An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: French
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Community College Dunshaughlin
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Dunshaughlin Co Meath
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	71960I
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	28/01/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	07/04/2025

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.

Included in this subject inspection report is a student-friendly page that provides information for the children/young people in your school about the inspection that occurred recently. It outlines for them some of the main findings and recommendations.

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.

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

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection and anti-bullying procedures were conducted:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Child Protection</td><td>Anti-bullying</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.</td><td>1. The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) or Bí Cineálta (2024) and this policy is reviewed annually.
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.</td></tr>
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The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Subject inspection

Date of inspection	27/01/2025 and 28/01/2025
Inspection activities undertaken • Review of relevant documents • Discussion with principal and key staff • Interaction with students, including focus groups	• Observation of teaching and learning during five lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Dunshaughlin Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the auspices of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board. The school offers the Junior Cycle, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes. The Centre for European Schooling (CES) is accommodated on the school campus. The school has a current enrolment of 1,132 students.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good.
- The rapport between teachers and students was very positive in all lessons. Students showed an interest in their work and demonstrated a willingness to participate in lesson activities.
- Teachers used digital technology effectively to support learning. However, students had insufficient and infrequent access to digital devices to reinforce their learning.
- Whole-school provision and support for French were very good.
- Planning and preparation for French required improvement.

Recommendations

- Assessment for learning (AfL) techniques should be used throughout all French lessons to enable teachers to assess students' understanding and monitor progress.
- Teachers should ensure that students have opportunities to speak French with fellow students and with their teacher in every class.
- An oral component should be included in all in-house examinations for all year groups.
- A comprehensive review of junior cycle and senior cycle programmes of work should be undertaken in order to develop effective working documents for all year groups.

Detailed findings and recommendations

1. Teaching, learning and assessment

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good, with some examples of very good practice.
- The rapport between students and teachers was very good in all lessons observed. Teachers worked hard to develop a positive and supportive learning environment. Students in the focus-group meeting commended the ongoing efforts of their teachers to make lessons interesting and enjoyable for them.
- In all lessons, French was the main language of instruction. Students were attentive and clearly understood the content being taught through the target language.

However, in all lessons observed, students' use of the target language was limited to giving answers relating to vocabulary and grammar activities completed. There was insufficient focus on activities that allowed students to think and speak in French and improve their overall fluency. Collaboratively, teachers should develop strategies and resources to allow students more opportunities to engage in the target language in every lesson, both with their teachers and with each other.

- Teachers briefly shared the learning intentions with students at the beginning of all lessons. These were mainly focused on exercises in the text book rather than on what students should be able to do or understand by the end of class. Further development of assessment for learning (AfL) practice was needed, in terms of developing the learning intentions of lessons and sharing the success criteria with students. Prior learning should be measured at the outset of the lesson and learning should be gauged throughout and at the end of lessons.
- In the majority of lessons observed, the overall teaching approaches and the resources used were textbook led. Where possible and appropriate, lesson content should be reinforced using additional resources, such as, video clips, animations, audio clips, and quizzes. The use of supplementary resources would also facilitate differentiation and increase motivation and interest amongst students.
- Teacher questions were well distributed among the students. Translation to English featured regularly as a form of questioning and this practice provided limited opportunities for students to speak and formulate responses in the target language. In order to allow students greater opportunity to speak and to think in French, it is recommended that teachers focus more on questioning techniques that elicit French from students.
- Students completed regular formal assessments, and an appropriate system of reporting on progress to parents was in place. In sixth year, the in-house examinations included an oral examination component. In order to monitor student progress in all areas of linguistic development throughout students' time in school, this valuable practice should be extended to all year groups.
- There was scope to rearrange the seating arrangement in classrooms to encourage more collaborative activities amongst students. As such, these arrangements should be reviewed, so as to create more favourable conditions for a student-centred learning environment.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- Whole-school provision and support for French were very good. The study of languages was compulsory in the Junior Cycle. Three modern foreign languages were offered and language choice was based on student preference.
- Timetable provision for French met the time allocation requirements of the specification for the Junior Cycle and the syllabus for the Senior Cycle. Senior management supported and facilitated teachers to undertake continuing professional learning on an ongoing basis.
- Senior management had provided staff with access to devices to promote the use of digital technology in the classroom. However, due to resourcing issues, students did not have regular access to digital devices to support and reinforce their learning. It is recommended that logistical arrangements be investigated to allow all French students regular access to digital technology for learning.

