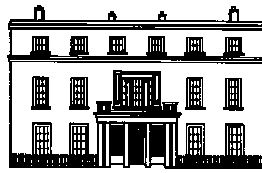


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of French
REPORT

Coláiste Gleann Lí
Tralee, County Kerry
Roll number: 70550H

Date of inspection: 18 November 2014



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	18 November 2014
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching was excellent in the lessons observed.
- Lessons were well structured and paced, and allowed students many opportunities for participation and engagement.
- The target language was used very effectively and students demonstrated a good understanding of the language.
- The quality of learning was good with students encouraged to participate in the varied lesson activities.
- Provision for French is very good with appropriate timetabling allocation and resources, and support for teacher professional development.
- Innovative ways of encouraging students' reading have been developed as part of the school's literacy strategy.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Time should be allowed for the consolidation of learning at the end of the lesson.
 - Senior students should be encouraged to take greater individual responsibility for their learning and for their participation in classroom activities.
-

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Gleann Lí is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the auspices of Kerry Education and Training Board (ETB). It has a current enrolment of 120 students. The school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The school is a participant in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching was excellent in the lessons observed. Lessons had clear aims which were shared with students at the start of the lesson. There was very good continuity with prior learning. As a way of developing this good practice, time should be allowed for the consolidation of learning by students at the end of the lesson.
- Lessons were very well structured and paced, and were characterised by the clear explanation of concepts. This was evident in the teaching of grammar where realistic and often humorous examples were chosen to illustrate a grammatical rule, and where the grammar component was integrated with the other elements of the lesson.
- There was very good use of the target language for classroom communication and instruction. Visual stimuli such as video, images and gestures were used to ensure all students understood the work of the lesson and students' comprehension of spoken French was good.
- Questioning techniques were effective and there was a clear progression during the lesson from whole-class questioning to individual work and paired activities. At these times, the teacher was able to monitor and assist individuals in their learning and to provide encouragement and support.

High levels of skill in classroom management were demonstrated through ensuring that all students were given regular opportunities to participate in the activities of the lesson. This was achieved through effective use of differentiated questions as well as reassurance and assistance to individual students. Consequently, the quality of learning was generally good.

- The enthusiasm for the language and the commitment to supporting students in their learning shown by the French department helped to create a positive learning environment. The choice of a variety of activities ensured that students were engaged and interested in the work of the lesson. However, as a small number of students were slow to participate, it is recommended that senior students should be challenged to take greater individual responsibility for their learning and for their engagement with classroom activities. It is suggested that strategies to help them to become independent learners might be explored in conjunction with the teachers of other languages.
- As well as teacher questioning during lessons, students' written work is monitored regularly and there is evidence in the copybooks of good use of formative assessment through strategies such as "two stars and a wish."
- Students' progress is assessed each month while school examinations are held twice yearly. The tests for students in junior cycle incorporate both written and aural tests, with the addition of an oral component for students at Leaving Certificate level.

- An analysis of student achievement in examinations is carried out by school management each year. The results are used to inform future planning, to target resources and to provide advice to students and parents.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good support for French in the school. The study of the language is mandatory in junior cycle and French then becomes optional in senior cycle. Students are surveyed on their option choices and the language is currently timetabled against Design and Communication Graphics.
- Timetabling is satisfactory with the provision of all single periods in junior cycle. This is good practice as it promotes regular class contact in the early stages of learning the language. In senior cycle, there is an allocation of three single periods and one double period per week. Students are taught in mixed-ability class groupings in junior and senior cycle. It is very positive that separate classes have been provided for fifth year and sixth year groups in the current year.
- The French room, as a designated teacher classroom, is equipped with a computer and overhead projector. Further improvements to the resources available are underway. The room is very well utilised to provide a visually stimulating language-learning environment with displays of maps, posters and cartoons as well as artefacts created in conjunction with the school's Art department. A small library of French-themed books has been created for use with the "Book in a Bag" initiative. Funding is also provided for the purchase of French language magazines. It is very positive to note this innovative way of encouraging students to read as part of the school's literacy strategy.
- There is a very good emphasis on cross-curricular and extra-curricular support for the language including the celebration of European Day of Languages, viewings of French films and a visit by a theatre group as well as French cookery in conjunction with the Home Economics department. A grant for attendance at a summer language course has been made available to a small number of students in recent years through the auspices of Kerry ETB.
- Senior management is supportive of teacher professional development and facilitates attendance at subject association meetings. Professional development activities both in Ireland and in France have been undertaken on a regular basis.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The subject plan is comprehensive and incorporates relevant policies such as the homework policy as well as references to the school's DEIS plan and to its literacy strategy. Schemes of work for each year group have been developed as well as resources to support literacy such as reading materials. It is clear that subject planning takes cognisance of students' additional educational needs and is linked to the requirements of the JCSP.
- There is good liaison between the subject department and other subject areas. Given the small size of the French department, it is very positive that there is ongoing collaboration

with the Irish department with regard to sharing resources and to developing strategies for language learning and assessment.

- Individual planning for lessons was very good with an emphasis on the development of students' language skills through a student-centred approach.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and subject teacher at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.