

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of German
REPORT

Killina Presentation Secondary School
County Offaly
Roll number: 65630B

Date of inspection: 29 November 2012



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN GERMAN**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	29 November 2012
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussions with principal, deputy principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good in the lessons observed.
- A broad range of active teaching methodologies was used to good effect.
- The teachers' use of the target language was very good and students were provided with many opportunities to develop oral skills in German.
- The atmosphere in all lessons was very good and the students' behaviour was exemplary.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for German is very good.
- The subject plan for German was incomplete and only documented planning for the first term.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the key principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) be implemented and that all students of German receive written feedback in their copybooks regarding how to improve their written skills.
 - It is recommended that the subject plan for German be completed in the first term and be reviewed by the senior management team on an annual basis.
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INTRODUCTION

Killina Presentation Secondary School, Co Offaly has an enrolment of 495 students. The school is a mixed voluntary secondary school and operates under the trusteeship of the CEIST (Catholic Education, An Irish Schools Trust). The school offers the Transition Year (TY) Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from good to very good, with an effective focus on the development and integration of all the language skills.
- The pace of lessons was generally very good and lesson content was chosen effectively and in line with requirements of the relevant syllabuses. The expected learning outcomes were shared with students at the beginning of lessons. In some cases, and in line with best practice, these learning outcomes were reviewed periodically throughout the lesson.
- A wide range of active teaching methodologies was evident in the majority of lessons observed. Group and individual task assignments were used to very good effect.
- Learning outcomes were enhanced through the use of innovative strategies in some lessons. Particularly noteworthy was the use of coloured pictures, puzzles and matching vocabulary exercises, which resulted in a very good level of student enthusiasm and engagement.
- The teachers' use of the target language was very good and provided students with a very effective model of German. Students had good opportunities to speak in German. These opportunities need to be developed further through the use of strategies that allow for more student-student interaction. It is also recommended that a short amount of time in lessons be devoted to specific exercises to develop and improve the students' pronunciation.
- Many effective tasks to practise listening comprehension were provided to students in the course of lessons. However, in one instance a listening text was played more times than was necessary, as the students had already answered all questions pertaining to the task. It is recommended that texts only be replayed where necessary. Teacher circulation in the course of listening comprehension tasks is recommended, so that the teacher can assess students' progress in this regard.
- The use of ICT in one lesson observed was excellent. All students worked well at their own pace and completed a variety of exercises relating to the topic of transport, on the dedicated website www.german.ie. Students engaged most enthusiastically with these tasks.
- Some of the methodologies used in the lessons observed allowed for a differentiated approach to the learning of German. In view of the fact that all classes are mixed ability, there is scope to build on this practice and to ensure that differentiated tasks and activities are provided, so that all levels of ability are catered for.
- The atmosphere in all lessons was very good and conducive to learning. Teacher-student interactions were very positive and the teachers were very affirming of students' learning.
- In all lessons, classroom management was very good, students' behaviour was exemplary and appropriate homework was assigned.

- Students' notebooks and copybooks were reviewed in the course of the inspection. It was evident that students complete written tasks in the target language on a regular basis. In the case of some students in junior cycle who were preparing for the certificate examinations, there was no evidence of monitoring or written feedback in copybooks. It is recommended that teachers implement the key principles of AfL and provide learners with clear advice in copybooks about how they can improve their written German.
- Teachers keep good records of students' performance in formal assessments and written reports are sent to parents on a regular basis.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision for the teaching and learning of German is very good in Killina Presentation Secondary School. German is provided for appropriately in all curricular programmes.
- Timetabling for the subject is very good and the deployment of staff is in line with their qualifications and skills.
- A good range of resources, including ICT resources, is available to support the teaching and learning of German. If and when resources permit, it is suggested that remote controls or wireless mice be acquired for the CD players. This would enable teachers to circulate in class while listening texts are being played for students.
- Access to German is very good. All first-year students study the language. In line with best practice, German is offered in second year in subject bands which are generated around students' choices.
- In a minority of cases, students in second and third year do not opt to continue to study a modern European language. It is recommended that care always be taken to inform these students and their parents of restrictions in access to certain third-level courses that may arise as a result of not studying a foreign language.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good whole-school structures are in place to support the departmental planning process. Meetings of the German department take place regularly and minutes of these meetings are kept. It is suggested that teaching and learning strategies and how AfL strategies can be built in to classroom practice be discussed at department meetings.
- At the time of the inspection, the plan for German covered only the first term of the academic year 2012-13. It is recommended that in future the year plan be finalised in the course of the first term. It is also recommended that the subject plan be reviewed by the senior management team in the school.
- The plan for the teaching and learning of German should include information on how the key principles of AfL will be applied in the course of lessons.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Different methodologies of Afl are incorporated into lessons as appropriate to the needs of students and are reviewed regularly.

The subject plan for German has been completed and updated to reflect the new text books in use. The plan contains an evaluation section on teaching and learning and sets out the methods of Afl that are being used.