

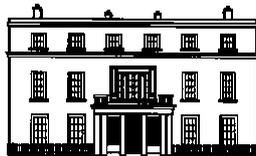
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of German  
REPORT**

**Meánscoil an Chlochair  
Kilbeggan, County Westmeath  
Roll number: 63221U**

**Date of inspection: 11 and 12 April 2013**



**A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F  
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N  
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S**

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

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2013
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from excellent to very good.
- A wide variety of strategies was used to encourage students to communicate effectively through the medium of German.
- Student engagement and enthusiasm for the language was evident throughout the inspection.
- Classroom management was excellent and student-teacher rapport was very positive.
- There is very good wholeschool support for German and the uptake of the subject is increasing.
- The coordination of the subject department planning and collaboration between members of the German department are excellent.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is recommended that student errors be used at opportunities for development particularly in relation to oral skills in the course of lessons.
  - It is recommended that peer collaborative review become established practice among members of the German department, in order to build on the excellent collaborative practice that already exists.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Meánscoil an Chlochair is a co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment of 437 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate, Transition Year (TY), Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP).

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and student learning ranged from excellent to very good in the lessons observed.
- In all lessons the good practice of writing the learning outcomes on the board at the outset was evident. Students therefore had a clear understanding of what they were going to learn. In some lessons individual students were asked what they had learnt in today's lesson as they were exiting the classroom. This is a very good method of reviewing learning outcomes on an individual learner basis.
- The use of the target language by teachers was excellent and the emphasis on using the German at all times in the course of lessons is most laudable.
- A wide variety of strategies to promote the student use of the target language was used to great effect. Particularly noteworthy is the emphasis placed on the use of pair work to maximise student opportunity to speak German. To enhance the development of students' oral skills, it is recommended that students' errors be used as learning opportunities in the course of lessons.
- Students were actively engaged in the lessons due to the effective methodologies used to ensure student learning. Students were on task at all times and were clearly enjoying their lessons.
- Classroom management was excellent. The atmosphere in all lessons was most positive and the rapport between teachers and students was very good.
- The attention paid to classroom routines was particularly effective. In some lessons students had assigned tasks such as writing the day and date in German on the whiteboard and they assisted seamlessly with the distribution of learning materials. This level of classroom organisation is most commendable and could usefully be extended to all lessons.
- Assessment procedures were used to very good effect to ascertain the quality of student learning throughout the lessons observed. A strong emphasis on the use of assessment for learning (AfL) strategies such as the use of mini white boards and the traffic light system was evident in one lesson. These strategies could very usefully be extended to all lessons.
- A sample of copybooks was viewed in the course of the inspection. Students had completed a wide range of tasks and copybooks were very well monitored. The quality of written feedback given to students was very good and learners were given clear advice about how they could improve their written skills.
- The level of organisation of student work in copybooks and notebooks is commendable and is a comprehensive aid to student learning.
- German is taught in a base classroom and the learning environment provided there is most supportive of learning. A wide range of student work, posters and maps was on display.

- Good attention was paid to developing students' literacy skills and particularly effective is the provision of a class set of dictionaries and also the attention paid to key words in the course of lessons.

#### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- There is very good whole school support for German. German is offered as an optional subject to all students who enrol in first year and is available in all curricular programmes. The uptake is good and is showing a significant increase in recent years. Provision for this increase in numbers is supported by management who assign two German classes in all years in junior cycle.
- The support for new and student teachers who are members of the German department is very good. Peer collaborative practices exist and experienced teachers have visited student teachers' classrooms to give support to the teaching and learning processes. This is very good practice and peer collaborative review could usefully be extended to all members of the German department. This would be particularly effective due to the excellent collaboration that already exists within the department.
- There are very good co-curricular activities to support student interest and enthusiasm in the language. Every effort is made to ensure that students have contact with countries of the target language through email partnership, trips and exchanges.
- The whole-school assessment policy is very effective and has a strong emphasis on continuous assessment. The quality of summative assessments in German is very good and a strong emphasis is placed on communicative approaches to assessment.
- The provision of resources for the subject is very good. There is a wide variety of interesting and relevant resources available to support the teaching and learning of German.
- Teachers' commitment to continuous professional development (CPD) is very good and the benefits from their engagement with CPD were very evident in the lessons observed.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The quality of subject planning is very good. Particularly noteworthy is the effective coordination of planning, the leadership shown by the coordinator and the excellent collaborative approach adopted by all members of the German department.
  - Effective self-evaluation practices are conducted within the subject department. Student attainment in the state examinations is reviewed and analysed by the German department and recorded in the subject plan.
  - The quality of short-term planning and individual planning for lessons was very thorough. The quality of materials prepared in advance of lessons was very good and made learning more interesting for the students.
  - Very good records are kept of students' progress and assessments and parents are kept well informed of students' attainments through regular reports and parent-teacher meetings.
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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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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