

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of French
REPORT**

**Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach
Ceatharlach,
Roll number: 70440A**

Date of inspection: 16 December 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

Dates of inspection	12 and 16 December 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 overall quality of teaching and learning was good with some scope for development in the methodologies adopted to teach the different language skills.
- The target language was used by the teachers in all of the lessons observed.
- In most lessons teachers endeavoured to use varied methodologies in order to engage the students and promote active learning.
- There is good whole-school provision and support for French in the allocation of time, timetabling and the provision of resources.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students should be given more opportunities to use French in the classroom.
 - An integrated approach attributing due attention to all the language skills should be adopted in all lessons.
 - Teachers should expand their use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support learning.
 - All student tasks should have a clear purpose and structure.
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INTRODUCTION

Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach is an Irish medium co-educational post-primary school with 365 students, serving the town of Carlow and its hinterland. The study of a modern European language is mandatory in both junior and senior cycle and the option to study two modern languages is available to students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- A number of good teaching practices were observed in all lessons. Areas for development include a more systematic and integrated approach to the teaching of the different language skills and more creative use of ICT.
- The target language was used by the teachers in all of the lessons observed. To extend this good practice teachers should encourage greater student interaction in French. To this end it is recommended that the expressions for essential classroom communication be given to the students and that opportunities are created whereby students can use them in an authentic manner. In this way students will be enabled to build up their communicative confidence as well as supporting literacy development in French.
- All teachers began their lesson by outlining their proposed plan of work. It is recommended that the learning objectives be communicated in terms of what the students are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson. This will ensure awareness of teaching and learning as a shared process. Very good practice was noted in one instance where the teacher concluded the lesson by revisiting the learning intentions. This practice should be extended to all lessons.
- An integrated approach to the development of the different language skills was observed in some lessons. This is good practice as it supports knowledge and skills transfer across different contexts. This approach should be adopted in all lessons beginning with aural and reading comprehension skills. This will support oral and writing skills development.
- There was one lesson where the main focus was on the completion of examination style writing tasks. Notwithstanding the importance of examination practice and preparation, a more integrated thematic approach is recommended. To this end, teachers should consider identifying the themes in examination questions and teach them in a way which supports rather than dictates the lesson.
- A range of methodologies was observed. Question and answer sessions were observed in all lessons and, in general, there was a good balance between global and directed questioning. Teachers should extend this practice to include situations where students ask more questions of each other. In a small number of lessons, question and answer sessions were the dominant methodology. A more integrated approach would lead to a wider range of methodologies being used.
- ICT was used to support learning in one of the lessons observed. There were other lessons however, where the use of ICT would have enhanced the work of the lesson. It is recommended that teachers use more ICT to support language learning and cultural awareness. Possibilities include visual supports, up-to-date news items, video-clips, interactive maps and YouTube. Supplementary worksheets were distributed in most lessons and this is good practice.
- Pair or group work was observed in most lessons. This is good practice in supporting active and independent learning. However, there were some instances where tasks needed

a clearer purpose and structure. All tasks should have a preparatory phase to ensure comprehension of the skills being taught or modelled. Learning arising from the task should then be assessed and consolidated, through reporting back, reflection or discussion.

- Homework was assigned in all lessons and an examination of a sample of copybooks indicated that work was corrected. There were examples in the copybooks of one class group of high quality corrections supported by very good formative feedback. This very good practice should be extended throughout.
- There was good classroom management and students applied themselves well to their work. Some students indicated good willingness to interact with the inspector at the end of the lesson. Many were more timid and less willing to respond. The above-mentioned recommendations should serve to increase students' confidence and in turn their communicative competence.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is good whole-school provision and support for French in the allocation of time, in timetabling and the provision of resources.
- A number of classrooms have been designated as language rooms. It is recommended that these rooms be further developed in terms of displaying posters of France, classroom language and key expressions and samples of students' work. Teachers could consider the development of a language learning environment as a Transition Year (TY) project to be carried out at the beginning of the year and developed as the year progresses.
- To support their ongoing professional development teachers should inform themselves of the range of scholarships available to teachers of French. They should also consider attendance at subject association meetings and general in-service programmes available in local education centres. The school should also consider applying for a French language assistant to support them in their work.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is facilitated and a subject plan is in place. To build on the good work achieved to date it is recommended that the schemes of work incorporate more detail on the learning outcomes for each topic to be studied, the methodologies, the resources and the assessment practices to be used for each year group.
- The TY plan should be reviewed in light of class contact time available. Teachers should also ensure that the activities are in accordance with the principles of an effective TY programme. Consideration could be given to the introduction of a modular system where the different teachers teach modules in line with their particular strengths and areas of interest.

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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management would like to acknowledge its satisfaction with the positive subject inspection report for French.

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Arising from the inspection, the French Department has implemented follow-up actions. The French Department has put a plan in place to implement the recommendations in the report. The school's application for a French language assistant has been successful for the school year 2014-15. The presence of the language assistant will help the teachers in their work. School management will provide full support for assessment for learning at whole-school level.

This is a translation of the school response submitted by the board of management.