

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in French

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Phádraig CBS
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Roselawn Lucan Co. Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60264A

Date of Inspection: 09-05-2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

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. Teaching, learning 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	08 & 09 May 2019
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

School context

Coláiste Phádraig is a voluntary secondary school for boys with an enrolment of 550 students. The school offers the junior cycle, an optional Transition Year Programme, the Leaving Certificate (Established) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to good.
- Teacher use of the target language was consistent across all lessons; student use of French was less frequently observed.
- A variety of language skills were observed during the evaluation; within individual lessons, however, there was a need for a wider range of language skills development.
- Teachers provided individual attention to students where necessary; there is scope to develop additional strategies aimed at differentiated learning.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is good.
- The quality of individual and collaborative planning and preparation was good.

Recommendations

- Student-student oral interactions should feature more regularly within each lesson.
- Teachers should plan for a variety of skills treatment within each lesson, in line with the integrated approach to language teaching.
- Strategies should be developed to further differentiate learning to support the needs of the mixed-ability student cohort.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to good.
- Teacher-student rapport was noted to be very good in all of the lessons observed.
- Teachers spoke French throughout the lessons, which is good practice. Student target language use should be extended to include more opportunities to engage in the target language in every lesson, both with their teachers and with each other.
- Whole-class drills featured in a lesson as a measure to enhance and reinforce accuracy in student pronunciation. It is suggested that, following on from this good practice, that teachers also provide individual attention to student errors. Such practices could then be extended to all lessons.
- The presentation of the intended learning to students varied at the outset of lessons; in some instances, lesson content was presented, while in other instances, the intended learning was not shared with students. This should be addressed through a review of lesson planning to ensure that the proposed learning is presented as specific and detailed learning intentions and that consideration is given to the integrated approach to language teaching within the lesson structure.
- A good variety of language skills were observed in the course of the evaluation and these served to reinforce students' receptive and productive skills development. Overall, however, there was a tendency within individual lessons to focus on a narrow range of skills development and this should be reviewed in order to progress learning through a wider mix of skills treatment.
- Vocabulary revision featured in some lessons with words recorded on the whiteboard in French alongside their English equivalent. It is suggested that, where possible, recourse to translation is substituted with alternative approaches, such as the use of visuals, in order to limit recourse to English.
- Information and communication technologies (ICT) featured in a lesson through the use of a visualizer and, in another lesson, students presented their Classroom-Based Assessment in Oral Communication for junior cycle through the use of the data projector. The varied use of ICT as noted is good practice.
- Best practice observed in pair and group work included tasks that facilitated time-bound active student engagement in the target language. In some instances, the time assigned to the tasks was excessive or the nature of the task provided was more suited to individual, rather than pair work. A review of such strategies should take place to ensure that all tasks provided support purposeful student engagement.
- Due attention was paid to sociocultural awareness in a lesson where the teacher identified the French regions under discussion through references to the classroom map of France. This is good practice.
- Teachers circulated and provided individual support to students where necessary. Overall, however, there was scope to develop additional strategies to promote differentiation, in order to meet the needs of the mixed-ability cohort.

- A sample inspection of copybooks indicated that homework was being regularly monitored. Very good examples of homework corrections were observed in some student copybooks. In those copybooks, teachers' written comments clearly guided students towards improvement through both the identification of strengths as well as areas for development. This practice should be further extended to all lessons.
- Formative assessment strategies featured in a lesson through the use of lollypop sticks to randomly select students to respond during a plenary session; this good practice should also be extended as part of the subject department's defined target-setting goal to extend formative assessment practices.
- Regular formal summative assessment of students takes place and parents are kept appropriately informed on progress. The portfolio of student assessment includes in-house oral examinations for all year groups; this is good practice.
- The print-rich classrooms, with various posters, expressions and relevant materials prominently displayed, served to enhance the learning experience for students.
- Classroom seating arrangements were also arranged in a manner conducive to the creation of a student-centred learning environment.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is good.
- There is an appropriate allocation of time to the subject for all year groups; the spread of lessons across the week ensures regular contact time for most year groups.
- Uptake of languages on entry to the school is good. The continuation rate from junior to senior cycle, however, would indicate that further strategies may need to be taken to encourage greater retention of students at senior cycle.
- Staff have engaged in some continuing professional development (CPD), primarily through the support services. Where possible, consideration could be given to widen this engagement to include the range of CPD opportunities available through the cultural services and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Teachers have intensified their efforts to promote the subject recently, to include the introduction of French-themed breakfasts, student visits to the cinema to view a French film, and through a successful application for the services of a foreign language assistant.
- To build on these positive developments, it is suggested that the members of the subject department establish direct links with a French-speaking school, either through e-Twinning or the establishment of an exchange programme. This should further enhance students' engagement with, and promotion of the subject.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of individual and collaborative planning and preparation was good.

- Schemes of work relevant to the 2017 junior cycle specification for modern foreign languages indicate that good progress has been made in terms of planning for units of learning. There is scope to develop the schemes relating to the other year groups to include a greater focus on methods of assessment, differentiation, and detail as to the delivery of content.
- A review of the data emerging from certificate examinations indicated that attainment at senior cycle is improving overall. Certain trends merit further analysis, notably as there is some variation in overall performance from year-to-year, as well as some high failure rates over recent years. Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets have been set by the teachers within the subject department. Further refinement and ongoing monitoring of such targets is advised in order to ensure that identified areas of concern can be addressed.
- Minutes of subject department meetings contain good evidence of agendas relating to organisational matters and to teaching and learning issues. The language teachers within the school have also recently amalgamated into a single modern foreign languages department. This is good practice.

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

The board of management of the school 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.

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 of 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;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board is of the opinion that the report does not reflect a complete/accurate picture of the teaching of French in the school for the following reasons:

- Only four classes were visited during the inspection, no 1st year or sixth year classes were visited.
- It is the Principal's opinion that the recommendations relating to 'Planning for a variety of skills treatment' and 'Differentiated learning' are already carried out in French lessons. The fact that classes were visited during May when 3rd year classes were revising for state exams and second year classes were completing CBA's dictated teachers strategic approach on the day.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- It is the Board's opinion that the second and third recommendations are already in place.
- There are regular subject department meetings which will be used to address the recommendations.
- The Board provides a bursary for teachers to attend relevant training courses.