

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of French
REPORT**

**Hazelwood College
Dromcollogher, County Limerick
Roll number: 71850B**

Date of inspection: 3 October 2013



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN FRENCH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	3 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very high in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were well structured, and included opportunities for student engagement and participation.
- There was very good use of French by teachers and students in the lessons observed.
- Classroom management was effective and a positive learning environment was created.
- Student achievement in the certificate examinations is very good.
- Provision for French is very strong with good timetabling and resources.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lesson planning should allow for more opportunities for students in junior cycle to use the target language.
 - An assessment of oral proficiency should be introduced for junior cycle classes.
 - In order to more easily monitor and evaluate progress in addressing identified priorities, the action plan and the achievement of priorities and targets should be documented in the subject plan.
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INTRODUCTION

Hazelwood College is a co-educational community college under the auspices of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. It serves the rural population of south county Limerick and has a current enrolment of 537 students. The school offers a wide range of curricular programmes including the established Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme. It also offers an optional Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed. Classroom routines were well established. Very good practice was seen in the well-structured and paced lessons with varied activities and good integration of the key language skills.
- The target language was used to very good effect by the teachers for communication and instruction purposes. There was a commensurate emphasis on the development of the students' use of the language through strategies such as the *mot du jour* in senior classes and the *instructions du professeur* in junior cycle.
- A lesson on French songs as part of the TY programme for French showed the benefit and enjoyment that students gain from active engagement in their own learning. The students' high level of co-operation and energy together with the enthusiasm of the teacher created a very positive learning experience.
- Good questioning techniques were evident in all lessons both in whole-class teaching and in the questioning of individual students. There was engagement with pair work in many lessons and in senior cycle, this strategy was used to encourage students to work independently. In junior cycle, there sometimes needed to be a better balance between teacher input and the time allowed for students to interact in the language. In order to increase the opportunities for students to speak French, it is recommended that there be a greater emphasis on pair-work activities in junior cycle. The introduction of an oral assessment in junior cycle is also recommended as a way of linking the good practice in target language usage with the monitoring of students' progress.
- Classroom management was effective and learning activities were well managed. A positive and supportive learning environment was created. Students' interest in the language was very evident and it was clear that the teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is a strong motivating factor for student engagement and enjoyment.
- The arrangements for student assessment include tests at mid-term, Christmas and summer depending on the year group. Students sit common examination papers where appropriate, and this is good practice.
- An examination of a sample selection of student copybooks and files showed that homework is assigned and regularly corrected. An assessment for learning (AfL) approach is taken with positive comments as well as grade markings and it is suggested that this approach should continue to be developed.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision for modern foreign languages is very good. French and German are the two foreign languages offered in the school and the study of a language is compulsory in both

junior cycle and senior cycle. Students have a choice of either French or German in first year. Timetabling for French is very supportive of language learning with single periods for all year groups. Students are taught in mixed-ability class groups in first year.

- Co-curricular and extra-curricular support for the language is well-organised and includes an annual visit to France organised by the language teachers as well as a *petit déjeuner* for junior cycle students.
- There is a very good range of resources available to support the language, including well equipped classrooms with a data projector and computer in every room as well as access to a language laboratory. All students have access to the student server with an area specifically designated for French. The subject department is also allocated an annual budget for the purchase of resources.
- The teachers have designated classrooms. Good use has been made of the space available to display samples of students' work as well as posters, maps, charts and keyword and number lists. The electronic notice board in the foyer is used to promote French and there is also a notice board for French on the main corridor.
- Senior management supports teachers' involvement in professional associations. The teachers are encouraged to attend professional development events and their membership of the French Teachers' Association is funded by school management.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is facilitated by senior management. A subject co-ordinator is appointed on a rotational basis for French. The role involves maintaining the status of the subject, the analysis of results and the review of subject plans as well as responsibility for leadership and support within the department.
- Good practice is seen in the collaborative planning involved in the development of the subject plan. It is good to note that the mission statement for the subject promotes the importance of fostering enthusiasm and appreciation for the language amongst students.
- Meetings of the teachers of French are held each term and these meetings are appropriately documented. The teachers have identified priorities for the subject, have developed an action plan, and are engaged in addressing these challenges. In order to more easily track and evaluate the progress made, it is recommended that this work should be documented in the subject plan.
- Student achievement in the certificate examinations is very good. The results are analysed each year and the findings are used to identify trends such as the uptake of levels, and to further the development of the subject.

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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