

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of French
REPORT**

**Mount Anville Secondary School
Goatstown, Dublin 14
Roll number: 60140F**

Date of inspection: 3 October 2011



**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

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| Date(s) of inspection | 3 October 2011 |
| 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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers |

MAIN FINDINGS

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was very good.
- The target language was used by the teachers in all of the lessons observed with one example of exemplary practice in the use of French as both the language of instruction and communication.
- A broad range of methodologies was observed, many of which promoted active student learning.
- There is good whole-school support for French in the allocation of time, timetabling, the provision of resources and commitment to co-curricular activities.
- Good planning practices are in place.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Where a lesson involves the presentation of students' work, such presentations should be interspersed with follow-up activities to ensure full class engagement with the work presented.
 - Subject plans include detail on the homework and assessment protocols to be used; however, greater detail on methodologies would be beneficial.
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INTRODUCTION

Mount Anville is a voluntary secondary school with 638 female students. It is a fee-paying school in south County Dublin. French, German and Spanish are offered in the school and students can choose to study more than one language.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The target language was used by the teachers in all of the lessons observed. Exemplary practice was noted in one lesson where French was the language of both instruction and communication throughout the lesson. There were, however, a small number of occasions where teachers reverted back to English as the lesson progressed. Teachers should endeavour to use the target language throughout the lesson as there was good evidence that students understood what was being said in French.
- Overall, lessons were well structured and paced and the content was appropriate to the needs and interests of the students. Some teachers began the lesson by sharing the learning outcome, while others gave a brief outline of the lesson content. It is recommended that all teachers frame their lesson plan in terms of the desired learning outcome as it makes students aware of their responsibilities in the learning process in addition to supporting good lesson structure. This approach will also replicate the format used in the teachers' written schemes of work.
- There was one instance where the lesson began with a question and answer session on an event which occurred at the weekend. This is good for familiarising students with topical issues and vocabulary. However teachers should source the information on the event from a French website rather than projecting pictures with headlines in English.
- Overall, there was good attention to developing the different language skills. In one instance, the inclusion of a listening text would have further supported students' aural skills development. Very good practice was noted in one lesson where the teaching of grammar was seamlessly integrated into the body of the lesson.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was observed in all lessons, supporting, in some instances, a preparatory phase for oral work and reading comprehension and the correction of homework in other lessons. Students used ICT in one instance for PowerPoint presentations. The use of ICT for varied purposes is good practice. However, where ICT was used to present student projects, there were insufficient follow-up activities to assess the learning outcomes for both those delivering the presentation and for the targeted audience. Students should be encouraged to choose simple topics of personal relevance and use PowerPoint as a support for oral presentations rather than just reading the information out from the screen. The use of follow up activities such as teacher-student or peer question and answer sessions or discussion in simple French is also recommended in order to facilitate class engagement with the work presented.
- Other methodologies observed included the use of song with a supporting video clip and games for the purpose of consolidating learning. These strategies actively engaged the students in addition to enhancing their enjoyment of the language learning lesson.
- Pair-work activities as observed in most lessons fostered active student participation in addition to contributing to oral skills development. In one instance students were told to work in pairs, but proceeded to work individually. In such instances teachers should review the nature of the task to ensure that it supports the desired outcomes. Where oral

skills development is the intended outcome, the assignment should necessitate interaction in the target language. If however, the purpose of working in pairs is to support one's peers, the instructions should be communicated accordingly.

- There was evidence of active learning in most of the lessons observed. Where this is not yet fully developed, it is recommended that the structure of lessons be reviewed and opportunities created for all students to actively progress their learning. Students' responses indicated good understanding of the work in hand and they applied themselves well to the tasks assigned.
- Homework was given and corrected. Very good practices in the assessment and recording of students' work were noted in some lessons.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good whole-school support for modern languages. Good practice was also noted in the appropriate allocation of time and in timetabling.
- Classrooms are teacher based and a culturally-enriching language learning environment has been established. To further this good practice, teachers should also consider posting up charts of key expressions for the week or the topic to afford all students the opportunity to assimilate new learning over time. A wide range of resources has been provided by school management to support the teaching and learning of French. Teachers have also built up a significant bank of useful worksheets for use in the classroom or at home.
- There is good commitment to ongoing professional development through teacher involvement in language learning projects or attendance at in-service training seminars.
- There is very good commitment to co-curricular activities and plans are currently in place to foster active links with schools in France.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The permanent section of the subject plan for French is well laid out documenting the school's modern foreign languages policy, the school context in relation to class organisation, resources and information relating to good practice in teaching and learning. There was also evidence of reference by teachers to the syllabus, and to subject relevant reports as a means of supporting teaching and learning.
- Schemes of work have been drawn up for each year group. They are articulated in terms of the topic, vocabulary, grammar, learning outcomes and aspects of French civilisation to be taught. The inclusion of learning outcomes in terms of desired competencies is good practice. To further build on this good work and to support self-evaluation, teachers should include greater detail on the proposed methodologies in their subject plans.

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.

Published March 2012