

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of French
REPORT

Coláiste Chríost Rí
Capwell Road, Cork
Roll number: 625600

Date of inspection: 18 January 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	17 and 18 January 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 eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was good with some aspects of practice being very good.
- The target language was used as the medium of communication in most lessons.
- Classroom management was positive and caring.
- Subject provision is supported by the availability of teacher-based rooms equipped with information and communications technology (ICT).
- The regular assignment of homework and the assessment of students' progress supports their learning and most students succeed well at their chosen level in state examinations.
- The full potential of collaborative departmental planning has not yet been realised.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should continue to extend classroom use of the target language and, in particular, opportunities for student use of the language.
 - The French department should agree a subject-specific assessment policy to include reference to: the use of common assessments where appropriate; the incremental introduction of the formal assessment of students' oral competence and the monitoring of students' written work.
 - The French department should: agree a common template for schemes of work; devise a more complete Transition Year (TY) plan and devise an action plan for the development of subject provision generally.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Chríost Rí is an all-boys post-primary school under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers Trust (PBST). Current enrolment stands at 637. The school offers Junior Certificate, an optional TY programme, Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was good with some aspects of practice being very good.
- Lesson content selected was appropriate to the various year groups concerned. There were some examples of the use of a thematic approach. It is advised that such an approach supports student learning more effectively than an approach which focuses on individual examination components.
- The focus of lessons was identified for students. It is advised that this be done by the identification of linguistic and/or other learning outcomes for lessons and that these be shared with the students. Good practice was noted where lesson content was exploited to link to the students' lives and to develop students' cultural awareness.
- All lessons were well structured and paced. Attention was paid to the review and assignment of homework, the introduction of new material and the integration of the various language skills. It was advised that consideration be given to the use of approach/approaches to listening and reading comprehension which would support the development of students' global comprehension skills.
- The target language was used as the medium of communication in most lessons observed. Where this was not the case, it was deemed that a valuable natural language learning opportunity had been missed. Language acquisition was supported by good practices such as the display and use of a 'lexique de classe', an emphasis on pronunciation and good building of vocabulary. It was advised that an emphasis be put on the teaching and learning of communicative structures rather than vocabulary in isolation, and that any undue or automatic recourse to translation be avoided. The importance of using French for the purposes of transactional communication in the classroom was emphasised as was the importance of creating further opportunities for student use of the language.
- There were some examples of the use of pair work and the integration of ICT. Greater use of methodologies such as pair work, group work and role play is recommended as a means of providing opportunities for student use of the target language. The French department itself has identified the integration of ICT as an area for the development and this evaluation supports that conclusion.
- The development of students' communicative literacy was supported by the attention paid to listening, reading and writing activities. There were also some very good examples of students being supported to use their existing knowledge of vocabulary to decipher the meaning of new words.
- Classroom management was universally good, positive, caring and sensitive. It was clear that students respond well and with engagement in such an atmosphere.
- The strength of students' recall was noted in the lessons observed. Students generally also displayed very good grammatical awareness. There were some examples of students

being encouraged to maintain good notebooks thus developing good language learning habits and supporting future revision of learning.

- Homework was assigned and reviewed in all lessons. The amount and nature of teacher monitoring of students' written work varied in the copies examined. There were some very good examples of personalised feedback to students. The development of a correction code and the value of introducing an element of differentiation into written work assigned should also be considered.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- French is currently the main, and will shortly be the only, modern language offered in the school and, as such, is and will be a key element of curricular provision.
- There is very good access to the subject and all students are encouraged to take it. French is core at junior cycle and compulsory in TY. It is optional at senior cycle where uptake is strong.
- Allocation of time is very fair and timetabling is supportive of language learning.
- Subject provision is supported by the availability of teacher-based and ICT-enabled rooms. There were some very good examples of the exploitation of the classroom to create linguistically and culturally supportive learning environments. Teachers were advised to continue to exploit the potential of teacher-based rooms equipped with ICT.
- An opportunity exists to develop a plan to enhance subject-related resources. Consideration should be given to the making of an application for the services of a French language assistant and to the potential of other schemes and courses which would support the continuing professional development of teachers.
- It is recommended that French teachers develop a subject-specific policy on assessment to include reference to the incremental introduction of oral assessment and reporting, the use of common assessments, where appropriate, and the frequency of monitoring of student work.
- The subject department has begun some analysis of outcomes in certificate examinations. It is advised that the level of uptake of higher level French at Junior Certificate be monitored particularly in the context of current school policy in relation to banding. The subject department is also advised to monitor trends in outcomes at higher level Leaving Certificate with a view to increasing the percentage of higher grades over time.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A subject department structure is in place and a teacher acts as coordinator on a rotational basis. Meetings are held and records maintained which is good practice. However, the evaluation concluded that the departmental structure could be exploited more proactively to support effective collaboration and the sharing of good practice. This will be supported by the planned whole-school emphasis on self-evaluation.
- A subject plan is in place since 2011. The plan contains schemes of work for the various year groups. It was advised that a common template should be used for all schemes of work. It was also recommended that a more complete TY plan be devised and an action plan for the development of subject provision generally.

- All lessons observed had been well planned and prepared by individual teachers.
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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 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.

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