

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in French

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Presentation College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Terenure Park Terenure Dublin 6 W
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76092K

Date of Inspection: 18-10-2016



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

Date of inspection	18-10-2016
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

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Presentation College Terenure is a Community College under the auspices of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. It has a current enrolment of 331 female students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY), and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good; the quality of learning ranged from fair to very good.
- There was consistent use of French as the language of instruction and good effort from some students to interact with the teacher in the target language.
- There was good attention to teaching the different language skills in an integrated manner.
- An appropriate balance was maintained between teacher instruction and student activity and good efforts were made to incorporate a range of productive and interactive tasks during lessons.
- There is good whole-school support for languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should ensure that all students engage in both prepared and spontaneous interactions in French in order to maximise their skills and dispositions as language learners.
- Teachers should use a more differentiated approach in order to respond to the diverse needs and abilities of the student cohort.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to good, with a number of discrete examples of very good practice. Areas for development included greater student engagement in both prepared and spontaneous oral interactions and differentiation to meet the diverse needs of the student cohort.

- French was used as the language of instruction in the lessons observed. The responses of some students indicated good willingness and capacity to interact in French. These skills and dispositions should be further developed by maximising opportunities in all lessons for both prepared and spontaneous interactions in French. Such opportunities could include general question-and-answer sessions or inviting comment on a range of unexpected, but authentic topics of conversation.
- Learning intentions were communicated to students in some lessons. This good practice should be extended to lessons where only the proposed lesson content was communicated. Students should also be made aware of their responsibilities as learners of the language. The learning intentions should be revisited at the end of the lesson to assess student progress and to evaluate the lesson management.
- All teachers endeavoured to teach the language in an integrated manner with the incorporation of listening and reading texts, and oral and writing tasks. This is good practice. There was one lesson where the focus remained on vocabulary acquisition rather than on manipulating vocabulary for the purpose of communication and this should be addressed. Greater attention to oral skills development is recommended in one instance.
- In some lessons the practice of directing questions at targeted students prevailed, thereby ensuring that all students were challenged to participate in the lesson. In other lessons however, the use of more global questions resulted in the same students answering all the questions asked. In these instances, greater use of directed questioning is recommended. Students should also be actively encouraged to extend their answers beyond single words to full sentences.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) supported teaching and learning through the use of digital presentations and video-clips. In one instance, however, the benefits of a very good video-clip would have been enhanced had a preparatory stage been introduced to support students' engagement with the text. A preparatory phase could take the form of brainstorming relevant vocabulary, setting the context whereby students can make accurate guesses or doing an introductory reading text on the topic.
- An appropriate balance was maintained between teacher instruction and student activity and good efforts were made to incorporate a range of productive and interactive tasks during lessons.
- Pair work was observed in most lessons. In some instances students should be encouraged to focus on authenticity as well as accuracy when answering questions asked by their partners. The good practice noted in some lessons of students progressing their learning by reporting back on the answers provided by their partners should be extended to all lessons.
- The quality of learning ranged from fair to very good. There were some students who engaged actively with the work in hand and their participation in lessons indicated good consolidation of prior learning and strong motivation to learn and achieve.
- A positive learning environment prevailed in all lessons. Teachers circulated as students worked independently and provided help where needed. However, there was limited evidence of differentiation in the instructional phases of lessons and no use of differentiated tasks or worksheets. Greater attention to differentiation is recommended.
- There were students, in some classes who remained disengaged throughout the lesson. The need for further linguistic scaffolding for these students should be considered in addition to the provision of differentiated tasks and supporting materials. A review of student groupings and seating arrangements should also be considered.

- Very good formative feedback was noted in some of the copybooks examined. There were other copybooks where work had been corrected, but no written feedback included. All teachers should build up the practice of providing formative feedback on students' written assignments and on their oral production.
- An examination of outcomes in the state examinations indicates good uptake of higher level in the Junior Certificate.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good whole-school provision and support for languages. A taster programme is offered in first year allowing students to sample French, German or Italian. Students can then make a more informed choice regarding the language they wish to continue.
- While some teachers have already availed of continuing professional development for teachers of French, they should consider applying for any further initiatives provided by the Department of Education and Skills, the French Cultural Services, the subject association and local education centres to support linguistic and pedagogical upskilling.
- Classrooms are teacher based, thereby facilitating the creation of a language-learning environment. To support them in optimising their print-rich environments, teachers should consider incorporating the creation of relevant language-learning posters into the Transition Year programme as a project to be completed incrementally over the year.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Formal subject planning meetings are primarily of an organisational nature. Apart from the annual analysis of results in the certificate examinations, there is little reference to issues relating to teaching and learning. All subject planning meetings should include discussion of teaching and learning. Teachers should use the school self-evaluation process to reflect on their practice and on learner outcomes. Consideration should be given to working with the teachers of other languages in this regard.
- The current subject-planning template should be adapted to include the methodologies and the assessment protocols to be used. This will ensure that the focus remains on how performance targets can be achieved rather than on lesson content.
- The current TY plan for French should be reviewed to ensure that the programme provides for incremental development of language acquisition and sociocultural knowledge from junior cycle. Teachers should plan for a range of language initiatives including project work to be carried out in French, practical activities arising from students' learning and opportunities for remediation.

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

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;