

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

**Subject Inspection in Spanish**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	Meanscoil Iognáid Rís
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Long Mile Road Walkinstown Dublin 12
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	60480G

**Date of Inspection: 03-05-2018**



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

## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	03-05-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with deputy principal and Spanish teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to deputy principal and Spanish teachers</li></ul>

### School context

Meanscoil Iognáid Rís, known locally as Drimnagh Castle CBS, is an all-boys voluntary secondary school with a current enrolment of 580 students. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The school offers the Junior Cycle, the established Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, in addition to an optional Transition Year (TY).

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good with elements of very good practice and some areas for improvement noted.
- Teachers used the target language very effectively in the lessons observed and students were able to understand and respond in Spanish; however, in all lessons there was scope to increase the opportunities for oral production and interaction between students.
- Some good practice was observed where teachers provided written guidance to students on how to improve their written work but this was not widespread.
- Throughout the evaluation, there was a secure and orderly learning environment inside and outside classrooms; student behaviour was very good in all lessons observed.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support was very good.
- Collaborative practices within the department were very good.

#### Recommendations

- To improve student competence and confidence in speaking Spanish, teachers should design and implement activities where students are required to talk to each other in the target language.
- The good practice observed where teachers provided written guidance to students on how to improve their written work should be extended.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good with elements of very good practice and some areas for improvement noted.
- Teachers had very good subject knowledge and were highly competent in their use of Spanish. Teachers' use of the target language was very good in the lessons observed.
- Students were able to understand the target language used by teachers and responded to their teachers in Spanish in an age appropriate way. However, in all lessons there was scope to increase the opportunities for oral production and interaction between students. To improve student competence and confidence in speaking Spanish, teachers should design activities where students are required to talk to each other in the target language.
- Language awareness was integrated very successfully through the target language in line with the new *Specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages* when students compared meals using the different Spanish verbs associated with mealtimes.
- Teachers strategically selected and used a good range of meaningful learning activities designed to consolidate and extend learning in lessons. These included effective individual, pair and group activities, as well as examples of cooperative learning.
- During lesson observations, students were usually fully engaged in learning and enjoyed their learning. In a small number of instances, some students could have been challenged to extend their learning further through the provision of differentiated learning activities.
- Teachers effectively used a range of strategies to assess ongoing learning during lessons. Learning intentions were shared with students at the beginning of all lessons observed. In one lesson, students used a digital application to review their learning which helped give them a sense of progress in their learning. This good practice of reviewing learning should be extended.
- A review of student copybooks revealed that students had completed a range of written activities. Teachers' practices in correcting students' written assignments varied. At times, the completion of classwork and homework was monitored by the teacher; at other times, good practice was observed where teachers provided written guidance to students on how to improve their written work. The good practice should be extended.

## 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support for Spanish was very good.
- Curriculum provision, including timetabling, is in line with good practice.
- There is good access for students to the study of Spanish. All students study a foreign language in Junior Cycle and in the school's TY programme; the study of modern foreign languages is optional thereafter.
- Students choose between Spanish and French before coming into first-year. In line with Ireland's strategy for foreign languages in education 2017-2026, the school might consider enabling students to study more than one foreign language at Junior Cycle and in TY.
- There is excellent support from the principal and the board of management for teacher continuing professional development (CPD). Teachers have sought out opportunities to upskill and are to be commended for their commitment to CPD.

- The principal and the board of management manage subject provision very effectively. Spanish teachers have base classrooms and this has enabled them to provide print-rich environments that support learning. There is a dedicated language laboratory in the school that is regularly used to enhance the teaching and learning of Spanish.
- Currently, students are streamed for ability from second year. Higher level uptake for senior cycle is lower in Spanish than in some other subjects in the school. It is therefore suggested that the department consider retaining mixed ability groupings in Spanish until TY.
- During the evaluation, there was a secure and orderly learning environment inside and outside classrooms. Student behaviour was very good in all lessons observed.
- Leadership of school development in relation to Spanish was very effective. Very good progress has been made on the implementation of all of the recommendations from the previous subject inspection in Spanish in 2007.

### **3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Collaborative planning and preparation practices in the Spanish department are very good. Teachers use on-line platforms to share their resources with each other. It is suggested that management consider providing a whole school learning platform to further facilitate teacher collaboration and encourage sharing of learning resources with students.
- The Spanish department meets regularly as part of the larger modern foreign languages department and also as an individual department. Minutes are maintained for these meetings and the discussion of teaching and learning is a regular feature therein. Teachers reported that informal collaboration and discussion of teaching and learning is also common practice.
- Currently, effective curriculum plans are in place and references to additional resources are integrated into the plans. Planning within the Spanish department is currently under review, with the aim of updating plans in line with the new *Specification for Junior Cycle Modern Foreign Languages* and further developing digital curriculum plans.
- Teachers' individual lesson planning for the lessons observed was very good. Teachers had prepared lesson resources in advance and these were very well tailored to meet the learning intentions of the lessons.
- Modern foreign languages teachers actively seek ways to incorporate the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020* into the curriculum. During the current academic year, they have each selected a digital learning tool to trial and they plan to share their experiences with their colleagues.
- The Spanish teachers meet with senior management each year to professionally review and reflect on the results of certificate examinations. In addition to comparing results to the national average, the examination outcomes for Spanish are compared to the results each student has received in similar subjects. These reflections are used by teachers to inform curriculum planning.
- The language skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening are all tested in school-based examinations, in line with good practice. Good practice was also observed in first year where all students sit a common examination. In subsequent years, class teachers set separate examinations for their own classes. In order to ensure equality of access to learning, it is recommended that teachers collaboratively design examinations and other forms of assessments.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the deputy principal and 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 of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> 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 <b>outstanding</b> 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
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> 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
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> 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
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> 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
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> 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;