

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of French  
REPORT**

**Coláiste Iosaef  
Kilmallock, County Limerick  
Roll number: 76070A**

**Date of inspection: 19 November 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**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	18 and 19 November 2013
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in all lessons observed.
- The target language was used extensively, and target language use promoted, in all lessons.
- A number of strategies were used to provide effective support for student learning.
- There are many positive aspects to provision and whole-school support for French.
- The French department is professionally organised, committed and proactive; this work was reflected in very thorough departmental planning, schemes of work and planning for lessons observed.
- There is a need to continue to raise uptake of higher level in certificate examinations and to raise the percentage of high achievers.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- French teachers should ensure adequate use of auditory materials particularly in initial language acquisition.
  - The introduction of streaming from second year should be closely monitored and evaluated.
  - Forward planning should include the establishment of an e-link with a French school and the acquisition of some subject-related resources for students.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste Iosaef is a co-educational community college under the joint trusteeship of Limerick County Education and Training Board (ETB) and the Sisters of Charity of Saint Paul the Apostle. It has an enrolment of 478 in the current school year. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan. It offers a full range of programmes: Junior Certificate and the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP); the Transition Year (TY) programme; Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was good or very good in all cases.
- Lesson content selected was syllabus appropriate. It was exploited well to link with prior and planned learning. Teachers shared lesson objectives with the students. Very commendably, planning had identified differentiated learning outcomes for students. The importance of identifying linguistic learning outcomes for lessons was discussed with teachers. It was also advised that JCSP statements of learning be incorporated as relevant.
- French was used extensively in lessons. Lessons were not text-dependent and they had been planned so as to integrate opportunities for student use of the target language. This was achieved through the use of methodologies such as pair and group work and role play and through the inclusion of a game in another lesson. It was advised that students be supported to undertake role plays without the support of a written text.
- Detailed planning meant that lessons were very well paced. Planning had taken cognisance of the integration of the various language skills and of the development of students' language awareness.
- Planning had also considered opportunities for the integration of information and communication technology (ICT). ICT provided visual and some auditory support. The importance of continuing to use and maintain a focus on the use of auditory material, in initial language learning in particular, was discussed in the context of the appropriate integration of ICT in language lessons.
- A number of strategies employed provided effective support for student learning. ICT was employed to support learning and student engagement. There were some good examples of teacher checking for understanding and of recapitulation and reinforcement of learning in the lessons. It was also positive to see effective use of subject-specific terminology and to see that students are encouraged to keep notes. Students were reminded of reading and listening strategies to support listening and reading activities. The social learning platform Edmodo is also being introduced to support home and student independent learning.
- All lessons were well managed and teachers were encouraging and affirming.
- Homework is assigned and monitored. Monitoring was most effective when, in some cases, formative feedback was provided to students. It was also positive to see some use of a correcting code to support student review and learning. Peer assessment was encouraged in some lessons.

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

- French is a key part of an expanding provision for languages in the school. It is offered in all programmes available and is core at junior and senior cycle.
- First-year students are encouraged to study French or Spanish. Taster programmes are offered in first year. Exemptions are only allowed following appropriate consideration and consultation.
- Time allocation and timetabling of French are in line with practice nationally.
- Classes are organised as mixed-ability groups in first year. French classes are streamed in all other years. Streaming was introduced from second year in 2012. It was advised that the impact of this decision on outcomes for students be carefully monitored and evaluated.
- All three members of the French department have a degree in French and one of them has a post-graduate qualification in the subject. Members of the department participate in professional development opportunities and a number of them have also been involved in the administration and correction of oral and written certificate examinations. The school has had the services of French language assistant in recent years. On-going participation in professional development opportunities to support teachers in the maintenance of their communicative competence was encouraged.
- The school provides some extracurricular and co-curricular activities. A modern language week is planned for this school year and a tour to France is organised when possible. The establishment of an e-link with a French school was advised.
- French is very well-resourced in the school. All three teachers work in teacher-based rooms which is very positive. This has offered, and offers, the opportunity to create a linguistically and culturally supportive classroom environment. There were some very good examples of the use of classroom layout to support cooperative learning and encourage student talk. Requests for subject-related resources can be made through the subject coordinator. It was advised that the French department acquire some resources to support and extend learning opportunities for students.
- All of the classrooms are ICT-enabled and have wireless access. The school has also set up a media room which will offer further possibilities to support language learning.
- Students are assessed regularly. The commitment to the assessment of students' oral competence is a particular strength of practice. As far as possible, students' oral competence is assessed as part of all in-house examinations and students are also offered the opportunity to sit an oral examination as part of Junior Certificate French.
- An overview of student achievement in certificate examinations would suggest the need to continue to raise uptake of higher level and the percentage of high achievers.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- A department structure operates in the school. The position of coordinator of French rotates. Formal meetings are held termly and records are maintained.

- Planning material examined was very comprehensive and thorough. It included a subject department plan and schemes of work for all years. Although not a requirement, detailed lesson plans were also presented.
- The considered nature of planning was impressive. Positive features of planning included reference to: differentiation; student learning styles; students with special educational needs and online resources.
- Schemes of work were very thorough and integrated in conception. The inclusion of a notes section for teachers is very good as this supports professional reflection and improvement. Departmental reflection could be further supported by including a focus on teaching and learning and the sharing of best practice in departmental meetings.
- It is clear that departmental planning and collaboration have brought about and continue to support the development of subject provision in the school.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the 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.