

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Spanish

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Coláiste Éanna
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Hillside Park Ballyroan Road Rathfarnham
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60342R

Date of Inspection: 06-02-2019



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

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 Spanish 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.

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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

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.

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

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	5 and 6 February 2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and Spanish teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and Spanish teachers

School context

Coláiste Éanna is an all-boys voluntary secondary school under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust with a current enrolment of 621 students. The school offers the Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good; practice in the lessons observed ranged from highly effective to adequate.
- Teachers' use of the target language was commendable but student opportunities to speak Spanish in lessons varied.
- Highly effective active learning was observed in a small number of lessons; however, in other lessons a predominance of teacher voice limited learner experiences and outcomes.
- In most lessons, a lack of differentiation led to some students not being fully supported or challenged.
- Subject provision and whole school support are very good.
- Planning and preparation was satisfactory overall; however, there was a lack of integration of language skills in the curricular plans and an over-reliance on examination material in TY and senior cycle plans.

Recommendations

- The Spanish department should discuss and share the highly effective practices observed in a significant minority of lessons, particularly in regard to students' oral interaction in Spanish and engagement in active learning.
- To ensure that all students are fully supported or challenged, the Spanish department should discuss and agree approaches to differentiation to be implemented with all Spanish class groups.
- The Spanish department should collaboratively review the subject plan and develop an active document that includes an outline of how language skills are to be integrated in lessons in all years.
- The TY plan should be reviewed to include learning that is active and experiential, and that helps students to develop their Spanish in innovative ways.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good; practice in the lessons observed ranged from highly effective to adequate.
- All teachers used the target language throughout the lessons observed and this good practice is commended.
- In some lessons, engagement with learning contributed to students' sense of well-being. Students were provided with many opportunities to communicate with each other in Spanish. In these lessons, students were very confident and competent when engaging in Spanish conversation with the inspector. Learning outcomes in these lessons surpassed what might normally be expected of students at their age and stage of learning.
- In other lessons, however, there was no student-to-student interaction in Spanish and the only opportunity for students to speak in Spanish was with the teacher. Many students in these lessons were unable to converse confidently with the inspector. To raise learner outcomes for all students, opportunities for students to engage in oral interaction in Spanish should be integrated into all lessons.
- A mix of language skills was observed in a small number of lessons. The most effective lesson integrated opportunities for students to practice oral, reading and listening skills and to consolidate learning. Teachers should discuss and share a range of methodologies designed to develop all language skills.
- In most of the copybooks reviewed, opportunities for student writing consisted of answering questions from handouts. In a significant minority of lessons, the copybooks contained very little written work. Students in all years should be encouraged to write independently in Spanish.
- There was limited evidence of teacher correction of written work. In one lesson, formative comments written by the teacher to guide improvement were provided on students' recent written work. This good practice should be extended.
- In some lessons, grammar was taught in isolation and students were given no opportunity to practice their new learning in a communicative context. A more effective approach was observed where grammar was taught very successfully as it arose in context. Learning was further consolidated when students were required to ask and answer questions in Spanish incorporating the newly acquired grammatical structure. This highly effective practice should be adopted by all teachers.
- In most lessons, a lack of differentiation led to some students not being fully supported or challenged. In one lesson, a differentiated work sheet facilitated engagement with lesson content. This good practice should be extended. The Spanish department should discuss and agree approaches to differentiation to be implemented with all Spanish class groups.
- The content of lessons was shared at the beginning of all lessons. In one lesson, a range of formative assessment strategies was used very effectively to assess student learning. Teachers should discuss and share further formative assessment strategies to support student learning and implement them in lessons.
- In most lessons, resources were prepared in advance. However, in some instances, there was an over-reliance on material taken from previous state examination papers. To improve learner engagement, teachers should endeavour to vary their resources.
- Creative use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning was observed in some lessons. This good practice should be extended.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- The principal and other leaders in the school foster a culture in which learning flourishes, leading the school community to continuously strive for excellence by setting high expectations for students. Academic tracking was recently introduced to help students achieve their potential.
- The school fosters students' holistic development through a range of co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities, for example, Modern Foreign Language (MFL) days and walking the Camino de Santiago.
- The principal encourages teachers to take on leadership roles through the rotation of departmental co-ordinator roles. Teachers' continuing professional development is supported in a range of areas. Some members of the Spanish department are members of the Association of Teachers of Spanish (ATS). It is advised that all teachers avail of school support to join the ATS.
- There is very good curricular provision for languages: the study of a modern foreign language is compulsory throughout the school and there is ample provision for languages on the timetable.
- Given the new national strategy for languages, *Languages Connect Ireland's strategy for foreign languages in education 2017-2026*, the school could consider offering students the opportunity to study more than one language.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The overall quality of planning and preparation was satisfactory. The Spanish department meets regularly and minutes are taken of meetings. Results from state examinations are discussed at these meetings. It is suggested that these discussions be extended to inform future planning for improvement.
- Members of the Spanish department have acted as examiners for the State Examination Commission and it is commended that they share their expertise with colleagues. Teachers also share their learning from continuous professional development.
- It is welcomed that the school plans to create an MFL department to encourage collaboration across languages. This new department should further develop reflective collaborative practices designed to improve student learning and enhance teachers own professional development.
- The quality of planning varied. A good start has been made to junior cycle planning, with planning based on units of learning informed by the integration of the three MFL strands. Current junior cycle assessment planning refers to monitoring class-work, testing and correcting homework. This should be reviewed to reflect the specification.
- TY Spanish is currently heavily influenced by examination-type materials and activities. TY should provide an opportunity for students to use Spanish in alternative ways, for example, through exploring the world of work experience through Spanish. The TY Spanish plan should be reviewed and a new programme put in place for the next school year. It should include learning that is active and experiential, and that helps students to develop their Spanish in innovative ways.
- Current senior cycle plans are very heavily influenced by the Leaving Certificate examination. The plans are skill-specific and often taught in blocks of a number of weeks' duration. There is no common theme to these lessons, which means that students do not have the opportunity to make meaningful and authentic connections between different areas of the curriculum. The Spanish department should collaboratively review senior cycle plans to ensure language skills are integrated throughout.

- Students are assessed regularly through in-class summative tests and school examinations. Currently, teachers set their own tests and examinations. Teachers should approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour to support students' learning and to measure their attainment. The school should consider collectively reviewing their whole-school policy on assessment, to include a whole-school approach to providing developmental oral and written feedback to students.

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

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 of Coláiste Éanna, An Edmund Rice School, accepts the report of the Subject Inspection in Spanish (Date of Inspection: 06-02-2019), as the final inspection report.

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 Spanish Department, in collaboration with Senior Management, has engaged in implementing the recommendations of the report.

Scheduled meetings have and continue to take place where teachers of Spanish have discussed and shared innovative ideas and best practice.

The Spanish Department has commenced a review of the plans and schemes of work for each respective year group, incorporating agreed approaches to differentiation.

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
Very Good	Very good 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 outstanding 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
Good	Good 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
Satisfactory	Satisfactory 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
Fair	Fair 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
Weak	Weak 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;