

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of French
REPORT**

**Glanmire Community College
Glanmire, County Cork
Roll number: 76064F**

Date of inspection: 9 October 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

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| Dates of inspection | 8 and 9 October 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

- Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning provided examples of both excellent and effective practice, and some examples of practice with scope for development.
- The target language was used quite extensively in lessons observed.
- Formal assessment of students' oral competence has been introduced at Junior Certificate.
- French teachers are professionally committed and work collaboratively to develop provision and practice.
- Subject department planning is advanced and evolving.
- School management and the French department are using evidence-based analysis and planning to support the raising of student attainment.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Targets for improvement in student attainment should include the identification of specific classroom strategies to be used and evaluated.
 - Subject department meetings should include a focus on teaching and learning and the promotion and sharing of good practice.
 - The French department should devise a time-bound plan for the development of provision generally to include the establishment of a link with a French school, the development of resources, and the creation of a French room.
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INTRODUCTION

Glanmire Community College is a co-educational post-primary school which operates under the auspices of Cork Education and Training Board (ETB). There are 905 students enrolled in the current year. Fifty-nine percent of the current enrolment is male. The school offers Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Observation of lessons provided examples of both excellent and effective practice in teaching and learning, with some examples of practice with scope for development.
- Lesson objectives were outlined. Where best practice was noted, these objectives were identified as learning outcomes for students. It was advised that consideration always be given to the identification of linguistic learning outcomes.
- Lesson content had been well selected and was syllabus appropriate. Student learning was supported by evident links with prior and intended learning. A thematic approach to the selection of lesson content allowed for some very good examples of the integration of grammar and cultural awareness.
- The target language was used quite extensively in lessons. Where best practice was noted, French was used both as the medium of instruction and for the purposes of transactional communication in the classroom. In such instances, target language use was also promoted by very effective teacher modelling of language use and there was no evidence of an established dependence on translation.
- Student oral production was promoted through the use of role play, pair and group work. It was advised that the linguistic learning opportunities offered by the use of such methodologies be further exploited through pre-demonstration and teacher modelling of the task(s) concerned and through explicit clarification of student roles. Where used, other strategies such as whole-class oral starts to lessons and very effective teacher management of questions and student answers also supported the development of student oral production. There were some very good examples of how thorough preparation scaffolded focused student oral production thus supporting linguistic acquisition.
- Lessons had been planned with attention to the importance of the integration of the various language skills. The inclusion of literature in TY and the use of a film clip in a lesson observed were two very good examples of the inclusion of opportunities to support the development of students' reading and listening comprehension skills. The importance of the development of students' global comprehension skills was discussed with teachers.
- Many lessons included examples of very good use of visual supports for student learning. The fundamental importance of the use of authentic auditory material as part of initial language acquisition was raised in discussion with teachers.
- Almost all lessons were very well managed. Where most effective, classroom management was a reflection of the quality of established teacher-student rapport.

- Students are being encouraged to develop good language-learning habits. Due attention was paid to the assignment and monitoring of homework in lessons observed. It was advised that, on occasion, homework be differentiated so as to provide some extra challenge for students.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- French is the only modern language currently offered and, as such, is a key element of curricular provision. Subject provision is supported by allocation of time and timetabling.
- French is part of the core curriculum at junior cycle and is optional at senior cycle. Subject options are created so as to facilitate student access. Uptake of higher level and student progress are supported by the teaching of the common syllabus in mixed-ability groups at junior cycle and by the opportunity to try higher level in fifth year.
- All members of the French department have studied the language to degree level and some to post-graduate level. The department is fortunate to include a native speaker of French in its number and to have had the services of French language assistant in the recent past. Opportunities for teacher professional development are supported by the school.
- All classrooms are equipped with information and communications technology (ICT) and French teachers also have access to the computer room. It is recommended that, when feasible, teacher-based classrooms be made available and that in the interim a classroom be designated as a French classroom.
- Subject provision is supported by extracurricular activities such as a school tour and a number of other co-curricular activities. Some subject-related resources are available in the school library. It is advised that the French department undertake an audit of existing resources and devise a plan for the acquisition of further resources. It is also recommended that the school re-examine the feasibility of the creation of a link with a French speaking school.
- The school has developed an assessment policy. It was advised that the French department discuss the regularity of the monitoring of students' work in the context of any review of this policy.
- The decision to introduce the formal assessment of students' oral competence at junior cycle as part of the school's focus generally on oracy and its on-going commitment to the raising of levels of student attainment in French is very positive. It is advised that this be seen as a real opportunity to promote the development and integration of students' oral competence broadly and in an integrated manner. It is also recommended that levels of assessed student oral competence be recorded on the student's school report.
- The school's analysis of levels of student attainment is comprehensive. It is recommended that the subject department maintain an overview of trends in student attainment and link any planned raising of the levels of attainment to the identification, use and evaluation of relevant teaching and learning strategies.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- French teachers work within a department structure. A subject convenor is appointed on a rotating basis.
- The department is organised and reflective. It meets regularly and records are kept. There is clear evidence of the evolution of practice overtime. The recent introduction of Edmodo, a shared learning-platform, will support teacher sharing of resources. It is advised that department meetings include a focus on teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice.
- Departmental planning has been established for a number of years and is advanced. Long term plans and schemes of work have been devised. These include reference to literacy.
- Lessons generally had been very thoroughly prepared; preparation had included the sourcing, preparation and development of resources and, in some cases, the detailed preparation of individual lesson plans.
- It was advised that a time-bound action plan for the development of provision for the subject generally be devised and that some consideration be given to the introduction of self-evaluation at individual and departmental level.

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 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.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

- (i) The Board welcomes the report.
- (ii) The Board notes that the school's French department found the process to be both helpful and affirmative.
- (iii) The Board commends the school's French department on the overwhelmingly positive findings detailed in the report.

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

- (i) The French department intends to identify specific classroom strategies which will further strengthen the significant improvements in student attainment already achieved.
- (ii) Additional time will be allocated at further department meetings to share best practice. Teachings and Learning strategies will be expanded as an agenda item for these meetings.
- (iii) The French department will explore the possibility of establishing links with a French school. Within the constraints of the budget available, it will seek to develop the existing recourses it has. The provision of a French room and/or teacher based classrooms will be considered in the context of a new extension to the school building due in 2015.
- (iv) The French department began a process of self-evaluation two years ago. This evaluation led to the introduction of the French oral examination at Junior Certificate level. The department intends to further develop a system of self-evaluation at both departmental and individual level in line with an overall school SSE strategy.
- (v) The use of learning outcomes as a learning strategy will be further developed to include an emphasis on linguistic outcomes. The inclusion of an assessment of oral competence on the student's report card will be considered.
- (vi) The French department intends to maintain the excellent planning, preparation and good classroom practice referenced in this report.