

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in German

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Muckross Park College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Donnybrook Dublin 4
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60710U

Date of Inspection: 17-10-2018



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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 German 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	16 and 17-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Dominican College, Muckross Park, currently has 701 girls enrolled. The school provides Junior Cycle, Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. The Transition Year programme is compulsory in the school.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with many instances of excellent practice evident.
- Student use of the target language was very good and some students have achieved high levels of fluency for their age and stage of learning.
- Highly effective questioning strategies were evident where teachers used wait time and scaffolding techniques to promote student thinking and effective recall.
- The standard of student attainment is consistently high and a number of students have been awarded international scholarships.
- The quality of whole-school support for German is very good and the senior management team (SMT) provide highly effective leadership for learning and teaching.
- Teachers are very committed to availing of continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities and there are good co-curricular activities to support the teaching and learning of German.

Recommendations

- In the correction of students' written work, teachers should increase the use of formative assessment strategies.
- Where appropriate teachers should provide students with suitably challenging extension tasks and additional learning materials to ensure suitable differentiation for gifted and talented students.
- The school should seek to establish formal links with a target-language country.
- In order to extend the very good school self-evaluation (SSE) practices observed, teachers are encouraged to engage in peer visits and to incorporate the student voice by means of student surveys.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good, with many instances of excellent practice evident.
- Teachers' use of the target language was excellent. Teachers demonstrated a very high level of linguistic competence, which served very well to provide requisite linguistic environment for high quality learning. It was clear that this was common practice as students responded readily and showed high levels of comprehension of German.
- Student use of the target language was very good and some students have achieved high levels of fluency for their age and stage of learning. In some lessons, teachers used innovative methods to enable students to use the target language, such as a walking survey. Students were asked to walk around the classroom and interview each other in German and note the replies of their peers. This is excellent practice and worked very well to optimise student use of the target language.
- Teachers used a wide variety of active learning methodologies to optimal effect in lessons. Highly effective questioning strategies were evident where teachers used wait time and scaffolding techniques to promote student thinking and effective recall.
- Very good strategies were noted in relation to developing the skill of listening and excellent practice was observed where students completed tasks entirely through German. To build on this, teachers should circulate while students are completing these tasks in order to assess information about individual student's progress.
- Student engagement in all lessons was very good and students participated with enthusiasm. Students were given many opportunities to work together, to engage in pair and group work. Student behaviour was exemplary.
- A most positive rapport between students and teachers was noted. Teachers created an orderly learning environment and teachers affirmed students appropriately for their efforts and contributions.
- Students' written work is very well monitored and corrected very thoroughly on a frequent basis. To further enhance students' written skills in German, teachers should extend the use of the common correction code and adopt a common approach to providing formative feedback. Students should be encouraged to analyse errors and follow up in an analytical way on errors.
- The learning environment is very supportive of student learning and engagement. Currently the layout of classrooms is traditional. Consideration should be given to changing this layout so that the seating arrangement would readily facilitate more communicative teaching approaches.
- The quality of student learning was excellent. Due to the very high standard of learning evident among many students, it is suggested that teachers ensure that students are provided with extension tasks and additional learning materials to ensure suitable differentiation for gifted and talented students.
- The standard of student attainment is consistently high and a number of students have received international scholarships on the basis of their exceptional performance in state examinations.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of whole-school support for German is very good. The SMT provide highly effective leadership for learning and teaching.
- German is an optional subject and all students who choose German are able to take a second modern foreign language (MFL). This is excellent practice and in keeping with national policy in relation to increasing uptake of MFLs.
- There are good resources to support German learning. In classrooms, in order to facilitate teacher circulation while audio material is being played, it would be very beneficial for teachers to have electronic remote controls, if resources permit.
- Members of the German department are very committed to availing of continuous professional development opportunities and this clearly pays dividends in classroom practice.
- There are good co-curricular activities to support the teaching and learning of German. Activities are organised for European Day of Languages and students partake in German debating competitions.
- Currently the school has no formal links with target language countries. The school should seek to establish formal links with these countries and ideally with a school. This would provide students with rich learning opportunities to develop their linguistic and cultural competence.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject planning is very good. It is particularly effective that a MFL department has been formed. The leadership of subject planning is highly effective as a member of the SMT holds formal meetings with subject co-ordinators.
- Good planning for the implementation of the new MFL specification was evident and good work has been done on specifying learning intentions. The section relating to assessment should now be developed to include formative assessment strategies.
- The quality of planning for individual lessons was excellent. Teachers are highly committed to planning for optimal standards of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- In order to build on all the very good practice in relation to planning, teachers should consider engaging in peer visits to lessons. This provides unique opportunities to share good practice.
- There are very good SSE practices in place in the school and highly effective use is being made of *Looking at Our School, 2016*. Very good use is made of the SSE process to analyse student outcomes. Teachers should consider incorporating student reflection forms or surveys in relation to their views on teaching and learning as part of the data gathered for SSE.

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

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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 Board of Management is very pleased with the inspection report and the teaching staff will undertake implementation of the recommendations to enhance the learning experiences of our students, as indicated. Since the inspection, the teachers have established formal links with the target-language country, Germany.

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 of 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;