

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection in French**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St Louis High School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Charleville Road Rathmines Dublin 6
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60890C

**Date of Inspection: 08-11-2017**



### **WHAT IS A SUBJECT INSPECTION?**

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

### **HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in French under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

## SUBJECT INSPECTION

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	7 and 8 November 2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and key staff</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

St Louis High school is a voluntary secondary school with 666 female students. It offers Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning ranged from effective to highly effective; a number of exemplary practices were noted in the majority of lessons, while there were areas for further development in a minority of lessons.
- There was consistent use of French as the language of instruction in all of the lessons observed.
- A variety of methodologies was observed, most of which were used to good or very good effect; there was scope for greater student participation in a small number of instances.
- A number of very good assessment practices were observed in some lessons; learning would be enhanced by the use of formative feedback in other instances.
- There is very good leadership for the teaching and learning of languages.
- There is a strong culture of planning for improvement using the school's self-evaluation process at individual and subject department level.

#### Recommendations

- Active methodologies and opportunities for oral skills development should be maximised in order to extend active student participation in the target language.
- The use of formative feedback should be further developed to support students' writing skills development.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was effective or highly effective. A range of very good to exemplary practices was noted in most lessons. Greater use of methodologies promoting active student participation could have been more effectively used in a small number of instances.
- French was used consistently by the teachers in all of the lessons observed. Good student comprehension indicated familiarity with French as the language of instruction. In one lesson a small minority of students displayed some reluctance to using French as the medium of communication. In such instances, teachers should consider the use of French subtitles on digital presentations to reinforce the spoken word. Supporting worksheets for students experiencing considerable difficulty should also be considered in order to improve their communicative confidence.
- Good planning and preparation was evident in the structure and efficient sequencing of the lessons observed. Teachers began by outlining their learning intentions and writing up the homework to be completed. To further enhance this good practice, teachers should set their learning intentions for the lesson within the context of the overall learning outcomes for broader units of work.
- Good practice was also noted in a number of lessons where the learning intentions were revisited at the end to assess student progress. Consideration could be given to using some of the assessment for learning strategies to support this phase of the lesson, particularly in junior cycle.
- A variety of methodologies was observed and most were used to good or very good effect. Teachers endeavoured to teach the range of different language skills and there were some very good examples of grammar being taught in an integrated manner. The task where students had to identify a range of expressions they had heard as part of a listening text was a creative way of promoting and testing aural comprehension. This was achieved within the context of target language usage.
- In one lesson, a task was assigned for the purpose of oral skills development. However, it did not require sufficient interaction to be fully effective. Teachers should ensure that all activities intended for oral skills development are based on a clear need for students to communicate with their partners.
- There was one instance where the lesson sequence did not provide optimum opportunity for oral skills development related to the topic being studied. Where this occurs, teachers should facilitate pair or group interaction at the outset or at the end of the lesson in order to afford all students the opportunity to communicate in French with the teacher and with their peers in every lesson.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was effectively used to support learning through the use of digital presentations and the provision of visual supports. In one instance learning could have been enhanced had the digital presentation been interspersed with questions or student responses to the material presented. The use of individual whiteboards in some lessons was effective in facilitating whole-class correction of an aural comprehension task.
- In one lesson, a video-clip served as a very good stimulus for work on a challenging topic. A preparatory phase outlining key vocabulary and expressions facilitated effective engagement with the text. The use of well-prepared worksheets in turn supported the subsequent

student tasks thereby maximising the learning opportunities for the students. This very structured approach resulted in students extending their learning beyond general information retrieval and facilitated the manipulation of language to express opinions.

- Attention to differentiation was noted in instances where supporting worksheets were distributed to some students and where teachers circulated during group activities attending to those requiring help. The incorporation of cultural awareness enhanced the enjoyment of language learning.
- A positive learning environment was promoted in all lessons. Seating arrangements facilitated effective group work in many classrooms. Students demonstrated enjoyment, motivation and evidence of learning in the manner in which they asked questions of the teacher, in their pair work activities and in their interactions with the inspector. Student resourcefulness was also noted where some referred to work displayed on the walls when completing a task.
- Homework was assigned in all lessons and there were very good examples of meaningful assignments requiring manipulation of language, detailed corrections and helpful comments in some of the copybooks examined. Greater use of formative feedback where students are informed of their strengths along with one area for development is recommended in some instances. The introduction to blogs, as noted with students new to the study of French, is good practice in supporting writing skills development from the outset. Formative feedback should also be used to support students' oral skills development.

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

- The leadership of teaching and learning of modern languages is highly effective in St Louis High school. Students can opt to study more than one language.
- There is good allocation of time for languages and satisfactory timetabling. Senior management should explore ways whereby French could be timetabled in single periods in junior cycle.
- A print rich environment has been developed in the teacher-based classrooms visited. The development of a French noticeboard on the school corridor which is managed in part by TY students is very good practice in maintaining the high-profile of French in the school. It also provides TY students with creative learning tasks.
- The high level of commitment to continuing professional development and the range of co-curricular activities offered in the school reflect teachers' ongoing concern for their own professional standards and also for their students and their progress. School management has also facilitated opportunities for parents who are native French speakers to work with students preparing for examinations.
- While the considerable work of organising trips to France to support students' linguistic and sociocultural competence is acknowledged, consideration should also be given to initiatives such as e-Twinning as a means of affording remaining students opportunities for intercultural dialogue.

## **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- There is a strong culture of planning for improvement at both senior management and subject departmental level. Subject departments are encouraged to use the school's self-

evaluation process to reflect on their own work and that of the subject department in order to ensure high quality teaching and learning. The annual analysis of examination results indicates that there is very good uptake of higher level and outcomes are in line with expectations.

- Some adjustments are required to curricular planning for first year to take into account the demands of the new Junior Cycle specification. Teachers of French should work with their other language colleagues, planning collaboratively and incrementally as a modern languages department.
- When reviewing the TY plan, teachers should consider initiatives that place a greater focus on learning by doing. Students could also be encouraged to research and reflect more on their language learning activities in Transition Year.

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**

**Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The board of management is delighted with the extremely positive findings of this report. It is particularly pleased to note that the overall quality of teaching and learning ranged from effective to highly effective and exemplary practices recognised. The BOM is also delighted that there was consistent use of French as the language of instruction in all the lessons observed.

**Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The French department will take on board the recommendations as outlined in the report, in order to further enhance the positive learning experiences for our students.



## THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;