

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in French

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Bríde
Seoladh na scoile / School address	New Road Clondalkin Dublin 22
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60122D

Date of Inspection: 14-03-2017



WHAT IS A SUBJECT INSPECTION?

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in French under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	13-03-2017 and 14-03-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Coláiste Bríde is an all-girls voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 966 students. The school offers the Junior Certificate and the full range of Leaving Certificate programmes as well as an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons was very good, with exemplary practices evident in a number of lessons.
- There was excellent use of the target language by both the teachers and the students in most of the lessons.
- A wide range of innovative methodologies was observed during the evaluation.
- The teachers of French are committed to their professional development and demonstrate a dynamic approach to their work.
- The quality of provision and whole school support is very good.
- The quality of both individual and collaborative planning and preparation is very good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Senior cycle subject planning should be updated following the very good planning templates in use by the French department at junior cycle.
- Further consideration should be given to extending the use of common in-house examinations for each year group.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the majority of lessons observed was very good, with some exemplary practices noted.
- Teacher competence in the target language was, in all instances, of a very high quality. Teachers used the target language throughout most lessons observed.
- Students were provided with numerous planned and spontaneous opportunities to communicate in French both with their teachers and with each other. These experiences were both effective and purposeful for students.
- Lesson content was outlined to students at the start of each lesson. In the best instances, the proposed content was framed in terms of specific learning outcomes that were revisited in the course of the lesson to assess student progress. This practice, which varied from lesson to lesson, should be extended.
- The lessons were taught using an integrated approach with grammar contextualised as is appropriate. There was a very good pace and structure to all lessons. One lesson was particularly notable due to the teacher's excellent attention to planning, timing and integration of skills. This served to facilitate a very rich learning opportunity for students.
- Strategies to promote differentiation featured prominently and were particularly appropriate given the mixed ability cohort at both junior and senior cycle. Teaching approaches were carefully planned and successfully managed by the French teachers and included very good questioning strategies, individual support, group support and differentiation by task.
- Assessment for learning (AfL) strategies were central to many of the lessons observed. Highly effective practice included the use of mini-whiteboards, KWL charts and 'traffic light' techniques. There were also some very good examples of formative comment-only feedback in the copybooks. This served to guide students towards improvement. In a limited number of lessons, there was scope for further development in the provision of comment-only feedback.
- A varied range of active learning strategies featured in each lesson, some of which were facilitated through the creative and innovative use of information and communications technology (ICT). Strategies included a 'wheel of fortune' to randomly select students for questioning, video clips, songs and a successful lesson that promoted independent and group learning.
- There was a very good balance between teacher and student input and it was evident that students enjoyed the learning experiences provided to them by their teachers.
- Regular formal assessment of students takes place and there is an appropriate system of reporting on students' progress to parents. An in-house oral assessment for all year groups is in place. Commendably, the department has also introduced the optional Junior Certificate oral examination.
- Classroom management was highly effective in all lessons with students on task and motivated. Teachers demonstrated high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Lessons were noteworthy for the dynamic, inclusive and affirming atmosphere promoted by the teachers.

- Classroom seating arrangements were optimal in almost all of the lessons observed and served to facilitate the widely used active learning methodologies.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of provision and whole school support for French is very good.
- French is allocated appropriate time on the school timetable.
- Teachers, supported by school management, have engaged in an impressive array of relevant subject specific continuous professional development (CPD) and this was clearly reflected in the high standards observed in teaching and learning. The benefits of these practices could be further shared through the school's in-house peer observation model.
- Members of the French department provide a wide range of co-curricular activities. The department has established exchange and study links with schools in both Lyon and Toulouse. The school has also applied for and received a French language assistant on a number of occasions in the past. This has all served to develop and extend students' curricular experiences and promote the subject.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall planning and preparation, at an individual and collaborative level, is very good.
- The delivery of the course is in accordance with common schedules and would support the provision of common assessments. Further consideration should be given to extending the use of common in-house examinations for each year group.
- Very good practice was observed in the subject planning documentation which contains evidence of both reflective practice and action planning for improvement.
- Subject planning for junior cycle is advanced and these templates could now be usefully extended to the plans at senior cycle, including TY. In particular, the plans require specific learning outcomes and a more time-bound approach to the execution of the various strands of the course.
- The position of co-ordinator is rotated. This is good practice.
- Minutes of meetings are recorded and, commendably, contain evidence of agendas relating to both organisational matters and teaching and learning.
- An analysis of state examination outcomes by the department takes place. Targets for improvement and strategies to achieve them have been agreed. This is very good practice.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management are delighted to receive such a positive report from our recent French Inspection and wish to congratulate the French department. The Board are delighted that the report reflects the consistency of very good teaching and learning practices within the school, the high commitment of our staff to professional development opportunities and the provision of a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities.

The French inspection also reflects the schools' focus on areas such as AFL, differentiation, ICT integration and subject department planning and the maintenance of high quality records reflecting the dedication of the subject coordinators.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

The French Department have already begun to plan more common tests for forthcoming house exams as per the recommendations of the Inspector.

Planning templates for senior cycle shall be updated as recommended, also the Department are cognitive of the new Junior Cycle implications for the French Department.

The French Department's aim is to uphold the high standards in this report.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;