inspector
Susan Jackson	Additional Inspector
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Full report

Information about this school

- The Collège Français Bilingue de Londres is situated in Kentish Town, in the London Borough of Camden. It opened in September 2011 with a permitted maximum of 640 boys and girls aged from five to 15 years. It is currently registered for up to 700 pupils. The collège is conventionné (contracted) to the Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger (AEFE). It teaches the French National Curriculum within a bilingual framework.
- In the primary department, half of the curriculum time is taught in French and half in English. In the secondary department, pupils study a common core of subjects and follow two distinct pathways, a bilingual one and a multilingual one.
- The collège does not use any alternative provision. It provides after-school care until 6.00pm for pupils aged from five to 11 years.
- The collège was first inspected in December 2011 when it did not meet all of the standards for independent schools and the education provided was judged as satisfactory. A progress monitoring visit, carried out in July 2012, found that the collège had implemented its action plan satisfactorily and met all requirements.
- There are currently 693 pupils on roll, including 340 pupils in the primary department and 353 pupils in the secondary department. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are French and British, but other nationalities are represented. For 60% of pupils, English is a second language. In the last year of collège, pupils take the Diplôme National du Brevet (DNB).
- The leadership structure includes a principal who oversees the whole school, a primary headteacher, two deputy headteachers and subject leaders. In conformity with the French system of education, the responsibility of carrying most of the checks on teaching and learning, and of appraising most staff, is shouldered by French inspectors, not by the senior leaders. Where permitted by the employment status of some teachers, the senior leaders may appraise them.
- There is a board of trustees whose role includes: checking that the school complies with the standards for independent schools in the United Kingdom; overseeing financial and human resources matters; and supporting the development of the school. However, its role does not include holding the school to account for the quality of education, a function fulfilled by the French inspectors and the AEFE.
- The collège aims to:
 - 'provide a French education for French, British and other nationalities living in London'
 - incorporate aspects of English education into the curriculum and to ensure that pupils are bilingual in French and English
 - provide a safe, secure and pleasant environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the best practice is shared to raise the overall standard of teaching throughout the school from good to outstanding.
- Provide pupils with consistent opportunities for writing at length across all subjects to raise standards of written English and French.
- Help pupils to improve the quality of their writing through consistently detailed written feedback.
- Implement plans to refine systems for tracking pupils' progress year on year.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Although the leadership and management of the collège are good overall, they are exemplary in several aspects. The education and care provided for the pupils have improved significantly since the school's first inspection. The collège complies with all of the independent school standards.
- The leadership of the Principal is outstanding in that it has secured the highest levels of achievement and personal development for pupils. This has been achieved by giving clear direction to all staff, and communicating the highest ambitions to all. As a result, the collège meets its aims fully.
- The senior leaders and teaching and non-teaching staff have worked relentlessly to create an extremely positive ethos in which all pupils can flourish. They provide excellent pastoral care and promote the highest standards of behaviour consistently throughout the school. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and pupils are happy and feel safe.
- The school has been highly successful in developing a coherent bilingual curriculum that fosters pupils' academic and personal development extremely well. Very effective policies ensure that pupils develop excellent literacy and numeracy skills, in two languages in primary classes. Pupils demonstrate great linguistic agility throughout the school.
- A wide range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum extremely well and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceedingly well. The citizenship programme combines elements of French and British democracy and prepares pupils actively for life in modern Britain.
- Secondary pupils receive up-to-date, impartial and personalised careers advice that helps them to make informed choices about their future.
- Partnerships with the local and wider communities are very strong for the greater benefit of pupils. For example, a sports centre has been created as a joint project with the borough and a local association. Pupils benefit from educational exchanges with French schools worldwide, for example with schools in Germany, Morocco, Spain and Uruguay.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about all aspects of the collège's work. The vast majority would recommend the school to others. They receive the full range of information to which they are entitled and feel well informed of their children's progress. The parents' association is a very active body that has been involved in improving the well-being of pupils and families. For example, it has contributed to developing the outdoor play area, and it organises social events.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is reflected in its respectful ethos and consistent implementation of anti-discriminatory policies.
- Effective policies and procedures ensure that pupils who have special educational needs, or pupils who have linguistic or other learning difficulties, are not disadvantaged and make sustained progress. The school has plans in hand to develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs further.
- Complex arrangements governing the employment status of the various teachers working at the school are not within the control of the senior leaders. The staff turnover has been high since the school opened, particularly at the end of 2014. The senior leaders have worked hard to ensure, within the limits of their powers, that teaching is good.
- Leaders have initiated a change of culture in which teachers become comfortable to reflect on their practices and share ideas on how to develop their skills further. However, the best practice that exists within the school is insufficiently shared to raise the quality of teaching to outstanding. Most staff say that they are highly satisfied with the training they receive and are proud to serve in this school.
- Systems for appraising staff, whose employment status allows it, are effective in improving teaching.
- In the secondary department, the subject leaders are very effective in ensuring that pupils are on track to achieve or exceed curricular targets.
- The senior leaders know the school well through frequent staff meetings that focus on educational and pastoral issues, and pupils' progress. They have correctly identified the strengths and areas for further development. A management plan helps them to monitor and effectively evaluate the actions taken.
- The material change related to raising the age range to 16 years is recommended.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Rigorous systems enable trustees to carry out their statutory duties very effectively and to ensure that safeguarding arrangements and independent school standards are met. The premises are maintained well and enable safe and effective learning.

