

FPN EXPERT ADVICE



This four-bedroom 'bastide' in St-Clement-de-Rivière near Montpellier is perfectly situated for a family relocating to the south of France as it is close to three bilingual schools (www.ninoscool.com / www.epbi.org / www.ecole-bilingue.com). The property includes a large cellar, garage and enclosed garden with pool, and is on the market for €1.4m (www.home-hunts.com)

An educated decision

For families relocating to France, the international schools of the French Riviera are a big attraction, not to mention the sunny climate and beautiful homes

Usually, for people with children who are looking to relocate permanently, schooling is at the top of their list of priorities. Families with younger (primary school aged) children will often be happy to embrace the French education system, but those with older children (probably aged 10-11 and over) generally look for an international school where their children can learn most lessons in English but still also be taught French to a high standard.

As well as the level of education, which is of paramount importance of course, an international school will also allow children and parents alike to meet new like-minded friends, which is also very important when arriving in a new area or country.

There are several on the French Riviera which are highly regarded, including Mougins International School, CIV Valbonne and International School of Nice (ISN), all of which have proven popular with British relocators.

Aside from having state-of-the-art facilities and an excellent reputation, Mougins School runs the GCSE, AS and A Level syllabus, the same as in the UK, so many families opt for this as it makes the transition as smooth as possible for their children.

The area around Aix-en-Provence also has a number of excellent international schools, from primary up to senior school level. For many years Aix has attracted overseas buyers who are either living or working long-term or short-term in the area. It offers families the possibility to have a curriculum based on the GCSE and for the last two years of education students can study an International Baccalaureate, a qualification which is recognised by universities all over the world.

Although the demand for property in Aix-en-Provence and the surrounding

countryside is high, prices have also come down, in some cases by 15%. Rental prices are very high and demand exceeds supply of a certain quality.

There is a wide selection of properties to choose from in the area, ranging from authentic countryside farmhouses to stunning bastides, and Home Hunts report that typical

budgets for their clients are between €800,000 and €1.4m.

With boarding facilities available at schools such as the International Bilingual School (IBS) in Luynes, buyers don't necessarily need to be within an immediate 15-minute school run radius, opening up their property search area even further.



Boarder NOT bored

Provence manager of Home Hunts, Nicola Christinger, is based in Nîmes and after her elder daughter had completed four years at a local private French college, she decided to send her daughter to the International Bilingual School in Luynes, where she is a weekly boarder, for two years to do her International Baccalaureate.

"The IBS gave my daughter a chance to really develop her written English and prepare her well for the next step towards a UK university," says Nicola.

"The school has a fabulous atmosphere with really dedicated staff and small classes. She was able to mix with children from so many different nationalities and, although I speak fluent French, I felt much more comfortable dealing with important issues concerning her education in my English mother tongue.

"Over the past year we have seen a definite increase in sales in this region. Families are moving to the Aix region and buying properties up to 40 minutes from the school, where they buy a beautiful home, often with a tourist activity or gites, but still close enough for their children to attend the international schools. It gives them a chance to opt for a system which offers more long-term choice," she adds.