

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

**Subject Inspection in Spanish**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Putland Road Bray Co Wicklow
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	68261L

**Date of Inspection: 12-02-2020**



---

**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>Dates of inspection</b>	11-12 February 2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal, 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 lessons</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and relevant staff</li></ul>

### School context

North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School is a recently established co-educational school with a current enrolment of 221 students. The school provides the Junior Cycle and the Transition Year (TY) programme. The first cohort of Leaving Certificate students will commence in September 2020. Spanish is offered to all students. Students have the opportunity to study Chinese in TY.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Digital technology is used very effectively to support teaching and learning and encourage student engagement.
- Teachers are very aware of the learning needs of their students, preparing differentiated resources in advance of lessons and adapting lessons to suit emerging learning needs.
- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- The quality of planning and preparation at individual and departmental level is very good.
- Teachers collaborate very effectively and are to be commended for their high level of engagement with co-curricular and extracurricular activities organised for students.

#### Recommendations

- The very good practice observed, where students were provided with activities which required them to talk to each other in Spanish, should be extended to all lessons.
- Teachers should increase the provision of formative feedback to students to guide improvement; where oral feedback is provided, students should be encouraged to write it down and implement it in future work.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- Spanish was the main language of communication in all lessons observed. Teachers' use of the target language was commendable. At times, students addressed teachers in English and were occasionally encouraged to rephrase the question in Spanish. This good practice should be extended.
- Overall, students had very good understanding of Spanish, given their age and stage of learning. In one lesson, students were provided with activities which required them to talk to each other in Spanish and in this lesson students were more confident when speaking the target language. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- There was a very positive atmosphere in all lessons observed. Interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and positive and conducive to wellbeing.
- Students were able to assess their progress realistically and reflect on their attitude to language learning. Overall, they had a very positive attitude towards language learning and were happy to engage in and persist with increasingly challenging language activities. They had acquired a very good understanding of some of the key concepts required for effective life-long language learning. This is highly commendable.
- Teachers were very aware of the learning needs of their students and adapted lessons and learning tasks to suit emerging learning needs. Teachers were very attentive to those needs and had prepared differentiated resources in advance of lessons to ensure that all students maximised their learning. Learning outcomes for lessons were differentiated according to student ability. This is very good practice.
- In all lessons, digital technology was used very effectively to support teaching and learning and encourage student engagement. Lessons were very well planned, with a wide variety of activities to consolidate and progress learning. There were very good transitions between learning activities. Grammar was taught within a communicative context in lessons. This is very good practice.
- In some lessons, learning intentions were shared in terms of lesson content. These should be expressed in terms of the learning to be acquired and shared with students so that they can assess their progress during and at the end of the lesson.
- Some very good use of formative comments to guide improvement was noted in the reports on student progress sent home to parents. A survey of student work revealed that student work is regularly corrected and includes positive affirmation from teachers. To help students to improve their own learning, teachers should regularly provide students with individual advice on how to improve. If teachers provide oral feedback, students should be encouraged to write it down and implement feedback in future pieces of work.

### 2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole school support is very good.
- Teacher continuing professional development (CPD) is encouraged and supported by the school. Spanish teachers regularly participate in CPD and are members of the Association of Teachers of Spanish. Members of the department have served as examiners with the State Examinations Commission and this has contributed to their learning.

- Teachers are encouraged to share their expertise within their department and Spanish teachers have shared their learning with other teachers in the school.
- There is a very positive attitude towards languages in the school. The senior management team strategically plans to broaden the curriculum as the school increases in size. In light of *Languages Connect Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017-2026*, it is welcomed that these plans include the introduction of a second curricular modern foreign language.
- The school's self-evaluation (SSE) process is impacting positively on teaching and learning in the classroom. The current SSE focus on wellbeing and readiness for learning was evident in the very positive and safe learning environments created in lessons. The highly effective impact of the previous SSE focus on differentiation was also observed.

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

- The quality of planning and preparation at individual and departmental level is very good. Minutes are taken at meetings and subject department meetings include the discussion of teaching and learning; this is very good practice. Teachers reflect on results of certificate examinations and use these reflections to inform planning. This is also very good practice.
- Teachers collaborate highly effectively. Weekly meetings are held to enable collaborative planning to occur. Resources are shared on the school's learning platform. Selected resources to support learning are shared with students on a dedicated student learning platform.
- Teachers plan very effectively. Planning for junior cycle is well advanced. Currently, different elements of planning are located in separate documents. It is suggested that these be amalgamated digitally and include links to resources. This would give teachers a valuable live working document and enable them to share reflections in real time.
- Teachers are to be commended for the high level of engagement with co-curricular and extracurricular activities organised for students. Though only in its fourth year, the school has been awarded an e-twinning label and has established a successful exchange programme with a school in Spain. Plans are afoot to further extend links with Spain. Spanish teachers collaborate with other subject departments to provide co-curricular learning experiences for students.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal 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
<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;