

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

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Rosses Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Dungloe County Donegal
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91407T

**Date of Inspection: 27-09-2017**



### **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.

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.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Date of inspection</b>	27-09-2017
<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 four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

The Rosses Community School, which serves the town of Dungloe and its hinterland, has a current enrolment of 403 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching was good; there was scope for further development in the quality of student learning.
- French was used consistently by the teacher in some lessons; it was interspersed with English in others.
- A range of methodologies was observed, a number of which were used to good or very good effect.
- Whole-school provision and support for French are good.
- A range of good planning practices is in place.

#### Recommendations

- Teachers should prioritise methodologies that facilitate more active student engagement and interaction in the target language.
- French as the language of instruction should be extended and students should be afforded opportunities in every lesson to interact in French with the teacher and their peers.
- The practice of formative feedback should be further developed.

### DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching was good. A number of effective practices was noted in all lessons. The main area for development was the promotion of active student participation and engagement with the language thereby enhancing the quality of learning for all students.

- French was used consistently by the teachers in some lessons, while in others it was interspersed with English. Where it is used to a lesser extent, the teacher should build it up incrementally, beginning by giving all instructions in French and, where scaffolding is required, seeking alternatives to translation.
- Students' use of the target language should also be built up incrementally by giving them the linguistic strategies to engage in simple classroom interaction and by creating opportunities in every lesson for student interaction with the teacher and with peers.
- Teachers communicated their lesson plan to the students at the outset of each lesson. To extend this good practice, it is recommended that, in line with the new junior-cycle specification for modern languages, they articulate their lesson plans in terms of learning intentions for the lesson. Teachers should also revisit these intentions either during or at the end of the lesson to assess student progress.
- A range of methodologies was observed, a number of which were used to good or very good effect. Question-and-answer sessions were effectively used in all lessons. In some instances, it is recommended that the students be further challenged in their manipulation of language by encouraging them to extend their answers. Consideration could also be given to asking the higher-ability students to propose corrections for any errors made by their peers.
- A quiz, using information and communication technology (ICT), proved very effective in one lesson to support student learning and promote enjoyment of the lesson. Good practice was noted in another lesson where spider diagrams were used to extend student learning and support language awareness, one of the three strands of the new junior-cycle specification. When planning for and implementing the new specification for modern languages, teachers should keep in mind the need to integrate all the strands of the specification into the work of the lesson and all of the language skills within the strand of communicative competence.
- Active learning was supported by the use of a think-pair-share task in one lesson and pair work. These are good practices which should be further developed to facilitate oral skills development and independent learning, particularly for the higher-ability students. The exploitation of reading texts, with differentiated questions for students, as observed in one lesson, was also very good practice in providing for the differentiated needs of the student cohort.
- A positive learning environment prevailed in all lessons. Students were very well behaved and applied themselves to their work. There were some who asked questions and many used dictionaries to support their learning. However, many of the students were receptive rather than active in their learning. To address this, teachers should create more situations where students are obliged to contribute to the lesson and to interact with students other than those sitting beside them. Student reflection should also be encouraged as a means of identifying what helps them learn best, what they have difficulty with and how they can improve.
- An examination of student copybooks indicated that their work was well organised. To further develop students' writing skills and overall progress, it is recommended that homework assignments be prioritised which involve the manipulation of language and facilitate the provision of formative feedback. Good practice was also noted in the school's participation in the Junior Certificate optional oral examination.

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

- There is good whole-school provision and support for French in the allocation of time, timetabling and the provision of resources.

- An attractive display of French-related posters was observed in each of the classrooms visited. As the year progresses teachers should extend this learning environment with charts of key expressions to promote and support student interaction with the teacher and their peers.
- Teachers have engaged with continuing professional development (CPD) for Junior Cycle and are members of the French Teachers' Association. Consideration should also be given to applying for the range of scholarships and CPD days provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the French Cultural Services.
- The current engagement with the Erasmus Plus programme is also good practice as a means of supporting professional development and intercultural dialogue with French schools.
- The school's initiative to fund a language assistant for part of the year to support students in preparation for their oral examination at Leaving Certificate is commended.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of planning for teaching and learning is good. The subject plan sets out the context and includes schemes of work for each year group. These schemes of work are well laid out establishing the topics with their corresponding learning outcomes, relevant methodologies, resources, and assessment protocols. There is also very good sharing of resources and co-operation with colleagues using digital media as the means of communication.
- With the advent of the new junior-cycle specification, it is recommended that the members of the French department focus on collaborating with other modern languages teachers to develop a meaningful subject plan for first-year students in line with the new specification for modern languages. The plan should comprise units of work which identify the learning outcomes from each strand, the relevant teaching and learning strategies and the success criteria for effective learning in each language.
- The minutes of subject department meetings indicate that the issues discussed to date have been primarily of an organisational nature. The focus on planning as a modern languages department is welcomed as it should facilitate discussion across languages on aspects of teaching and learning and the sharing of ideas and resources.

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 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 of quality 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;