

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

Subject Inspection in Spanish

REPORT

School name	C.B.S. Westland Row
School address	Westland Row Dublin 2
Roll number	60490J

Date of Inspection: 14-11-2016



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 [Spanish](#) under the following headings:

1. Learning, teaching 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.

Subject Inspection

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

Date of inspection	14-11-2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

SCHOOL CONTEXT

CBS Westland Row is co-educational voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust that serves an urban catchment area in Dublin city centre. The school offers the established Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, along with an optional Transition Year programme. It participates in the Department's DEIS initiative to deliver equality of opportunity to schools and currently has an enrolment of 108 students. There is one teacher of Spanish in the school. Spanish is compulsory in first year and optional thereafter.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- Teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good.
- Teacher competence in Spanish and in the pedagogical skills required for developing students' learning across the curriculum was demonstrated.
- Teacher and student use of Spanish as the main classroom language varied in the lessons observed.
- The provision of written feedback from the teacher about how students were progressing in their work varied within and across lessons.
- There is very good provision and support for Spanish in the school.
- Subject department planning is highly effective and at a very advanced stage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The teacher should extend the use of Spanish as the main classroom language to all lessons and further develop strategies for promoting student use of the target language among themselves and with the teacher.
- The teacher should extend the provision of written feedback to students and further progress this good practice by providing students with clear strategies for improving their work.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good.
- The teacher demonstrated competence in Spanish and in the pedagogical skills required for developing students' learning across the curriculum.
- In recent years, the teacher has focused on using the target language, Spanish, as the main language of instruction in junior cycle lessons. This change in practice has had a very positive effect on student learning. This has been evidenced through an improvement in attainment in recent Junior Certificate examinations. Also, there was a notable difference in student competence and confidence in the use of Spanish in the junior lessons observed, compared with a senior cycle Spanish lesson where English was the predominant language of instruction. The good practice of using the target language as the main language of instruction should be spread to all lessons.
- Student use of the target language varied in the lessons observed. In the lessons where Spanish was the main language of instruction, some students demonstrated very good speaking skills. Strategies that were successfully implemented in lessons such as pre-teaching classroom language and having a selection of phrases laminated on each desk promoted student oral language use.
- In some instances, students discussed group activities in English. In order to enhance the oral competence of all students, pair or group work should be specifically designed to give students opportunities to speak to each other in Spanish about the topic being studied.
- Well-prepared digital and paper resources were tailored to match the specific learning intentions of each lesson. Learning intentions and learning activities were differentiated. Differentiation of homework activities was also evidenced in a review of student journals. These are very good practices.
- In all lessons, the general topic of the lesson was shared with students. This good practice should be extended by sharing the learning intentions of the lesson and getting students to review their learning at the end of lessons.
- Students achieved the intended learning in all of the lessons observed and most students demonstrated high levels of interest and participation in learning.
- The teacher modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment and thereby created a learning environment where most students were motivated to engage in and enjoy their learning.
- In all lessons, relationships and interactions in classrooms created and sustained a co-operative and affirming learning environment.
- In all lessons, the teacher provided students with constructive oral feedback on their work. In some copybooks, written feedback was provided to students. In some cases, students were pre-taught Spanish comments and these were used in the written feedback. This good practice should be extended and further progressed by providing students with clear strategies for improving their work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good provision and support for Spanish in the school.

- Spanish is the only modern language taught in the school. It is compulsory in first year and optional thereafter. Uptake of Spanish in the school has increased in recent years.
- There is very good timetabling provision for Spanish lessons.
- Students of Spanish are very well supported in the school and provided with extra support classes where appropriate. The school has developed links with outside agencies, which some students have availed of to gain access to extra-curricular support in Spanish.
- The teacher plans collaboratively with other subject departments for learning activities that enable students to make meaningful connections between learning in different subjects. For example, students from different year groups cook Spanish recipes in collaboration with Home Economics. In Transition Year, there are creative links with History, Geography, English and Art.
- Student engagement is enhanced through valuable extra-curricular activities, such as visits to the library in the *Instituto Cervantes*, visits to a tapas restaurant and a whole-school *La Liga* day.
- Students are assessed through formal examinations three times a year and through continuous assessment. In some year-groups, all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are assessed in these examinations. It is recommended that this be extended to other year groups where possible. Oral and written formative feedback is given to students following their in-house examinations; this is good practice.
- All teachers have recently been provided with electronic tablets. There is a class set of tablets available for use in classrooms. The Spanish teacher has availed of continuous professional development (CPD) in this area. There is some reference to the use of tablets in the subject department plans, but there is scope to further develop the creative use of this technology in lessons.
- The Spanish department has engaged actively and productively with regular CPD that develops practice and meets the needs of students and the school. Copies of certificates of attendance and notes from these CPD courses are included in the subject folder.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is highly effective and at a very advanced stage. Planning is devised around learning outcomes which are grouped around topics. There are references within each topic to content, learning and assessment activities; cultural awareness and hyperlinks to resources are included. In some year plans, there is a reference to success criteria for each learning outcome; this good practice should be extended.
- Planning for students with special educational need is very good; individual education plans for specific students inform planning for teaching and learning in Spanish for these students.
- The individual lessons observed were very well planned and activities and homework were differentiated.
- The Spanish teacher is a highly reflective practitioner and regularly reviews the plans and makes notes to inform future planning. This is commended.
- There is currently a Professional Masters in Education student in the department. Regular departmental meetings are held and annotated. In addition to planning, teaching and

learning issues are discussed and this is good practice. The special needs assistant attends some of the meetings.

- The Spanish teacher and the teachers in the Irish department engage in constructive collaborative practice as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development in language teaching. They are currently working on developing strategies for improving student target language use and a common approach to formative marking in languages.

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

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.

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 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;