

Year 8 Institut Francais Visite!

The Institut français du Royaume-Uni, originally known as the Université des Lettres françaises, opened in 1910 as the initiative of a young French woman, Marie d'Orliac, eager to introduce the London public, and indeed the wider British population, to well-known writers, thinkers and artists from France. This initial desire to make the institute a gateway to French culture and thinking is something that should be preserved – especially considering hardships it has faced.

That's one thing I thought about walking up to the building – how despite all of the conflicts of the wider world, small parts of other cultures will always make an effort to stay put and continue to accommodate. There's something so special about that. Inside, a sweeping staircase leads from the foyer area to the first floor and the famous Rodin statue L'Âge d'Airain. Other works of art, both old and new, decorate the corridors demonstrating how culture spans the past, present and future.



We then filled out a sheet to provide context for the film 'Dilili a Paris' – the story of a precocious six-year-old girl named Dilili investigating the disappearances of several young girls in Paris, assisted by local delivery boy, Orel. It was not ground-breaking, I must admit, but I was still pondering the history of the building and how much it has and does facilitate – previously acting as a base during WW2 for French soldiers, and currently acting as a hub for French learning in a primarily French-speaking area. The context was much needed. We watched the film in Ciné Lumière, a grand independent cinema located inside the building that acts as a hub for French, European and World cinema. They recently opened a second one, in order to accommodate as much world cinema as possible.

The film was horrifying in the way that it portrayed the themes of racism, classism and sexism so clearly through the lens of two young children on their quest to help others. That realistic nature, lacking a filter, made the film tragically endearing, alongside its unique style of animation that made the characters stand out so vividly. It was written by Michel Ocelot, most famous for directing Kirikou and the Sorceress. He often comments on racism in his work, to make a point about his privilege and ignorance of history. This is something I felt the Institute stood for as well – giving a voice to others and demonstrating that cultural divides should not divide us as humans, emotionally or physically. Chatter on the train ride home was of history, culture and empowerment.

Ambika, 8C

The French Institute was an enjoyable day but also was educational. When we were walking to the institute, the shops made you feel like you were in France as we had learnt about different shops in our French lessons. Once we had reached the place, we had a variety of activities to do about the film. The activities were engaging and also gave a background story about what would happen in the film. Dillili à Paris was a very interesting film. She shows dedication to save all the young girls and the women who are being used as objects as the men believed women weren't good for anything. The film has a strong message and point and also grew my vocabulary in French as the movie was in French. Overall, I enjoyed the day out on the French institute.

Jia, 8C

My trip to the French Institute was very interesting. Firstly, the building itself was incredible and it had its own theatre! Right before we watched the movie, Dillili à Paris, we did some activities on what we knew about the movie by looking at the trailer. The activities were interesting and fun and we got to communicate a lot with people from the Institute. As we watched the movie my friends sang along with the songs and danced, we enjoyed the trip a lot. The movie was about a girl who works out a mystery and saves all the kidnapped girls. On our way there and back, we walked through a predominantly French area of London; there were French bakeries, and an ice cream shop. We enjoyed the trip to the French Institute a lot.

Rameen, 8A

Our class was invited to the French Institute in South Kensington to gain a finer knowledge of the French language in one of the most diverting and entertaining way possible. I have genuinely enjoyed the experience. Firstly, we completed activities relating to the film 'Dillili à Paris.' We discovered monuments in Paris, learnt about the good times, gained a deeper understanding of vocabulary, and revised the names of the clothes and colours. Overall, I would say that the French Institute trip was spectacular. In other words, "C'était incroyable!"

Apsora, 8D

Salut! Je m'appelle Janya et je suis en 8a. Il y a environ un mois, nous sommes allés à l'Institut français. C'était très amusant. Au début, nous avons eu une leçon interactive sur le film que nous allons voir, Dillili à Paris. Nous avons ensuite déjeuné, j'ai pris une pizza et c'était délicieux. Après cela, nous avons vu le film, Dillili à Paris. Nous avons toute une salle de cinéma pour nous tous seuls ! Le film était très bon, j'ai adoré. Il s'agissait du sujet des droits des femmes, Dillili une jeune fille a aidé à sauver tant de jeunes filles de l'esclavage. Dans l'ensemble, le voyage a été fantastique et je vous recommande vraiment d'y aller une fois et de profiter des films français là-bas.

Janya, 8A

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