

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

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Moate Community School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Church Street Moate Co Westmeath
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	91501L

**Date of Inspection: 16-05-2019**



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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.

## **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>	15 & 16 May 2019
<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

Moate Community School has a current enrolment of 810 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate (Established) programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good.
- Teachers worked hard to develop a positive and supportive learning environment.
- Whole-class instruction and consistent teacher use of the target language were central to the teaching approaches observed; opportunities for students to converse in French with each other did not feature.
- Good to very good formative assessment strategies were noted in lessons; the integrated approach to language teaching and active learning methodologies was less evident.
- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is very good; the subject department's action plan represents an opportunity to develop targets for improvement in attainment and uptake.
- The quality of individual planning was good; action is required to improve the senior cycle schemes of work.

#### Recommendations

- Student-student oral interactions should feature in every lesson and oral examinations should be extended to all year groups.
- Teaching approaches should place greater emphasis on the integrated approach to language teaching and active learning methodologies.
- Subject department action plans should develop strategies that focus on raising aspects of attainment and uptake in the certificate examinations.
- A comprehensive review of senior cycle schemes of work should be undertaken in order to develop effective working documents for those year groups.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed was good.
- Teachers spoke French throughout most lessons observed and did so to a high standard.
- Very good attention to the correction of student pronunciation was frequently observed; this included an appropriate mix of both whole-class practice, as well as sensitive individual attention to student errors.
- Students regularly delivered oral presentations to their peers on subjects ranging from asking for directions to the presentation of their Classroom-Based Assessments in Oral Communication. These good practices would be further enhanced through the development of specific opportunities for students to engage with each other in French in every lesson.
- Teaching approaches focussed primarily on the delivery of whole-class instruction. Future planning for lessons should emphasise the integrated approach to language teaching to also include, for example, opportunities for oral and aural skills development within lessons.
- Teachers presented the learning intentions at the outset of lessons. As was appropriate to the stage of the academic year, preparation for upcoming examinations was a key focus within lessons.
- Teachers worked consistently to ensure that students' learning was well scaffolded at the outset of lessons. At times, the duration of the introductory instructional phase could have been rebalanced to ensure greater student input at an earlier stage. In those instances, teachers are advised to review the sequence of the planned tasks, with a focus on placing active learning opportunities earlier within the lesson sequence.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) featured through the use of the data projector to display appealing visuals and for the use of a whole-class game. This is good practice.
- Formative assessment approaches observed included the use of show-me-boards, inclusive questioning strategies, and exit slips to assess learning. These approaches served to reinforce and differentiate the learning to good effect.
- Very good examples of homework corrections were in evidence in some student copybooks where teachers' written comments identified strengths and guided students towards improvement. The provision of such comments on student work should be extended.
- Good practice in the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills in lessons included the referencing of the day and date at the outset of lessons, and the noting of subject-specific vocabulary on the board.
- Students receive regular formal assessments and an appropriate system of reporting on such progress to parents is in place. In-house oral examinations take place in sixth-year and this practice should be extended to all year groups, in order to monitor student progress in all areas of linguistic development.
- Teachers provide students with an affirming learning environment and teacher-student rapport was noted to be very positive in every lesson observed. The physical environment was also supportive of learning, with a mix of commercial posters and student-developed work on display.

- Classroom seating arrangements are traditional and should be reviewed, where feasible to do so, in order to create more favourable conditions for a student-centred learning environment.

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

- The quality of provision and whole-school support for French is very good.
- Senior management are very supportive in leading learning and have, for instance, organised meetings to disseminate findings from a recent subject inspection report. This was done with a view to ensuring that the recommendations arising from that report could be shared and embedded in practice across subject departments, including modern foreign languages.
- Within the context of a school operating hour-long lessons, the allocation of time to the subject is good. For a number of year groups, however, lessons are timetabled on concurrent days, which serves to reduce the overall spread of contact across the week. Where possible, optimising the spread of lessons should be considered.
- Uptake of languages is very good in the school and the continuation rate from junior to senior cycle is also very good, with most students opting to continue their studies in the chosen language. Numbers taking the subject at junior cycle have also steadily risen over recent years.
- The members of the subject department have developed an action plan to support the subject. Further review of the targets therein is advised, with a focus on target-setting to bolster attainment in specific areas at junior and senior cycle, as well as uptake of higher level at senior cycle.
- Teachers have engaged in continuing professional development, including training events in France, available through the cultural services and the Department of Education and Skills. This is very positive.
- Teachers promote the subject through the open day and through an after-school taster programme for primary school pupils. The school has also hosted teachers from France through the Department of Education and Skills 'French/Irish Teacher Professional Visit Scheme'. This has served to encourage inter-cultural dialogue and to enhance student knowledge of the target language community.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of individual planning was good; action is required to improve the senior cycle schemes of work.
- Planning for the 2017 junior cycle specification has begun and is ongoing. Teachers have made effective use of their professional time and report that weekly meetings have taken place in order to discuss and embed the specification within the subject department. This is very good practice.

- The senior cycle schemes of work require development. At present, the fifth and sixth-year scheme of work is a single document that broadly outlines the content to be covered. Future development for this scheme should focus on the creation of time-bound contexts, specific learning outcomes, methodologies, resources and assessment. A similar review should also take place for the TY plan, to ensure that an effective working document is developed for that year group.
- Minutes of subject department meetings indicate discussions on items relating to both organisational matters and to teaching and learning issues. This inclusion of teaching and learning issues is good practice.
- The recent amalgamation of the language options in the school into a single modern foreign languages department represents an opportunity for more regular rotation of the position of co-ordinator; this should support the building of leadership capacity within the subject department.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

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.

## 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;