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Accueil du portail > Eduscol langues étrangères > School Education in France

School Education in France

Eduscol, the portal for Education players

***Eduscol*, the website of the Directorate-general for Schools of the French Ministry for National Education, is aimed at education professionals and, primarily, teachers. Its purpose is to provide them with information by presenting official texts and offering resources to support their implementation on the ground.**

- ▶ The Common Core of knowledge and Skills
- ▶ Le Lycée (Upper Secondary School)
- ▶ Personalising Pathways
- ▶ Teacher Training
- ▶ School and School Life
- ▶ Innovation and Experimentation
- ▶ Teaching with New Technologies
- ▶ Europe and the World

As such, in its eight main sections, Eduscol offers an overview of the French school system and its main characteristics and themes. You can read a summary of the 8 sections below.

For further information in English on the French education system

The Common Core of knowledge and Skills

Nursery, elementary and lower secondary education must allow pupils to acquire the Common Core of Knowledge and Skills. It is based on the recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on 'key competences for education and lifelong learning'.

This is a major provision of the 2005 Education Act (loi d'orientation et de programme pour l'avenir de l'École), and sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils must master at the end of compulsory schooling to continue their education, go into the work place and succeed in society.

Primary Schools

The specificity of the French school system is that pupils have access to nursery education before the age of six, when compulsory schooling begins. The main purpose of nursery education is to allow pupils to develop their full potential and to have a successful first experience of school. The emphasis is on the acquisition of language and its development, the discovery of the world of writing and of numbers as well as learning to 'live together'.

At the elementary level, learning the French language and mathematics are a priority. Alongside these core subjects are the teaching of foreign languages, history and geography, activities focussed on discovering the world, experimental science and technology, art and teaching the history of art as well as physical education and sport.

Information and communication technology are tools used to support a range of school activities and proficiency in it leads to the first level of the Information technology and internet brevet qualification (B2i).

Le Collège (Lower Secondary School)

Lower secondary schools take all pupils from elementary school without an entrance exam from the age of 11.

The primary objective is to allow everyone to gain proficiency in the common core of knowledge and skills and to lay the groundwork for pupils to continue their education at upper secondary school.

For further information in French on "the Common Core of Knowledge and skills, primary schools, lower secondary schools"

Le Lycée (Upper Secondary School)

At this level, two paths are open to pupils :

- the *voie générale et technologique* (general and technological path) where pupils go into a common seconde class which is the initiation cycle, then go on to choose either the *cycle terminal* or the *cycle technologique*,
- the *voie professionnelle* (vocational path) where pupils go into a seconde class then go on to study towards a vocational qualification ranging from the CAP to the BTS.

For further information in French on "Upper secondary schools and vocational education"

Personalising Pathways

Schools have a duty to safeguard equal opportunities. They must ensure the attainment of all pupils through the national curriculum and national exams.

They do this by offering a differentiated response to learning difficulties and through continuous training provision for adults.

For further information in French on "Personalising pathways"

Teacher Training

Teacher training contributes to the quality of state education provision and the attainment of all pupils. At the heart of the implementation of the reforms of the school system and developed around national priorities, each year it is aligned with local authority action whilst responding to its own needs.

Training must allow each teacher:

- to do their job as well as possible,
- to develop their knowledge and professional skills acquired from the work placements aimed at students studying for a masters,
- to constantly adapt and progress thanks to lifelong training.

For further information in French on "Teacher Training"

School and School Life

The school is a place of teaching but also of community. The organisation of school life, as well as specific provisions put in place - whether individual support, health and social actions, awareness of the arts and culture, sport development - all come under its internal educational policy.

These actions place a particular emphasis on the development of the pupil's personality and learning how to live together. Their aim is to give the pupil a sense of responsibility, a taste for getting involved with projects and a personal cultural life. They favour an active approach and in most cases involve outside partners working alongside teachers.

A school's educational action is an aspect of training: school is a place where a shared vision of societal values is

transmitted.

For further information in French on "School and school life"

Innovation and Experimentation

Within the National Education Ministry, several institutional stakeholders contribute to developing innovation and experimentation to promote pupil attainment:

- the network of 30 local authority advisors (CARDIE),
- the *Département recherche-développement, innovation et expérimentation* (Department for Innovation and Experimentation Research and Development - DRDIE) of DGESCO.

Their role:

- to develop the initiatives of teaching staff in schools,
- to pool and build on knowledge,
- to promote links with research.

For further information in French on "Innovation and Experimentation"

Teaching with New Technologies

Teaching with new technologies means being organised in a different way for the success of all pupils and a better school system.

Over the last ten years the French Education Ministry has been rolling out flagship schemes - in partnership with local authorities - to help pupils and teachers to benefit from the added value of using new technologies in education.

Teaching staff can draw on a network of ICT contacts at local authority level, supported at the national level by experts in the discipline to develop the use of new technologies.

The scheme is managed nationally by the *bureau des usages numériques et des ressources pédagogiques* (The Office for New Technologies and Pedagogical Resources) as well as the *Mission Infrastructure et Services* (Infrastructure and Services Instructure) of the Direction Générale de l'enseignement Scolaire (Directorate-General for Schools - DGESCO). This work is conducted in partnership with the network of local authority and Inspectorate General ICT advisers.

For further information in French on "Teaching with New Technologie"

Europe and the World

All education systems are now part of a constantly changing European and global context. The purpose is to train global citizens, to facilitate further study in another country, to enable job-seeking in an extended labour market. Opening minds to the knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures and societies is a key part of the curriculum. Various exchange and mobility schemes are the practical component of this international policy.

For further information in French on "Europe and the world"

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