- Trustees are well informed of the school’s performance through bi-monthly reports from the Principal. They know exactly how well pupils achieved in comparison with French national averages and European norms. Their responsibilities and duties do not include the performance management of staff, rewarding good teaching and holding the school to account for the quality of teaching and achievement.
- Trustees contribute to the school’s self-review and to the improvement plan. They fully understand what the priorities for development are for the current academic year.
- The budget is managed very effectively to provide the resources needed to support pupils’ learning, for example specialist sports facilities for all pupils, resources specific to the bilingual curriculum, and small group support for those who have linguistic or special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding throughout the school, as a result of highly effective strategies employed consistently by all staff. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of self-discipline in and out of classrooms. Learning proceeds without interruption in a calm atmosphere, and lunch times are very pleasant social occasions. Pupils are courteous, helpful, considerate and respectful of others and of their environment. The need for serious sanctions has been extremely rare.
- Pupils display excellent attitudes to learning in different classes and subjects, and with different staff and peers. Their attentiveness contributes immensely to their progress during lessons. Pupils take great pride in the way they present and organise their work. Their handwriting is mostly neat.
- Pupils’ levels of attendance and punctuality are very high. Pupils say they love school. ‘Our teachers are excellent and the food is great!’ Parents and carers agree that their children are happy at the school.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceedingly well within the French secular framework (*laïcité*). Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence and reflect on a wide range of issues. For example, in CM2/Year 6, they have fortnightly philosophical debates and recently discussed freedom of expression.
- French and British democratic values are actively promoted through the work of class representatives, and educational visits from the Mayor of Camden, for example.
- Pupils benefit from rich cultural experiences through history of art lessons, art projects and a wealth of cultural activities.
- The collège can demonstrate that policies and procedures that prohibit the promotion of political views and extremism are effective, so that all the independent school standards for this aspect are met.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure is good overall. It is exemplary in many respects and all the requirements for welfare, health and safety are met. Robust safeguarding arrangements ensure that all staff are vetted rigorously and trained to the appropriate standards of child protection. All the safeguarding, health and safety policies and procedures reflect the latest guidance. First aid arrangements meet basic statutory requirements.
- Pupils, staff, parents and carers are very positive about behaviour and safety at school. Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying and actively promote non-discriminatory practices. For example, 6ème/Year 7 pupils presented in assembly a short film they had made on bullying, and role plays. They had thought carefully about bullying prevention strategies, stressing the importance of mutual respect.
- Throughout the school, pupils learn how to keep safe in various circumstances, for example when crossing the road and using public transport. They learn about safety in the community, with the support of visiting local police officers, and about safe use of the internet, through a well-planned e-safety programme.

The quality of teaching

is good

- There is a large proportion of teaching that is typically good or better. However, outstanding teaching is not sustained owing to high staff turnover and insufficient sharing of the best practice that exists in the school. Consequently, not all pupils make rapid progress or fulfil their potential.
- Teachers generally have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They demonstrate good to excellent knowledge of the subjects they teach and a good understanding of their pupils’ needs and aptitudes. There is strong evidence that, in the primary department, most teachers plan tasks that match

pupils' differing needs well so that all are suitably challenged.

