

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Follow-Through Inspection
REPORT

Borris Vocational School
Borris, County Carlow
Roll number: 70400L

Date of inspection: 18 May 2016



Date of original inspection¹	13 March 2014	Type of original report	<i>Subject Inspection</i>	Date of FT inspection	18 May 2016
Report published	Yes				
Follow-through inspection activities					
<p>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with principal and senior management team • Meeting with the subject coordinator • Observation of teaching and learning • Interaction with students • Review of school documentation and records and students' work 					
Recommendation in original inspection report		Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation			
<p>It is recommended that the provision of opportunities to communicate in the target language, beyond answering the teacher's questions, is ensured in all Irish classes.</p>		<p>Partial progress</p> <p>The school management and Irish teachers have undertaken a significant amount of work to create opportunities for students to attend Irish language events and occasions and this work is greatly commended as it brings language learning into an interesting contemporary context. Worthwhile developments are recognised in relation to timetabling arrangements, oral examinations for certain year groups and trips to the Gaeltacht. Focus needs to be placed on developing the students' communication skills in Irish during Irish lessons, however. The students need to be enabled to speak the language and repetition must be used to ensure students can say and use new words and phrases in context. It was unclear during conversations with staff members whether the Irish department had been provided with an adequate opportunity to discuss strategies and methodologies based on this recommendation. This must happen without further delay.</p>			
<p>There needs to be more focus on accuracy in students' written Irish.</p>		<p>Good progress</p> <p>There was a lot of work in the copybooks observed during the evaluation and it was clear that they are regularly corrected. It would be worthwhile for teachers to build on the work carried out in this area and to put in place a number of other strategies in order to support language acquisition and accurate language manipulation. These could include making greater use of dictionaries and online dictionaries, displaying language exemplars in classrooms and providing them to students before they undertake a written task or activities in which they will be speaking Irish in class.</p>			
Summary of findings					
<p>Worthwhile work had been undertaken since the evaluation to broaden the students' experience of Irish as a living language outside the classroom. This work is commended but strategies and methodologies now need to be agreed among the staff in order to enable the students to speak the language and create regular opportunities for them to make functional use of what they learn during Irish lessons. There is a significant amount of written work in the copybooks and this work is corrected on a regular basis.</p>					

Recommendations

The Irish teachers should meet regularly and language teaching and learning should be a permanent item on the agenda for meetings. It is recommended that agreed strategies are discussed and used in order to support the students' written ability in the language through the use of online dictionaries and resources. Language exemplars should be used to help students while undertaking free conversation, structured class activities or written tasks. Mind maps, ICT resources and other visual resources could also be used to support student learning.

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.