



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# Subject Inspection: French Report

## REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Castleknock Community College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Carpenterstown Road Castleknock Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76062B
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	10/04/2024
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/ Date of issue of report	18/09/2024

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# 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(s) 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

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.

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.

## Actions of the school to safeguard children and prevent and tackle bullying

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:	
<i>Child Protection</i>	<i>Anti-bullying</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.</li><li>2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.</li><li>3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</i> or <i>Bí Cineálta (2024)</i> and this policy is reviewed annually.</li><li>2. The school's current anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and students.</li></ol>

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

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# Subject inspection

<b>Date of inspection</b>	10/04/2024
<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, including focus groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

## School context

Castleknock Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire, Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The school has a current enrolment of 1264 students and offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, and the established Leaving Certificate (LCE).

## Summary of main findings and recommendations:

### Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the majority of lessons observed.
- Very good practice was demonstrated by the teachers in their consistent use of French for instruction and communication purposes.
- Whole-school support and provision for French was very good. Students have the option to study two languages to Leaving Certificate and timetabling for French is in line with requirements.
- The overall quality of individual and collaborative planning and preparation was very good.
- The student focus group were very positive about their French learning trajectory. They commented on the supportive and encouraging attitude of their teachers.

### Recommendations

- There was scope to develop the stated learning intentions to also include differentiated success criteria in order to meet the diverse needs of the student cohort. Collectively, teachers should agree how best to incorporate success criteria into lessons to support students' learning.
- A greater balance between teachers' voice and student voice in the target language was required in a minority of lessons. Teachers should ensure that planned activities provide ample opportunities for students to communicate in French in all lessons.
- There was scope to develop a range of extension activities for students who are able for a higher level of challenge. Teachers should identify a range of supplementary activities, for students who would benefit from greater levels of challenge.

# Detailed findings and recommendations

## 1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in lessons observed.
- Most teachers created a highly effective learning environment for students in classrooms. Classrooms featured prominent displays of student work that evidenced progression of learning as well as posters related to vocabulary and French culture.
- The quality of teachers' use of the target language was very good in all lessons. In the majority of lessons, it was clear that students were benefitting from the rich linguistic environment. This was evident in their levels of comprehension of French and their willingness to engage in spoken French with their peers and teachers.
- There was evidence of correction of work in students' folders. Commentary tended to be affirmative rather than formative. To afford students active involvement in their own learning, a greater focus should be placed on formative feedback that informs students of their strengths and areas for development.
- Overall, very good planning for individual lessons was observed.
- All teachers presented specific learning intentions at the start of lessons. There was scope to develop the stated learning intentions to include differentiated success criteria, in order to meet the diverse needs of the student cohort. Very good attention to differentiation was noted in one lesson where extension activities were provided to students who were able to engage with a higher level of challenge. To further build upon this good practice, teachers should identify a range of supplementary activities for students who would benefit from a greater level of challenge, where appropriate, and to also scaffold the learning of students requiring additional support.
- In some lessons, a plenary was provided at the end of the lesson to review and assess the learning. This should be extended to all lessons.
- Most lessons progressed at a very good pace and were generally well sequenced. In a small minority of lessons, time management was less effective and some tasks were rushed.
- Classroom management in all lessons was very good and students were on task at all times. Student behaviour was exemplary in the lessons observed. All teachers regularly circulated the room and provided very good individual support where necessary.

## 2. Subject provision and whole school support

- Whole-school provision and support for French were very good. Languages were compulsory at Junior and Senior Cycle. Three modern languages were offered and choice was based on student preference.
- The overall allocation for French was very good. School Management was very supportive of the subject and provided appropriate time allocation for French in junior and senior cycle.
- There was very good access to and support for continuing professional development (CPD) and teachers, commendably, had availed of a range of CPD opportunities over the years. Teachers were encouraged by management to share their learning with their department. This was very good practice.
- The school applied for a French assistant and had been successful on several occasions. This was commendable and supported students' linguistic development and confidence in speaking French, as well as increasing students' exposure to the culture of France and the French speaking world.
- Teachers have promoted French through facilitating theatre company visits, French breakfasts and participation in the annual #ThinkLanguages initiative.

### 3. Planning and preparation

- Overall, planning and preparation for French were very good.
- A comprehensive planning folder had been compiled, setting out the context of the school and the subject department. The inclusion of specific resources and differentiated success criteria outcomes into units of learning merits consideration.
- All members of the department rotated the role of subject co-ordinator to develop leadership capacity.
- Formal subject department meetings for French were held regularly throughout the school year as well as shorter, informal meetings. Minutes of subject department meetings indicated that a range of organisational matters were discussed as well as matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment. These were available on the French department's shared online platform.
- Some very good schemes of work had been developed individually by most teachers. All teachers need to make sure that individual schemes of work contain precise detail such as specific vocabulary and grammar to be taught, teaching resources, pedagogical approaches and assessment methodologies.
- Very good collaboration and collegiality was evidenced through the sharing of teaching resources on the shared platform that were updated regularly.
- The French department, as well as the German and Spanish departments had collaborated with a neighbouring school to develop units of learning for the Junior Cycle. This approach to sharing practice and engagement in professional dialogue is commendable.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal/deputy principal/subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

## 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 quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Examples of descriptive terms
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Provision that is excellent</b> is exemplary in meeting the needs of learners. This provision provides an example for other schools and settings of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Excellent; exemplary; outstanding; exceptionally high standard; with very significant strengths
<b>Very good</b>	<b>Provision that is very good</b> is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and is of a very high standard. There is potential to build on existing strengths to achieve an excellent standard.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful
<b>Good</b>	<b>Provision that is good</b> is effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to build on existing strengths in order to address the aspects to be developed and achieve a very good standard.	Good; of good quality; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; strengths outweigh the shortcomings; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist
<b>Requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not sufficiently effective in meeting the needs of learners. There is need to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is good or better.	Fair; less than effective; less than sufficient; evident weaknesses that are impacting on learning; experiencing difficulty; shortcomings outweigh strengths; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b>	<b>Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard</b> is not meeting the needs of learners. There is immediate need for significant action to address the areas of concern.	Weak; poor; ineffective; insufficient; unacceptable; experiencing significant difficulties; serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated; requiring significant change, development and improvement to be effective

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of Castleknock Community College welcomes the many positive observations recorded during this recent inspection.

The Board welcomes the positive affirmation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment along with the supportive environment that was observed in all lessons. The Board notes the very good practice demonstrated by the teachers in their consistent use of the Target Language in the classroom. The Board further notes the exemplary classroom management and the rich linguistic environment that was observed. The Board acknowledges the positive affirmation of the quality of planning, preparation, and collaboration across the French Department. The Board welcomes the feedback that acknowledged the student focus group's positive attitude to the learning of French.

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

The Board of Management supports the French Department in addressing the recommendations made in this Inspection Report. School provision and support for French will continue to be of the highest standard as acknowledged in the Report.

The Department plans to incorporate differentiated success criteria into their lesson plans and will work on this collectively. The Department plan to build on the good practice that was observed regarding differentiation, and to extend that to provide for students who would benefit from a greater level of challenge. Extension activities will be developed collaboratively by the Department in response to this recommendation.

The Report's recommendations will inform teaching and learning and on-going planning in the Department.