

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Spanish

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Andrew's College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Boosterstown Ave Blackrock Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60650F

Date of Inspection: 19-04-2018



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agus Scileanna
Department of
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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 did not meet all of the requirements in relation to 1 and 3 above and therefore was not fully compliant with the checks undertaken. However, the school has subsequently furnished evidence of compliance with these requirements.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	18 and 19 April 2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and Spanish teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and Spanish teachers

School context

St Andrew's College is a co-educational fee-charging secondary school in County Dublin with a current enrolment of 995 students. The school offers the following programmes: Junior Cycle, a compulsory Transition Year, the International Baccalaureate and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in all lessons observed, with many elements of exemplary practice.
- There is a well-established, highly effective culture of creative practice among the Spanish teachers.
- Teachers' use of the target language was exemplary; however, opportunities for students to speak Spanish to each other in lessons varied.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- Collaborative practices in the department are exemplary.
- Collaborative planning is very highly developed.

Recommendations

- The highly effective practice observed in many lessons, where teachers integrated regular opportunities for students to talk to each other in Spanish, should be implemented in all lessons.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good overall, with many elements of exemplary practice.
- Learner experiences were very positive in all lessons. Students engaged meaningfully in their learning in a productive and purposeful manner. Relationships were very respectful and positive. Students contributed in class with confidence and were willing to risk incorrect responses, understanding the value of making mistakes. In one instance, this was made explicit when a student was rewarded for spotting a mistake.
- In-class assessment for learning techniques were very well developed in lessons. Learning intentions were shared with students in all lessons and this helped motivate learners through having a clear sense of attainable and challenging outcomes. These intentions were often revisited during lessons and at the end of lessons, encouraging students to reflect on their own progress and develop a sense of ownership for their learning. The school-wide reflection sheet for review of examinations was seen to be used effectively by students. Teachers could consider extending this reflective process to other written activities.
- A review of student work revealed regular correction by teachers. Formative comments on students' written work to guide improvement were used very regularly by many teachers; this good practice should be extended. Some teachers had developed the practice of identifying errors on student written work, which students then had to correct and highlight those they understood or did not understand. This was reported to have been very successful in developing students' overall language awareness.
- Teachers' use of questioning was very skilled. Differentiation of questioning according to student ability was observed in addition to individual and whole class questioning, and questioning to assess progress in learning.
- Teachers' use of the target language was exemplary in all lessons. Excellent use was made of various strategies to maintain Spanish as the main language of communication in lessons.
- Students' use of the target language varied. Highly effective practice was observed in some lessons, where teachers integrated regular opportunities for students to talk to each other in Spanish into the fabric of the lesson. Students in these lessons were confident and competent speakers of Spanish, appropriate to their level. In other lessons, students indicated that they had fewer opportunities to use the target language and that, at times, they could be challenged to speak more in Spanish. It is welcomed that oral presentations and an increased focus on oral work are now becoming a regular feature of junior cycle lessons in the school. It is recommended that, in order to improve students' competence in speaking the target language, teachers should integrate regular opportunities for students to talk to each other in Spanish in all lessons.
- Information and communications technology (ICT) was used effectively by all teachers to enhance learning in lessons. In one lesson, students made videos to consolidate their learning and this greatly added to the learner experience. Students were regularly given homework tasks that involved creating interactive tasks.
- There is a well-established culture of creative practice in the Spanish department. Teachers explore and share new approaches to teaching and learning, implementing new methodologies in lessons and reflecting on their effectiveness. Examples of this included the very effective use of carousel methodologies observed in various lessons.

- Teachers approach assessment as a collaborative endeavour to support students' learning and to measure their attainment. They engage in collective review of students' work and have established a practice of moderating senior students' written work to maintain standards.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- The principal and other leaders in the school foster a culture in which learning flourishes. They lead the school community to continuously strive for excellence by setting high expectations for students. They promote a culture of continuous improvement by supporting colleagues to become reflective practitioners. The principal and deputy principals have established a school-wide culture of collaborative review and this was very evident throughout the evaluation. In addition, school self-evaluation (SSE) is embedded throughout the school and was evident in the reflective approach of Spanish teachers to planning and teaching. The current SSE focus on assessment for learning and giving feedback to students was evident in lessons.
- The principal and deputy principals ensure that teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) is firmly based on action research and is adapted to the identified needs of the school. They maximise and support opportunities to develop teachers' capacity and competence. Active participation of teachers in professional networks to improve teaching and learning is encouraged.
- Provision of resources for Spanish is a very good. Teachers reported that they would like to be able to integrate more student ICT use into lessons. It is therefore welcomed that the board of management has prioritised acquiring more devices for the coming academic year.
- New staff are very well supported. There is a mentoring system in place, and support for new teachers at departmental level was reported to be particularly strong.
- Students are assessed formally during Christmas and summer examinations and via regular in-class tests. Communication with parents is via regular reports, parent-teacher meetings, emails and phone calls home. The school journal is also used to communicate with parents, particularly in junior years.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Collaborative practices in the department are exemplary.
- Teachers are proactive in building collective expertise in the skills and approaches necessary to facilitate student learning for the future. The school is the primary locus for teachers' CPD and teachers have identified and designed departmental CPD. For example, they share experiences as certificate examiners and ICT expertise. They also share their expertise with teachers from other schools, for example through presenting workshops.

- The Spanish teachers view collaboration as a means to improve student learning and to enhance their own professional development. They engage regularly in formal and informal constructive reflective professional collaborative review of teaching and learning practices, and use it to identify and build on effective approaches. They work together to devise learning opportunities for students and view the school very much as a learning organisation.
- Collaborative planning is very highly developed in the department. Detailed digital curriculum plans are in place for each year-group. These are working documents and teachers regularly review and evaluate aspects of the plans via a live comment box. This is commendable. The plans were reported to have been very helpful to new staff to the school.
- Individual planning for all of the lessons observed was very good. Resources that were very well tailored to the learning intentions were prepared in advance for all lessons. All lessons were very well paced and included planning for the progressive development of different subject-specific and key skills.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and Spanish 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
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;