An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Subject Inspection: French
REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Árdscoil La Salle
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Raheny Road Raheny Dublin 5
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	60291D
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	07/05/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	17/09/2025

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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	06/05/2025 and 07/05/2025
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 three lessons • Examination of students' work • Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Ardscoil La Salle is a co-educational secondary school under the trusteeship of Le Chéile, a Catholic Schools Trust. At the time of the evaluation, the school had an enrolment of 297 students. The school offered the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) .The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Youth for educational inclusion. There were two modern foreign languages (MFL) offered in the school; French and Spanish. The study of MFL was optional from first year onwards.

Summary of main findings and recommendations:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, with some areas requiring significant improvement.
- Teachers provided students with very regular opportunities to collaborate with their classmates, which made lessons more interactive, as well as allowing students to learn from each other.
- Relationships between teachers and students were positive and respectful.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for French was very good.
- Various extra-curricular activities were in place in the school to promote MFL and to highlight the importance of studying languages.
- Planning for French required improvement.

Recommendations

- Teachers should communicate clear and concise learning intentions and success criteria to students and revisit learning intentions at the end of each lesson. Adequate time should also be given to review understanding, reinforce key learning and allow for student reflection.
- In a minority of lessons observed, the selection and sequencing of activities by the teacher did not align with the learning intentions. The French department should review how new learning is introduced and consolidated to ensure students achieve the required standards in understanding, aptitudes and overall fluency.
- Teachers should plan lessons to ensure that content and activities appropriately challenge and support successful outcomes for students of all ability levels in their classrooms.
- A comprehensive review of junior cycle and senior cycle schemes of work should be undertaken in order to develop effective working documents that support learning for all year groups appropriately.

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 practice that required significant improvement.
- In the majority of lessons, French was the main language used by teachers and students. In some lessons, however, the use of French was limited to recall of vocabulary and repetition of new words and phrases being taught. To facilitate students in becoming confident in using French and to build their communication skills and overall fluency, teachers should create processes and tools that allow French to be the dominant language in the classroom, with it being progressed from first year onwards.
- In the most effectively planned lessons, teachers used authentic resources to reinforce content taught. These resources engaged students and enriched their learning significantly. In a minority of lessons, however, lesson content and activities did not always correspond to the identified learning intention or appropriately progress learning. The French department should review how new content is introduced and scaffolded to ensure that students acquire the understanding, linguistic awareness and skills to allow for successful outcomes for all students.
- While planning documents contained details of differentiated teaching approaches for French, these were not always evident in the lessons observed. Students in the focus group showed an awareness of the different levels and needs that existed in their French classes and expressed the view that teaching approaches were not always aligned to these diverse needs. It is recommended that teachers focus on providing differentiated content to support and challenge all students so that they can reach their learning potential in French.
- Collaborative work was an integral feature of all lessons observed, affording students opportunities to focus on applying lesson content. This approach was most effective when teachers circulated the classroom during pair and group-work activities, providing individual support where necessary and monitoring student engagement. It was effective in supporting and encouraging all students in their learning and should be extended to all lessons.
- Students received regular formal assessments twice annually and an appropriate system of reporting on progress to parents was in place. In-house oral examinations took place in all year groups and reports detailed grades achieved in the oral, aural and written components of the assessment. This was very good practice.
- Relationships between teachers and students were positive and respectful. Students were attentive and responsive to teacher instructions and requests. The school's ethos of creating a supportive atmosphere where everyone feels valued and accepted was evident in the rapport and interactions between teachers and students in all classes.

2. Subject provision and whole-school support

- Whole-school provision and support for French were very good. Timetable provision for French met the time allocation requirements of the specification for the Junior Cycle and the syllabus for the Senior Cycle. The study of languages was optional from first year onwards. Two MFLs were offered to students, who chose their optional subjects after having completed a six-week subject taster programme. All students studied French and Spanish in Transition Year, regardless of whether they had taken these languages at Junior Cycle. It was commendable that students who chose not to study MFL in Junior Cycle but wished to do so in at Leaving Certificate level, were facilitated and supported.
- There were issues with the organisation of the classroom-based assessments (CBAs) in French. The annual assessment calendar did not facilitate all CBAs and subsequent reporting to be carried out within the recommended window for completion. The organisation of the CBAs should be reviewed to ensure that the workload is distributed in a way that is more manageable for students and teachers of French.
- The senior leadership team facilitated a range of extra-curricular experiences in French. These activities included a linguistic trip to France, '*Think Languages Day'*, a languages

club, and annual '*Diversity Week'* which culminated with a culture fair. All of these activities promoted an awareness of the rich multi-cultural community of the school and the importance of language acquisition in communicating and working with others.

- All classrooms were equipped with personal computers (PCs) and data projectors to promote the use of digital technology in the classroom. Teachers had access to laptop trolleys so students could engage in interactive activities during lessons.
- An online platform was used at whole-school level to share and store resources between teachers and students. This platform was used most effectively by teachers when all class content, assignments and resources were stored electronically and were easily accessible to students throughout their years of study of French. Students in the focus group identified this facility as being extremely helpful for them in knowing where to access all class materials.

3. Planning and preparation

- Subject planning and preparation for French required improvement. Programmes of work were in place for all year groups. However, these lacked sufficient detail overall and were primarily based on topics from the textbook. Units of learning should be developed to contain learning outcomes linked to the three strands, assessment strategies and resources. Additionally, each unit should contain reflections from individual teachers, to facilitate annual review and to allow for concise planning in line with the particular needs of each teaching group.
- Subject planning was not sufficiently linked to the syllabus objectives and learning outcomes. Development in planning 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. Teachers should ensure that subject plans are updated regularly and are used as working documents to reflect and support classroom learning.
- At the time of the inspection, some teachers were not members of the French Teachers' Association of Ireland. It is recommended that they avail of this membership, in order to access opportunities to discuss and share best practice and to find support with addressing issues relating to their individual and collaborative practice.
- The French department met at various times during the school year. However, minutes of these department meetings were not stored in the department's planning folder, and this should be addressed. The French department reported regularly meeting on an informal basis to discuss learning and teaching. Key topics discussed in these informal meetings should be documented and also saved in the shared folder.
- The French department shared resources with new teachers where needed, but this was done on an ad hoc basis. In order to formalise collaborative practice, and the sharing of resources and effective teaching methodologies, an area on the school's digital platform should be created, where these can be shared routinely.

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

An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

For the students of Árdscoil La Salle about their learning in French
Date of inspection:
06/05/2025 and 07/05/2025

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?

- Overall, learning and teaching in the school were good, but there were some practices that needed a lot of improvement.
- Relationships between teachers and students were supportive and respectful.
- Group-work and pair-work activities were a regular part of French lessons and these were very helpful to students' learning.

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

- Teachers should make sure that all activities and resources used in lessons are carefully planned to increase students' understanding.
- Teachers should provide content and activities that meet the needs of all students in the class.
- Planning documents for each year group should be progressed so that they contain all details needed for teaching, learning and assessment.

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