

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of French  
REPORT**

**Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne  
An Daingean, Contae Chiarraí  
Roll number: 915110**

**Date of inspection: 31 March 2011**



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT  
OIDEACHAIS | OF EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

**REPORT  
ON  
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN FRENCH**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	22 March 2011
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was generally very good with some excellent practice observed.
- The target language was used in lessons observed and there were some examples of very rich exposure to the language.
- Teacher-student rapport and classroom management were very good.
- The French department is committed to the subject and to the ongoing improvement of provision; assessment of students' oral competence has been promoted and information and communication technology (ICT) has been introduced to support teaching and learning.
- French is a key part of curricular provision and, although uptake levels are of some concern, achievement is very strong.
- Whole-school support for the subject is very good.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Ongoing monitoring of uptake levels in the subject is encouraged.
  - Application for the services of a language assistant and the development of a link with a French school are recommended.
  - The French department should devise an action plan to support its developmental work.
  - The importance of a thematic approach, the incremental development of skills, the acquisition of linguistic structures and the inclusion of learning goals should be remembered in subject and lesson planning.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne is located in the Kerry Gaeltacht. Currently there is an enrolment of 464 in the school. French is one of two modern languages offered and is optional. At junior cycle, students are facilitated to study the language in either the Soláthar Lán Ghaeilge or the parallel bilingual 'Droichead' programme.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Teaching and learning was generally very good in lessons observed with some excellent practice evident.
- Lesson content was carefully selected and syllabus relevant. Particular strengths noted were the extent to which teachers endeavoured to link content to the lives and experience of the students and the extent to which opportunities to develop cultural awareness were harnessed.
- The target language was used in all lessons observed. In some lessons, students were exposed to a wonderfully rich and challenging range of language. Where the target language was most effectively used, student language acquisition was supported by strategies such as: the provision of alternatives in the target language and the avoidance of undue recourse to translation; support for, and the encouragement of, the use of structures; an emphasis on pronunciation and repetition; the use of probing questions and good teacher self-correction. Oral starts to lessons encouraged student oral production and very good use of visual supports including the use of ICT supported literacy, both oral production and composition. The importance of teaching students how to ask questions was discussed and the creation of more in-class opportunities for student oral production was advocated.
- A variety of methodologies were skilfully employed. Of note, were the natural and effective integration of the various language skills and the thoughtful and supportive integration of ICT. Greater use of pair-work and open questions was advocated as was the development of global listening skills.
- Teachers made very good use of available resources. Well-appointed teacher-based classrooms, including the computer room, provided visually stimulating and supportive learning environments. ICT and material resources were skilfully employed in many of the lessons observed. These were of especial benefit in supporting students who were learning both Irish and French
- Classroom management was very effective. Teachers know their students well, are aware of their learning needs and are sensitive and very encouraging in their approach.
- Teachers invested much energy in lesson delivery and lesson pace was engaging. Lessons provided very good examples of teacher checking of understanding. Students displayed good grammatical awareness and good recall and were comfortable in proffering answers. Senior students had acquired a wide range of vocabulary. It was suggested that student learning goals, including, where appropriate, Irish language learning goals, be specified at the start of all lessons. All students should also be taught and encouraged to make notes to support their own personal learning.
- The assigning and review of homework was an integral part of lessons observed. Google Applications were used very effectively to communicate tasks to students. The

importance of the regular monitoring of students' written work from junior cycle onwards was discussed.

- Provision to date for the assessment of students' oral competence in all but third year is highly commended as is the imaginative deployment of Transition Year students in the assessment of first and second year students. It was suggested that levels of students' oral competence be reported to parents.
- School management and French teachers review results in certificate examinations. Achievement in the subject is consistently strong.

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

- Access to the subject is good. In recent years, uptake levels have been of some concern particularly at junior cycle. First year students choose either French or Spanish prior to entry; the opportunity to sample both languages would support an experience-based choice.
- Allocation of time to the subject is very satisfactory. Currently, two class groups are taught by two different teachers and one class group is timetabled for one double and three single periods. It is suggested, that where possible, classes be the responsibility of one teacher and that single lesson periods be provided.
- Co-curricular and extracurricular provision is good. A noteworthy feature of lessons observed was the skilful incorporation and exploitation of co-curricular experiences. A link with a French speaking school would provide further learning opportunities for students.
- Students are assessed regularly. Communication with parents is good with reports issuing bi-annually. Parent-teacher meetings are organised annually.
- The subject is very well resourced. Teacher-based classrooms are very well equipped and language teachers also have access to a language laboratory. The ongoing acquisition of suitable resources and the building of the library stock are recommended.
- French teachers are committed to the enhancement of subject provision and to their own professional development. They have participated in certificate examination work, and in subject-related workshops. The work of the department has been valuably enhanced by the in-house provision of professional development in relation to ICT by one of its own members. It was suggested that the school make an application for the services of a French language assistant. It would be beneficial also to consider the possibilities offered by Department schemes such as the French/Irish Teacher Professional Visits scheme, and the summer scholarship scheme.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The work of the department is co-ordinated by one of the teachers. Department meetings are held. Weekly provision is also made for some of the teachers to meet. It is especially important that these meetings support collaboration and communication in relation to teaching and learning in the Solathár Lán-Ghaeilge and the parallel Droichead programme.
- French teachers should devise an action plan for the ongoing development of provision.

- Subject planning has been undertaken. The importance of a thematic approach, the incremental development of skills, the acquisition of linguistic structures and the inclusion of learning goals should be remembered in subject and lesson planning.
- Individual planning for lessons observed was most thorough and imaginative and had included the sourcing and preparation of relevant material and resources.

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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.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

**Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

We were really pleased with this positive and encouraging report.

*(This is a translation of the School Response submitted by the Board)*