

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

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Dominican College
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Wicklow Co. Wicklow
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	61860V

**Date of Inspection: 17-05-2018**



## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	17-05-2018
<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 3 class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Dominican College Wicklow is a voluntary secondary school with 450 female students. It is under the trusteeship of Le Chéile. The school offers Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching was very good with many instances of exemplary practice; there was scope for development in one lesson in promoting more active student engagement.
- French was used as the language of instruction and communication in most lessons; some students, however, were insufficiently challenged to interact in French.
- High quality learning and enthusiasm for French was observed in lessons where the methodologies and student tasks observed had clarity of purpose; student engagement and learning were less evident in lessons where the methodologies were not exploited to full benefit for students.
- There is good whole school provision and support for the teaching and learning of French.
- Very good collaborative planning practices are in place to support the teaching and learning of French.

#### Recommendations

- All students should be given the necessary expressions to communicate in simple French and should be challenged to use these linguistic strategies as frequently as possible in lessons to promote both prepared speech and spontaneous interactions.
- Teachers should ensure that the language skills to be developed during the instructional phases of the lesson are sufficiently processed by the students and that they are then facilitated to embed their learning through successful engagement with purposeful group tasks.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, the quality of teaching was very good. Exemplary practice was observed in most lessons. There was one lesson where there was scope for improvement in maximising the benefits of potentially good methodologies.
- The target language was used consistently by the teachers in all of the lessons observed. Students in most lessons were also actively encouraged to interact in French. Good attention to spelling in French was also noted. To further enhance these very good practices it is recommended that additional opportunities be afforded to students for spontaneous interaction in French.
- Students in one lesson were insufficiently challenged to interact in the target language. It is recommended that they be given the necessary expressions for simple interaction in French and situations created where they are challenged to use them to their maximum potential.
- Lessons were well structured and clear learning intentions communicated to students. The consolidation of prior learning at the outset of most lessons enabled students to progress their learning in an incremental manner.
- A variety of highly effective methodologies was observed in most lessons resulting in positive learning experiences and outcomes for the students. Students demonstrated high levels of enjoyment and motivation as they engaged in all phases of these lessons.
- The range of questions asked by teachers indicated good attention to the different ability ranges within the class groups. Students in most lessons also engaged in the practice of asking questions in French of each other and of the teacher. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- Digital presentations were effectively used in some lessons. A good video-clip was used in one lesson to support learning. It is recommended that this rich resource be further exploited in order to extend the learning experience and outcomes for the students.
- Effective pair or group work was observed in most instances where the tasks assigned were purposeful and students had a clear understanding of expected outcomes. In these instances teachers circulated thus supporting individual groups of students. Of particular note was the manner in which the teacher interventions were challenging or supportive as appropriate.
- The quality of learning varied, ranging from highly effective to fair. Where it was fair, the methodologies used had good potential for learning; however, the students demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding the lesson content and the purpose of the tasks assigned. As a result they did not engage sufficiently to bring about meaningful language learning outcomes. In these instances, it is recommended that greater attention be paid to the preparatory and instructional phases of the lesson. This should ensure that students have sufficiently consolidated their learning to be able to work collectively on independent learning tasks.
- Students' copybooks indicated that homework was regularly assigned and corrected in most instances. However, in one lesson there was very little evidence of written work in students' copybooks. All students should be afforded opportunities to manipulate language through writing skills tasks.
- In one lesson, project work was completed instead of homework assignments and this is acknowledged. However, the projects were written in English. It is recommended that project work be kept thematically simple, but documented in French.

- Most students were given both affirmative and informative feedback on the quality of their work. Exemplary practice was also noted where, using a very structured approach, the teacher demonstrated to students how to reflect meaningfully on their own work and how to assess the work of their peers. These practices should be extended to all lessons.

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

- There is very good whole-school support for the study of modern foreign languages. Students currently choose from one of three languages offered in first year. However, senior management is investigating the possibility of affording students the opportunity to study more than one language. This is welcomed.
- There is good provision for French in the allocation of time and resources. While timetabling is appropriate in most instances, senior management should explore ways whereby French in first year and in TY could be timetabled at better intervals across the week.
- A very attractive language learning environment has been built up in the French classroom with posters of France, French life and culture and displays of student work. Current seating arrangements facilitate the effective organisation and management of group work.
- The teachers of French have engaged in some continuing professional development. To further support the linguistic and pedagogical demands of the new junior cycle specification they should now consider availing of some of the scholarship and in-service programmes provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the French Cultural Services.
- It is recommended that the school apply for a French language assistant to support student learning.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The overall quality of planning and preparation is very good. A modern foreign languages department is in place and a number of meetings have taken place for the purpose of engaging in professional dialogue across languages and sharing best practice.
- Current curricular plans for the teaching and learning of French are well laid out. It is now recommended that teachers focus primarily on curricular planning to meet the requirements of the new Junior Cycle specification for modern foreign languages. To this end they should work collectively, using the webinars and templates available on the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) website to inform planning for the different units of work with their focus on learning outcomes, learning intentions and success criteria.
- The good practice of evaluating progress as noted in current subject plans should be continued and each unit of work appraised and revised as appropriate.

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 in 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;

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

### **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The school wishes to thank the Inspectorate for the positive findings in the subject inspection report.

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

The school will put all recommendations in to effect. The French department engage in collaborative subject planning for teaching, learning and assessment. All teachers will focus on the use of target language throughout lessons and will engage in peer observation. The school is using an online collaborative and individual subject planning tool to meet the requirements of the JCT specification.