

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Spanish

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Rosemont School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Enniskerry Road Sandyford Dublin 18
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60930L

Date of Inspection: 16-09-2016



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	16 September 2016
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and Spanish teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Rosemont School is an all-girls' fee-charging secondary school under the trusteeship of the Rosemont Educational Foundation Ltd. The school serves an urban and rural catchment area and has a current enrolment of 144 students. The school offers the Junior Certificate, the established Leaving Certificate and a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme. The study of a modern language is obligatory in all years. Spanish is available as an option to all year groups.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good in the lessons observed, with elements of exemplary practice.
- Teachers were highly competent and used very effective strategies to maintain Spanish as the main language of instruction.
- Overall, the quality of assessment was good; at times, formative assessment strategies were used successfully in class to enhance student learning and formative comments were added to students' written work to guide improvement.
- Overall, there was very good integration of language skills in lessons; however, at times there was scope to improve student use of the target language.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- Subject department planning is highly effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should incorporate into lessons pair or group activities which are specifically designed to give students opportunities to speak to each other in Spanish about the topic being studied.
- Teachers should further develop their approaches to formative assessment in lessons, to include extending the use of written comments to guide student improvement.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good in the lessons observed, with elements of exemplary practice.
- Teachers were highly competent and they used the target language very effectively throughout their lessons. Very effective strategies were also utilised to maintain teacher target language use. This was exemplary practice.
- Teachers modelled enthusiasm and enjoyment of Spanish, thereby creating an environment where students were motivated to engage in and enjoy their learning.
- In a senior Spanish class, students worked collaboratively on exercises designed around the optional Leaving Certificate novel. The study of the novel is very good practice as it provides opportunities to extend more able students.
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was used effectively in lessons to promote student engagement. The school's shared learning platform is used to enhance student learning.
- Sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness were developed very effectively in some lessons through presentations on Mexican culture and Mexican Spanish. Teachers designed student activities to maximise student engagement in learning.
- In most lessons, teaching methodologies and resources were adapted to help students of different levels maximise their learning. This is exemplary practice and should be incorporated into all lessons.
- Learning intentions were shared in all lessons. This good practice should be progressed by expressing intentions in terms of what students will be able to do at the end of the lesson. Students should be given time at the end of each lesson to assess their progress in order to enhance their awareness of their strengths and areas for development.
- There were opportunities for active engagement provided in all lessons, but in some lessons these activities were left until the end of the lesson. Teachers should review lesson structure so that opportunities for active learning are integrated into the main body of the lesson in order to promote student engagement throughout the lesson.
- There was very good integration of language skills in all of the lessons observed. The skills of listening, writing and reading were very well developed overall. At times, there was scope to improve student use of the target language through planning for more student activities which require students to speak Spanish. Teachers should incorporate into lessons pair or group activities which are specifically designed to give students opportunities to speak to each other in Spanish about the topic being studied.
- Classroom management was very good in all the lessons observed. Teachers created a learning environment that was based on mutual respect, affirmation and trust. Teachers had high expectations of students' work and behaviour and these were communicated effectively to students.
- Teachers assessed student progress in class through effective use of questioning for understanding. This facilitated deeper student engagement in the lesson. However, there is scope to further develop the use of formative assessment strategies in lessons.

- A review of copybooks revealed a variety of assessment practices. In a few instances, formative written comments were added to students' work to guide improvement. This good practice should be extended.
- The integration of the teaching of grammar in context into the fabric of all lessons was exemplary and helped promote student literacy.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- Spanish is allocated appropriate time on the school timetable.
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular provision is very good and supplementary activities are organised within the school, such as the different Spanish clubs. Spanish teachers regularly bring students to student events organised by the Association of Teachers of Spanish.
- Summative assessment is used to test students' aural, oral and written skills six times per year. Students participate in the optional Junior Certificate oral examinations. There is scope to develop the use of progressive formative assessments at regular intervals throughout the year.
- The principal and deputy principal foster a culture in which learning flourishes.
- Teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) is actively supported by senior management. Teachers are encouraged to share practices through various initiatives, such as peer teaching and peer observation. They have found these initiatives to be successful in improving student learning. The principal maximises opportunities to develop teachers' capacity and competence to improve teaching and learning by encouraging teachers to set their own CPD targets each year.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject department planning is highly effective.
- The department meets regularly and minutes are maintained. Self-evaluation of teaching practice is a regular feature in meetings. Student evaluations of elements of teaching, learning and examinations are sought and used to inform future planning. State examination results are also reviewed, analysed and used to inform planning.
- Teachers engage in constructive collaborative practice and in collaborative review of practice. Best practice is shared at departmental meetings. Notes on best practice from teacher CPD and other sources are maintained in the subject department folder.
- Teachers work very effectively with each other to support students with identified learning needs. An Individual Education Plan is drawn up for students with SEN who are studying Spanish; this outlines specific approaches and strategies for teachers to use in Spanish lessons. This is exemplary practice.
- The quality of schemes of work varied. Best practice was seen in a few plans where learning outcomes were linked to methodologies, learner activities and homework activities. This good practice should be extended to all schemes of work and include references to formative assessment.

- The individual lessons observed were very well prepared. Teachers planned a range of methodologies and resources in advance which were suitable for the learning intentions of the lessons.
- Communication with parents is via reports and the student journal.

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

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 welcomes the very positive and affirmative report on the teaching and learning of Spanish in Rosemont.

The Board was particularly pleased to see the following areas highlighted in the report:

- High levels of student engagement with and enjoyment of Spanish
- A learning environment based on respect, affirmation and trust
- High expectations of students
- Excellence in subject department planning
- Self-evaluation of teaching by members of the Spanish department
- Student evaluations of teaching, learning and examination attainment.

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 will continue to expand its existing use of Assessment for Learning strategies and group/pair work for teaching and learning.

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 very good 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. Overall, learners have access to a basic level of provision. 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;