

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

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Leixlip Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Celbridge Road Leixlip Co. Kildare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91371B

**Date of Inspection: 14-11-2017**



**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. 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.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	13-11-2017 and 14-11-2017
<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 six class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

Leixlip Community School is a co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment of 640 students. The school offers the junior cycle, an optional Transition Year Programme, the Leaving Certificate (Established), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- Students were on task in all of the lessons observed; further collective planning for differentiation is advised.
- Teachers spoke the target language throughout most of the lessons observed; there is scope to increase the student voice within lessons.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is very good.
- The quality of individual planning and preparation was good, aspects of collaborative subject planning should be reviewed.

#### Recommendations

- Strategies to promote differentiation should be facilitated in order to challenge and engage students of all abilities.
- Further opportunities for student-student interactions should be provided in order to build confidence in oral skills and redress the balance between the teacher input and the student voice within lessons.
- Current schemes of work should be further developed, as outlined in the main body of the report.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good.
- Teacher-student rapport was good and classroom management was also good with students on task in all lessons.
- Teachers spoke French throughout most of the lessons observed. In a number of instances, however, teachers increasingly communicated in English as the lessons progressed. This practice should be reviewed in order to maximise student exposure to French.
- Very good practice was observed in a classroom where statements outlining useful classroom expressions in the target language had been laminated and attached to each student desk.
- Students generally interacted with their teachers in the target language. It was noted, at times that when students were asked to read aloud, that opportunities to correct student pronunciation lapsed and this should be addressed where necessary.
- Student-student oral interactions should also receive a more prominent position within the lesson structure in order to develop confidence in oral skills.
- Teachers outlined the learning intentions at the start of every lesson. Best practice was observed where the learning intentions were set at a pace that challenged students appropriately. Notably, a review of learning, both at the start and end of lessons, featured in most of the lessons observed.
- Where the lessons were most engaging and dynamic, the focus was primarily student-centred, the progression in lesson activities was brisk and served to challenge, motivate and support students of all abilities. Where there was scope for development, a teacher-led approach to lesson delivery dominated and the lesson pace was insufficiently challenging for all students.
- Teacher questions were well distributed amongst the students. This is good practice. Teachers also circulated, providing individual support where necessary. However, given the mixed-ability cohort of most of the lessons observed and the need to challenge all students, a greater focus on strategies for differentiation should be developed.
- Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices featured in most lessons through the use of 'traffic light' systems to assess the learning. Students were also enabled to work collaboratively in most lessons, often through 'think-pair-share' activities. This is good practice.
- Very good strategies to promote language awareness and risk-taking were encouraged in a number of lessons where students were required to make meaningful connections between English and French words and to compare French words with similar sounding English words.
- In the lessons observed, the teaching of grammar was most successful when taught within a communicative context. A very good example of this was noted in a lesson where the teacher drew students' attention to examples of the present participle and to reflexive verbs within the overarching context of the lesson theme. This subtle yet effective practice served to integrate important aspects of grammar into the overall lesson theme.
- Homework was regularly assigned in most, but not all, lessons. In some instances, a significant amount of time was allocated to the correction of homework at the start of the lesson and this detracted from the progression of learning within those lessons. These practices should be addressed.

- In other instances, good examples of homework corrections were observed where teachers' written comments identified strengths that guided students towards improvement. These practices should be extended.
- Highly effective practice in the use of Information and communications technology (ICT) was noted where a video clip used to discuss drug abuse within professional sports was scaffolded with clear task instructions and learning outcomes appropriate to the level of the students.
- Very good literacy and numeracy strategies featured in all lessons through the noting of a "word of the day", keywords on the whiteboard, a print-rich subject-specific learning environment and through the eliciting of numbers and dates from students in French.

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

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is very good in terms of appropriate allocation of time and the spread of lessons across the week to ensure regular contact time.
- French is promoted by the teachers within the subject department. Activities include taster sessions in French for primary school pupils, an annual visit from a French theatre group to the school and a regular exchange programme in France. This is commendable as it reinforces student interest in the subject and serves to extend their knowledge of French culture.
- All of the teachers of French have engaged in continuing professional development (CPD), as is good practice, and it was noted that some of the teachers have also recently taken part in subject-specific CPD. All teachers should continue with this engagement, with a view specifically towards ongoing pedagogical upskilling in the teaching of French. Consideration should also be given to applying for a French language assistant.
- An effective system is in operation to assess students and to keep parents informed of such progress through the provision of regular reports.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of individual planning and preparation was good, with some scope to review collaborative planning.
- Teachers have begun planning for the new subject specification for junior cycle, introduced in September 2017, and this will require adjustments to existing schemes in due course. Other areas for development in the schemes of work include the development and review of strategies to promote differentiation for each year group, greater emphasis on the time-bound nature of content delivery within certain schemes, further integration of the language skills and elaboration of the learning outcomes where necessary.
- Outcomes in certificate examinations are reviewed and compared to national averages. Such analysis and review should now be used to inform planning for continued improvement through the development of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets.
- Minutes of subject department meetings contain evidence of agendas relating to organisational matters and to teaching and learning issues. This is good practice.

- The position of co-ordinator is regularly rotated in order to build professional capacity within the school. 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 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 Board of Management and Staff welcome this Subject Inspection Report. The report identifies areas where teaching and learning are strong. The recommendations present the school with a challenge for improvement. The school is fully engaged in School Self Evaluation and School Improvement Planning. In these processes we have identified differentiation as one of our development priorities this year. Earlier this year we contacted PDST to secure training in this area and expect to have it completed by the end of the year. All recommendations will be addressed at a whole school level.

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

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