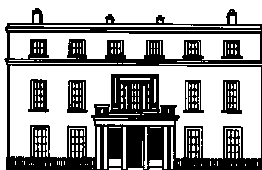


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Presentation Secondary School
Clonmel, County Tipperary
Roll number: 65340P**

Date of inspection: 11 March 2016



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection: 10 & 11 March 2016	
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during 6 class periods• Review of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in all lessons.
- There use of Irish predominated in all lessons.
- Students' general diligence as well as the very good order of their work was noteworthy.
- A need to devote more time to developing students' oral competence was identified during almost all lessons.
- There is a comprehensive assessment system in the school in which work completed during the year is recognised.
- Preparation for all lessons was commendable.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that, in all lessons, greater emphasis be placed on the acquisition of language structures and phrases related to the topic being explored and, that this goal be included as one of the lesson's learning intentions.
 - It is recommended that a common approach to assessing the speaking ability of junior-cycle students be set out.
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INTRODUCTION

Presentation Secondary School operates under the auspices of CEIST and 468 girls were enrolled at the time of the inspection. Irish is a core subject in the school curriculum which includes the Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate School Programme, Transition Year (an optional programme), the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied, and the established Leaving Certificate. There are five teachers with varying levels of teaching experience in the Irish department. 7% of the total student cohort has an exemption from studying Irish.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in all lessons. Students' work was in excellent order and their diligence with regard to class activities was noted. Nonetheless, a need to focus greater attention on raising the students' levels of language acquisition, especially in respect of their speaking ability, was identified.
- The use of Irish predominated in every lesson. It was clear, in general, that students and their teachers were accustomed to this good practice. For the most part, students understood their teacher's instructions as well as other metalanguage used in class. In one instance, levels of self-confidence exhibited by the class when speaking were particularly high and it would be good if the same self-confidence could be nurtured among all students.
- Opportunities for speaking Irish were created in all lessons by assigning students to cooperative learning tasks. Students gained valuable practice in speaking Irish to each other in those cases in which the task required an explicit oral outcome. In other cases, however, most of the emphasis was placed on written goals and, consequently, there was less dialogue and co-operation among students. It is strongly recommended that a communicative approach, in which oral language and cooperative learning are key features, be deployed in all lessons.
- Many of the resources used were creative and imaginative. Visual material was used extensively and the use of pictures and the video clips put learning in context and motivated students to express their views.
- Students applied themselves diligently to lesson tasks. It was commendable that the vast majority were able to refer to prior learning in their copybooks and that some of them used dictionaries. Another indication of the self-motivation and self-confidence of certain students was the manner in which they volunteered answers to the teacher's questions. In order to ensure more equal levels of participation in all classes, teachers should pose questions in a way that prompts all students to respond.
- Student progress was monitored during all lessons. This practice was very effective in cases in which teachers circulated, listening and offering advice as necessary. However, the inspector was of the view that sufficient opportunities were not availed of to develop students' levels of proficiency by practising the manipulation of new phrases that arose, during monitoring, with them or by discussing points of accuracy with them. Therefore, it is recommended, in all lessons, that deliberate emphasis be placed on supporting the acquisition of appropriate language structures.
- It was clear from the students' copybooks and journals that they had to complete written tasks on a regular basis. It was good that learning of vocabulary and grammar was part of these homework tasks.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The timetable supports the teaching and learning of Irish insofar as students have regular contact with the target language.
- It would be worthwhile reviewing how students are distributed to class groups and reflecting on the value of implementing a banding system for certain year groups.
- It is good that all teachers get an opportunity to teach Irish at various levels.
- The reference material on display in many of the classrooms is valuable. It would be good if Irish also had a more central place in the school library and if students with higher levels of proficiency were enabled to reading Irish texts independently.
- Overall, teachers' competency in oral Irish was satisfactory. All teachers should be mindful that they serve as their students' primary source of the language and, therefore, they should ensure the accuracy, fluency and richness of their own Irish.
- There is a comprehensive assessment system in place in the school, including continuous assessment of classwork. Students' progress is reported on at the end of each half-term. It is also good that the students' speaking ability is tested as part of their assessment. That said, it is felt that there is a need to put this practice on a stronger footing at junior cycle level. Hence, it is recommended that a common and definite practice be agreed with regard to assessment of the oral competence of junior-cycle students.
- *Seachtain na Gaeilge* events were underway during the inspection and a range of strategies were being used to promote the use of Irish in the general school environment. It would be good if the cross-curricular links created in the case of Music and Physical Education were extended so that Irish would occupy a more central role in school life.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- There was good preparation for all lessons. Additional resources such as video clips and worksheets were often prepared. It was clear that the activities that students were to complete had been considered in advance and, for the most part, there was a thematic link between the activities. This approach served to consolidate the learning.
- It was good that the vocabulary to be acquired, as well as points of accuracy that would become relevant, were included in the pre-determined tasks set by teachers. Nevertheless, further consideration of the phrases to be practised and acquired, depending on the differentiated abilities of the students, was necessary. Thus, it is strongly recommended that acquisition of turns-of-phrase or language structures form one of the learning intentions of all lessons.
- It was reported that there is a good team spirit among the members of the department. It is commendable that they meet regularly as a team. The upgrading the school's technology infrastructure so that the staff will be able to share electronic resources should prove beneficial.
- Possibilities were identified with regard to enhancing the subject development plan. As a first step, it is recommended that strengths and areas for development be identified as part of the self-evaluation at department level. With the main areas for improvement agreed, an

action plan should be formulated that specifies the roles and responsibilities of both teachers and students with regard to the achievement of improvement targets.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and Irish teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the positive findings of this report. We welcome the acknowledgement by the Inspectorate of the general diligence and very good order of students' work. We are pleased that the comprehensive system of assessment, the good quality of teaching and learning in all lessons and commendable planning by the teachers was recognised.

Area 2 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 and staff accepts the recommendations made in the report. The Gaeilge Department will continue its existing commendable practice in relation to teaching and learning and will also take into account the good recommendations made in the report. The Board of Management will continue to support the teachers and students of Gaeilge in every possible way and will ensure that the recommendations of the Inspectorate are implemented.

- The speaking ability of incoming First Years and Transition Years will be recorded and stored for comparison of language development in subsequent years. Recording equipment will be purchased to enable this development.
- A common practice for the assessment of oral competence of Junior Cycle will be developed and introduced in the next school year.
- Greater emphasis will be placed on the acquisition of language structures and phrases and this goal will be included in the lesson's learning intentions.
- The Parents' Council have agreed to fund the development of the Irish section of the school Library.