

SCHOOL OF BABEL

Review

The Evening Standard
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Cert PG, 94 mins

★★★★☆

JULIE Bertuccelli's enchanting, emotional documentary tracks a year in the life of 24 immigrant children – new arrivals at a Paris school and members of the same reception class. The youngsters, aged 11 to 12, squabble, bond and eventually shoot their own movie as patient, creative

teacher Brigitte Cervoni effortlessly re-defines what it means to meet “special needs”.

We hear too about what the kids and their parents are running away from (including female genital mutilation and anti-Semitism). Not one of these narratives feels like a sob story. Allowed to be themselves, the subjects speak in a language we understand. It's as simple – and extraordinary – as that.