



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
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Ecole Jeannine Manuel

# 40 YEARS CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND UNDERSTANDING

**1980**

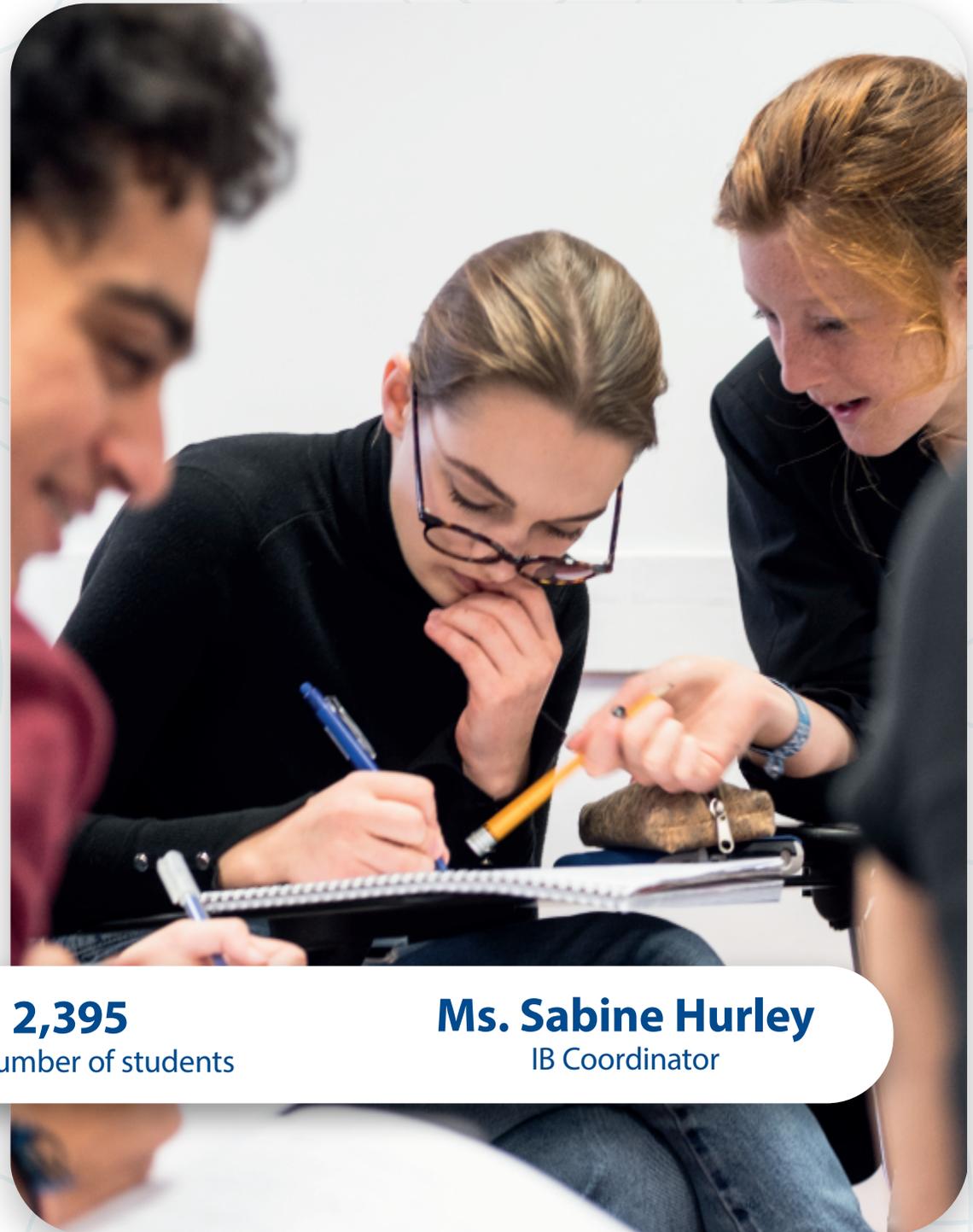
Diploma Programme offered since

**2,395**

Total number of students

**Ms. Sabine Hurley**

IB Coordinator



## A diverse school built from a need for people to understand each other

In 1954, Jeannine Manuel founded a school in post-war Paris. Having been a part of the French resistance and based in London during World War II, when Jeannine Manuel returned home, she looked for a school for her children where international understanding and bilingualism was at its heart. The drive behind this need for international understanding was the belief that the horrors witnessed by Jeannine Manuel during the war were due to the fact that people didn't understand each other.

So, unable to find a school with this international outlook, Jeannine Manuel founded what was then called École Active Bilingue Jeannine Manuel, which became Ecole Jeannine Manuel in 2014, with the mission of building a bilingual school that promotes international understanding, languages and the teaching and learning of cultures, to enable people from different countries and cultures to understand one another. The school began in 1954 with 11 students and 10 teachers and grew to a cohort of 120 students the following year. Now at full capacity at its site in Paris, the school has sister schools in Lille and London and was one of the first accredited UNESCO schools.

In 1980, the school chose to amend its curriculum and offer students the option to

study the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) and, in 2020, it celebrated its 40-year anniversary as an IB World School.

Sabine Hurley, Head of IB at École Jeannine Manuel, explains what makes the school unique: "We have three very fundamental components to our school. We are a French school, we are a bilingual school and we are an international school, and that gives us a very unique status amongst current and prospective families."