3. Planning and preparation

- Planning and preparation for French required improvement. There were programmes of work and units of learning in place. However, in most cases, these overly followed the content and structure of textbooks being used. The development of the programmes of work should focus on the time-bound achievement of the learning outcomes of the junior cycle specification and the objectives of the syllabus at senior

cycle. They should also identify suitable methodologies, assessment strategies, and specific resources to be used. Teachers should ensure that subject plans are updated regularly and used as working documents to reflect and support classroom learning.

- The French department met at various times during the school year. These department meetings were formally documented and contained good evidence of agenda items relating to organisational matters and teaching and learning issues. The French department met weekly on an informal basis to discuss various issues relating to teaching and learning of the subject. Key topics discussed in these informal meetings should be documented moving forward.
- At the time of inspection, the Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) department had met once since the beginning of the academic year. The French teachers reported that their planning was conducted as a French department, rather than as an MFL department. In line with the Junior Cycle specification, it is recommended that the teachers from all three modern foreign language departments now make every effort to become a coherent and cohesive MFL department. This measure will contribute to teachers fully embracing and implementing the new MFL specifications in relation to teaching, learning, and assessment.
- An online platform was available at whole-school level to share information and resources with staff and students. At the time of inspection, the school was transitioning to a new online platform and was awaiting training on its functionality and use. Once the new system is in place, the MFL department should develop a common approach to planning, storing and sharing resources, to foster ongoing collaboration and development. In doing so, teachers will be enabled to more fully embrace and implement the new MFL specifications in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school had processes in place to allow for the academic tracking and analysis of grades attained by students in certificate examinations. While the planning documents contained the data generated on grade attainment, they did not include an analysis of test results. The French teachers, as a full department, should analyse the results and identify emerging trends in students' achievement. This analysis should then serve as a focus for review and development.

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

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of Community College Dunshaughlin about their learning in French

Date of inspection: 28/01/2025

What kind of inspection did your school have?

A subject inspection was completed in your school. The inspector observed lessons and spoke with the principal and teachers. The inspector met with a group of students to talk to them about their learning in French.

What were the main findings of the inspection?

- The quality of teaching and learning in the school was good.
- There were very good relationships between teachers and students and teachers worked really hard to make learning fun.
- Teachers made very good use of digital technology in the classroom. However, students need more access to the school's devices to make their learning even better.

What did the inspector recommend to make teaching and learning better in French?

- Teachers should check more thoroughly that students are learning and understanding all material being taught in lessons.
- Teachers should give students more opportunities to speak French in every class.
- Teachers should create and review French plans so that changes can be made as needed to further improve students' learning.

Thank you for taking the time to read this page.
Special thanks to the students who participated in the focus group.

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
Excellent	**Provision that is excellent** 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
Very good	**Provision that is very good** 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
Good	**Provision that is good** 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
Requires improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires improvement to achieve a good standard** 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
Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard	**Provision that requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard** 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

Management and staff were very happy to welcome the inspector to our college to conduct the French Inspection. At all times the inspector demonstrated her professionalism in her dealings with the Senior Management Team, the staff of the French Department and our students. The French Department welcomes the feedback from the inspection.

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 Assessment for Learning techniques differentiated success in criteria into their lessons plans and will work on this collectively. The Department plan to build on the good practices that was observed regarding the use of the target language, and to extend the opportunities for student to use the target language among their peers and teachers.

The Department are committed to reviewing the recommendations regarding the use of an oral component for assessment across all year groups and to ensure that a comprehensive review of all plans is carried out.

The Report's recommendations will inform teaching and learning and on-going planning gin both the French Department and whole school.

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