- Teachers ensure that the curriculum is covered very well. They often plan links between subjects that make pupils' learning coherent and interesting, and often promote their cultural development. They work as a cohesive team to ensure that the bilingual curriculum is taught successfully.
- The teaching of reading is highly effective throughout the school, with a good emphasis on comprehension. In the primary department, teachers use the same system in French and English to teach phonics (the sounds made by letters) skills, and they monitor pupils' progress in reading very closely.
- The teaching of oral skills is central to the bilingual curriculum throughout the school and extremely effective. Teachers often use discussion and paired work to encourage pupils to develop their ideas and express their views. They often ask probing questions that challenge pupils well.
- Some teachers are very skilful at creating opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects, in both French and English. However, this practice is not consistent, particularly in the primary department. Consequently, pupils' standards of writing do not quite match their very high standards of speaking and reading.
- Some marking comments show pupils exactly how to improve their writing and, where pupils are given time to respond to these comments, they make rapid progress. However, this excellent practice is not consistent throughout the collège.
- The teaching of mathematics is excellent throughout the school. Pupils have numerous opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in real-life contexts.
- Teachers liaise very closely with parents, especially in the primary department, to ensure that pupils receive optimal support for their homework.
- Systems for assessing pupils' learning and the accuracy of teachers' assessments are effective. Pupils at risk of falling behind are identified early, and the support provided to target their needs is evaluated and modified accordingly. The school has plans to assess pupils' starting points more precisely as pupils enter the school in different year groups, and to further develop year-on-year tracking of their progress.
- Leaders have ensured all the independent school standards for teaching and assessment are met.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils join the school with varying levels of competency in English, French and other subjects. Most pupils have made excellent progress in the last three years as a result of high quality teaching and an outstanding curriculum. They have achieved very highly in many subjects in both primary and secondary departments. There has been no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Most pupils who have special educational needs have made good or better progress.
- Results in the DNB, which pupils take in the last year of collège, show that attainment was exceptionally high and well above French national averages in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Over half of pupils achieved the equivalent to A* to B grades in their examinations in 2012 and 2013. DNB results are on an upward trend, and one third of pupils gained the equivalent of A* to A grades in 2014.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education, as evidenced by the feedback received by the school on those pupils' performance in their first year at a lycée.
- In the primary department, CE1/Year 3 pupils achieved standards that were well above French national averages in French and mathematics in 2013 and 2014. The first cohort of CM2/Year 6 pupils who were assessed against French national norms in 2014 achieved standards that were well above average in mathematics and just above in French.
- In the primary department, CE1/Year 3 and CM2/Year 6 pupils achieved exceptional standards of oral fluency in English in 2014, in comparison with European norms. While CE1/Year 3 pupils worked within levels of writing that were also very high; the standards of writing of CM2/Year 6 pupils were lower.
- In both primary and secondary departments, the most able pupils achieve the high grades of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or other learning difficulties make sustained progress through the setting of manageable goals. Pupils who need support with their reading skills in French or English, and with their mathematics skills, receive small group tuition at least once a week.
- Pupils develop excellent speaking and reading in both French and English through the well-planned bilingual curriculum. Their basic skills, including their mathematical skills, are extended extremely well through enrichment activities, such as a reading club in upper primary, and mathematics challenges against other French schools. Participation in the primary radio station (Radio Récré) enhances pupils' communication, thinking and creative skills.
- Pupils' writing and bilingual skills are extended well in the secondary department through initiatives such

as translation projects undertaken jointly with other French schools.

- Pupils have numerous opportunities to discover their talents and excel in many subjects within the wider curriculum. For example, they play games against other French schools; they participate in exhibitions on different perspectives of London; pupils in 4^{ème}/Year 9 have won a first prize in a cartoon competition organised by the Institut Français.
- All the independent school standards related to pupils' achievement are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	100082
Inspection number	454239
DfE registration number	202/6385

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	French school with bilingual education
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–15 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Collège Français Bilingue de Londres Ltd
Chair	Arnaud Vaissié
Principal	François Xavier Gabet
Date of previous school inspection	June 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,041 (Year 1); all other pupils: £7,265
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