The school cohort also reflects this rule of thirds with a very clear aim of recruiting a third of families with two French parents, a third of families with one French parent and a third of families with non-French parents. Sabine says: "We proactively maintain a balance of multinational families in our school; at the moment we have over 80 different nationalities

represented. This mix of nationalities enables students to learn about different nations and cultures from one another, which is why the school was founded, to create an understanding of our differences and embrace them."

Offering both the French Baccalaureate and the IB, and recognized by the French Government as an American international section, École Jeannine Manuel is able to teach in both English and French. Head of school, Jérôme Giovento says: "We chose to be an American international section to strengthen the structure of our bilingual curriculum in the secondary school, teaching in both English and French. Due to this status, we are able to greatly enrich the English in our curriculum and consider the visions of both an American and a French teacher and combine them to teach the same topic." A strong feature of the school's identity.



## Binding the school with the curriculum

When choosing to offer the DP in 1980, an influencing factor in the decision-making process was the idea of international understanding that binds the school and the IB together. Sabine says: "International understanding is at the centre of everything we do and the DP has enabled us to enrich our curriculum and here our core principle of understanding others. Our students find a lot of meaning to their learning through the IB and its holistic approach with the extended essay (EE), theory of knowledge course (TOK) and creativity, activity and service (CAS)."

Jérôme says: "There is a unique, and positive tension between the IB and the French system. Whilst the two programmes do have a very clear difference in the way they are structured, they uniquely complement one another."

Jérôme and Sabine, who have both been teaching at the school for almost two decades, have found the cohesion between the two systems creates ideas and innovations amongst students and teachers alike. Jérôme explains: "The IB's approaches to teaching have changed the way I teach mathematics in the French system for the better." Sabine agrees saying: "The positive tension is something that pushes us forward. The IB has changed the way we approach teaching and learning across all sections of the

school. The IB philosophies have trickled down into everything we do at the school."

The IB has also provided teachers at the school with the opportunity to grow. Jérôme remembers a training course for IB teachers that he attended in Budapest: "When I first became an IB teacher, I realized that education wasn't just a national issue, it was an international one. The IB joined educators together who all spoke the same language (in terms of education) and had the same aims at heart. The IB has made me, and other teachers at École Jeannine Manuel, grow more than I imagined possible."



## Students driving change

Through the curriculum, students at the school embrace the IB's learner profiles and continue to strive to be open-minded. Students continually suggest and lead new groups at the school aimed at understanding one another. Sabine recalls: "Our students are proactive in ensuring everyone at the school is represented and feels like they have a voice. For example, a student approached us to set up The Queer Alliance Club at the school as part of their CAS project to bring the LGBTQ+ community and the non-LGBTQ+ community together, to discuss topics such as homosexuality and religion, and the AIDS crisis. This created a space within the school where students could talk freely, without judgement, about LGBTQ+ issues and allowed others to understand what the community may be feeling or experiencing. This club has been running and thriving since 2018."

Created in the same year, the school's students also founded Koh-ed club, which is run and managed entirely by a group of 50 students who teach disadvantaged children. The club was created with the purpose of sharing knowledge to equip disadvantaged students with the knowledge to achieve success.

## Preparing students for their next stage in life

Offering 30 DP courses, the breadth of subjects students are able to study at the school is a testament to the school's aim, as stated by Jeannine Manuel herself:

"The aim of education is to help shape 'whole' people, individuals aware of their presence in this world, engaged in its history, and ready to play a part in world affairs."

DP students are able to take control of their learning by choosing subjects they are not only strongest at but most interested in. One main benefit of the IB courses to the school is the adaptability of the curriculum to ensure that it is as relevant today as it was 40 years ago. Sabine says: "The programmes are constantly being renewed in an inclusive way, with input from various members of the IB community to ensure there's a real community effort. This works well for our school and our students as they can always be assured that the programme will be as up to date as it needs to be. The IB is truly a world class education."

Sabine further explains: "One of the main advantages of offering the IB is that it is the best preparation student can have for the next stage of their lives."

The school has found that the IB's approach to developing 21st century skills in students and promoting student autonomy gives them meaning in their learning and prepares them for whichever path they choose beyond school.

Jérôme says: "The autonomy that is left to our IB students to choose what they want to study, gives them a lot of freedom. The program gives students independence in their learning, which is very unique compared to other frameworks like the French Baccalaureate."

One of the main benefits the school finds from being an IB World school is that there's less politics involved in the programme, and the content in each course is not heavily skewed to the history or needs of one nation. Jérôme says: "It is a truly internationally-minded programme, teaching students to be open-minded as they enter life beyond school."

## Continuing the IB legacy

A highlight for the school each year is results day, enabling Jérôme and Sabine to witness the growth of their students from where they were when they first joined the sixth form in grade 10, to where they are when they leave at the end of grade 12. Sabine says: "It is so rewarding working with IB students. Every results day we are able to see what our students have achieved before they embark on the next stage of their life; it's always a pleasure when they come back and tell us what they've done since leaving the school."

In the future, the school hopes to continue to grow and evolve with the IB, promoting the autonomy of a student to take control of their learning.





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Find out more about the benefits of the IB:  
[www.ibo.org/benefits](http://www.ibo.org/benefits)