

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **DELIVERY OF THREE BILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS (P.45/2024): AMENDMENT (P.45/2024 AMD.) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 18th October 2024  
by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

### Introduction

Deputy Bailhache's amendment to proposition P.45/2024 seeks to gain in principle support for at least two English-French bilingual primary schools and requests the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to conduct a parental survey working with Statistics Jersey. If the survey outcome is positive, the Minister is then asked to appoint a project manager to create at least two schools by September 2026.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning understands Deputy Bailhache's passion and reasons for his proposal, but unfortunately, when considered alongside the Minister's priorities, the priority already given to French language tuition in primary and secondary schools, and strong concerns from primary schools Head Teachers, it cannot be supported at this time for the reasons set out below.

### French is already a priority language in our schools

As detailed in the Minister's [comments](#) to the main proposition, French is already a priority language subject in the Jersey Curriculum and primary schools. Outcomes in French in our primary schools are positive and continue on a positive trajectory.

The French Experience programme is an established part of the curriculum offer in Government of Jersey primary schools. A team of 1.5 specialist teachers have been employed to deliver the programme across Years 5 and 6 from September 2020. There is annual investment in the subject, significantly above that for other foundation curriculum subjects, reflecting this priority. The investment in training for teachers of French in primary schools can be seen through the provision for coaching, team teaching with the lead French teachers, curriculum network meetings, externally provided CPD through Alliance and other partners, and the delivery of the French Experience in year 5. All of this investment ensures that French is taught with annually increasing confidence and impact across our schools.

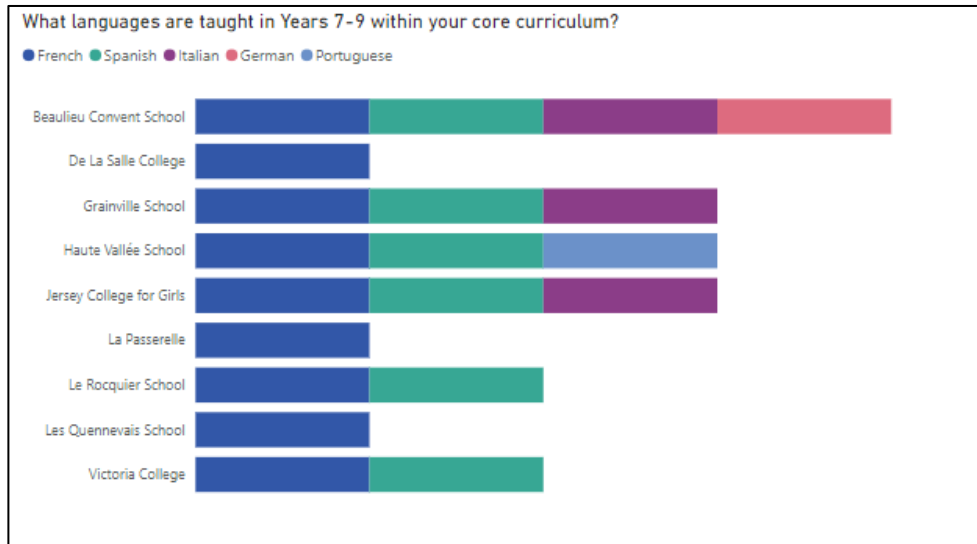
Repeat uptake of the programme over the last 4 years is testimony in itself to the success and impact of the programme in schools, as well as Smart Survey evidence collected from primary teachers in 2020-2021 after each programme.

On average 75% of pupils achieve a secure grasp of French by the end of Year 6 following the bespoke programme of study for French in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, created and resourced by the French lead.

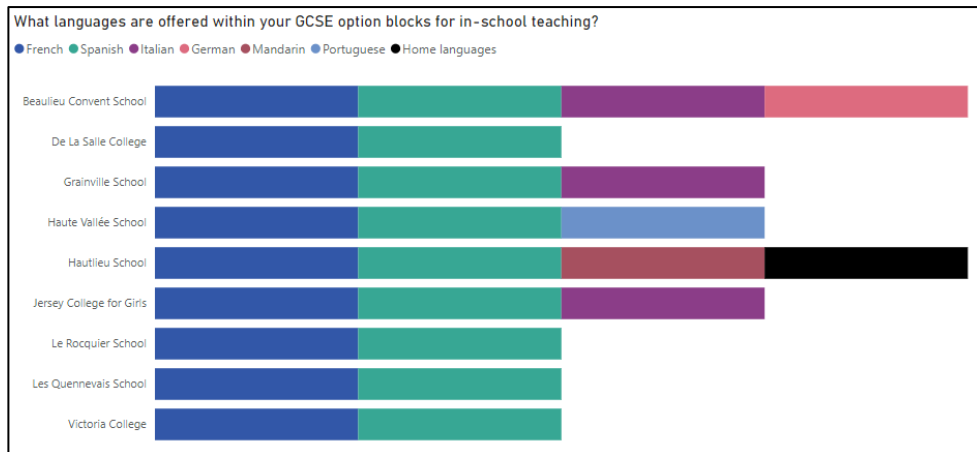
In 2021 the French lead supported the re-invigoration of the French Eisteddfod festival, when it was at risk of closing. With continued intervention and support from the team, pupil numbers taking part in the festival have reflected the increasing confidence in French learning across Jersey schools, from fewer than 150 entries pre- pandemic to more than 600 this year, with the festival extended to three days in 2024 to reflect the growing numbers.

In the most recent [Head Teacher survey](#) following the P45 proposition, 95% had accessed support with training, networking and curriculum planning with the majority accessing and valuing support with pupil entries for the French Eisteddfod and 90% of the 21 schools which responded were regularly accessing the French Experience. All the responses from school leaders demonstrated the value and importance that is placed on quality French teaching within the Jersey curriculum.

As detailed in the Minister’s answer to [written question 305/2024](#), French is a core curriculum subject in all the mainstream government provided and grant aided schools.



French is also available as a GCSE option subject in all the mainstream government provided and grant aided schools.



### Survey Issues

The Chief Statistician advises that due to the loss of posts through budget reductions they have had to cut outputs and have no spare capacity to conduct a survey of pre-school children during 2025.

Even if funding was available, they do not have spare staff to conduct such a survey and a survey such as this would be low on the list of their priorities.

It might be possible to include a module of language questions in the Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey (JOLS). This would be a random sample of about 1,200 achieved responses from households in Jersey. It would therefore not be targeted at parents of pre-school children and would include households with school age children and households that don't contain school-age children at all.

The next JOLS survey is in May/June 2025, with the results provisionally scheduled to be published in December 2025.

### **Priorities**

As previously advised in the comments paper for the main proposition, the Minister's priorities have been set and agreed by the Assembly when adopting the Common Strategic Policy.

Adding in additional priorities at this stage is likely to result in a reprioritisation of existing resources which will have a negative effect on previously agreed priorities. This amendment does not contain any suggestion as to which of the current priorities should be de-prioritised in order to provide the necessary resources to create at least two bilingual primary schools.

### **Financial and staffing implications**

The amendment lists total financial implications in the region of £60,000 for a 12-month project manager role. The likely minimum gross cost to government for a project management role is £72,000 per annum.

Neither this amendment, nor the main proposition lists any financial or resource implications for teaching staff to deliver bi-lingual education in primary schools. It is not understood how the Minister can employ separate French and English speaking teachers in a single form entry primary school without additional cost.