

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

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Holy Faith Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	1 Belgrove Road Clontarf Dublin 3
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60750J

**Date of Inspection: 10-03-2020**



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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.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

## **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

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	09 and 10 March 2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Holy Faith is an all-girls voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Catholic Schools Trust. The school offers the junior cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes (LCVP) to its 645 students.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in three lessons, and good in two.
- Teacher use of the target language was excellent; students actively engaged in French with their teachers, but opportunities for student-to-student use of the language were infrequent.
- Good formative assessment strategies were noted within most lessons; written formative feedback on student work was less readily observed.
- Teacher treatment of individual language skills worked to very good effect in many instances; however, there is scope to extend this engagement to a wider range of language skills within individual lessons.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is good, with some possibilities for improvement identified in the body of this report.
- Very good developmental work has taken place in terms of implementing the 2017 specification for modern foreign languages; collaborative planning for the senior cycle schemes requires further development.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should provide more opportunities for student-to-student oral interactions at regular junctures within lessons.
- Teachers should extend the provision of written formative feedback on student work.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on treating a range of language skills within individual lessons.
- Teachers should develop the senior cycle schemes of work, as outlined in in the body of this report.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in three lessons, and good in two.
- Teacher use of the target language was excellent in all instances.
- Students actively engaged in French with their teachers, and their confidence and willingness to regularly ask questions of their teachers in the target language indicated that this is established classroom practice.
- Opportunities for student-to-student engagement in French were infrequent. To further develop students' oral skills, this should be addressed through the provision of tasks that facilitate such interactions at more regular junctures within lessons.
- Teachers monitored and enhanced student accuracy in pronunciation through a successful combination of whole-class drills and sensitive correction of individual errors.
- There was very good individual teacher preparation for the lessons observed, with all necessary materials and resources prepared in advance.
- In most instances, teachers began lessons by communicating the learning intentions. Best practice observed included intentions that were specific and devised in a manner that would allow for meaningful student achievement.
- At times, however, the learning intentions were either overly broad or the language skills were treated in isolation. To maximise outcomes for students, teachers should develop learning intentions that focus on achievable and specific statements, with a variety of skills integrated alongside the chosen topic.
- Very good questioning strategies were observed in most lessons, including questions that revised and extended learning. Teachers also circulated and provided individual support, where necessary, in all lessons.
- A range of effective active learning methodologies were employed in every lesson. These included pair and group work, placemat exercises and think-pair-share activities.
- Information and communications technology featured regularly, often as a presentation tool or through engaging visuals that served to develop student vocabulary.
- Good formative assessment strategies were noted, including the use of 'thumbs up-thumbs down', exit passes, and student peer-assessment. In most lessons, a plenary was also provided at the end of most lessons to review and assess the learning.
- A sample review of copybooks indicated that homework was being regularly assigned and monitored. Examples of homework corrections, where teachers' written comments identified strengths and guided students towards improvement, were less readily observed. This should be addressed.
- Student work is regularly assessed on a summative basis and parents are appropriately informed as to the progress their daughter is making in the subject. An in-house oral assessment is also in place for all students.
- Student engagement with the subject was of a high standard and teacher-student rapport was positive in all instances.
- Teachers have recently moved to classroom-based arrangements within the school; they report that this has been very supportive of learning in the subject.

## **2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is good, with some possibilities for improvement identified below.
- All first-year students study both French and German as part of a year-long taster programme, following which they select one, or both, of the languages for junior cycle. Uptake of modern foreign languages is very high across the school curriculum.
- The overall allocation of time to French is generous and exceeds requirements. However, the allocation of time to first-year and transition year students is not ideal. Where possible, this should be rebalanced so as to provide more consistent exposure to the subject for every year group.
- Staff have engaged in continuing professional development (CPD) provided by the support services; going forward, teachers are encouraged to avail of additional CPD opportunities such as those available through the cultural services and other providers.
- To promote the subject, a cultural trip to France is planned for students later this year. Consideration should also be given to other means of promoting French, such as applying for the services of a foreign language assistant or engaging with the subject association.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of individual and collaborative planning was good, with some areas for development.
- The teachers within the subject department are currently reviewing their subject policy; this good work should also focus on updating certain wording therein in order to reflect ongoing changes in educational terminology and practice.
- Very good developmental work has taken place in terms of implementing the 2017 specification for modern foreign languages; there was also some good teacher reflection noted alongside the existing units of learning.
- At senior cycle, there is scope to enhance the schemes so that they can become more useful working documents; areas for development include strengthening the time-bound nature of delivery, inclusion of references to specific forms of assessment, and linking the themes to specific teaching and learning methodologies.
- The position of subject co-ordinator is rotated on a fluid basis. To support the development of leadership capacity within the subject department, consideration could be given to rotation of the role over a more extended period, such as one or two years.
- In order to enhance collaboration amongst the language subjects in the school, the teachers are planning to incrementally merge the school's French and German subject departments into a single modern foreign languages (MFL) department.
- Very positive outcomes were identified in a review of data emerging from certificate examinations in French. To maintain these high standards, particularly at senior cycle, the teachers have correctly identified strategies that, with further refinement into more specific targets, should support ongoing successful outcomes for students.

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 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
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;