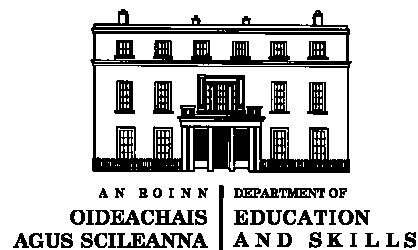


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT

Coláiste an Chraoibhín
Fermoy, County Cork
Roll number: 70990M

Date of inspection: 26 November 2015



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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection: 25 & 26 November 2015	
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• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good and practice was highly commendable in some cases.
- The use of Irish was to the fore during all lessons and it was evident that students were accustomed to this good practice.
- Language acquisition was most effective in instances in which teachers guided their students as they practiced newly-taught aspects of language.
- Extensive use was made of cooperative learning tasks in which students deployed a good range of language functions.
- Monitoring of students' progress was ongoing during almost all lessons.
- Planning documentation is very well organised and this is indicative of the overall commitment within the department to developing students' competence in Irish.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that additional time be allocated during lessons to ensure accurate use and pronunciation of newly-taught words and phrases.
 - It is recommended that students' oral competence of should be regularly assessed.
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INTRODUCTION

Coláiste an Chraoibhín is a co-educational school that operates under the patronage of Cork Education and Training Bord. Irish is a core subject on the school curriculum which includes the Junior Certificate, the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Transition Year (an optional programme), the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. This school participates in the DEIS plan for educational inclusion. There were 616 students enrolled at the time of the inspection and 21% of these students were exempt from the study of Irish. The school's Irish department has eight teachers with varying experience in teaching Irish.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good and practice was highly commendable in some cases. In these cases, approaches to enabling students' acquisition of phrases enabled them to communicate, verbally or in writing, about a range of topics at a level appropriate to their ability.
- The use of Irish was to the fore during all lessons and it was evident that students were accustomed to this good practice. They are to be commended for their genuine efforts in using whatever Irish they had, when interacting with each other and with their teachers.
- There was a greater emphasis on language acquisition in certain classes. Although students were presented with new vocabulary and phrases in all lessons, and although commendable efforts were made to explain their meanings, a greater emphasis could have been placed on practicing the pronunciation and use of these newly-taught aspects of the language. The practice of having students practice phrases as a group or individually, under the guidance of the teacher, before attempting less-structured tasks, was more effective.
- Opportunities for interaction were created during all lessons and students engaged enthusiastically in cooperative learning tasks. Cooperation and communication were more effective where functional tasks were set, requiring students to ask questions, give their opinions, find information, solve problems, assist each other, discuss subjects, find meanings, etc. In other cases, however, it was felt that tasks needed to be designed in a way that would encourage more interaction between students.
- Learning was effectively consolidated in many lessons by setting students tasks requiring them to practice the same aspects of language in different ways. In many classes, teachers provided the necessary support to ensure that students of all abilities could participate fully in class activities.
- There was a need, in some lessons, to pay greater attention to students of higher ability so as to ensure that the subject of the lesson would be sufficiently challenging for them. In these cases, the focus should be on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and form, as appropriate. Students should be given more responsibility for their own learning by setting them challenging tasks in which they assist each other, with reference to dictionaries, their existing knowledge, and their own notes.
- Generally speaking, monitoring and assessment during lessons formed a central part of all teachers' work. In all cases, the completion of tasks was regularly monitored. In addition, careful use was made of questioning to assess prior knowledge, comprehension of lesson content and level of competence. Peer assessment tasks, set in a small number of lessons,

were especially valuable in that they focused students' attention on success criteria and on their individual areas for improvement.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The timetable supports the teaching and learning of Irish and students are assigned to classes so as to ensure that they can study Irish at the highest level suited to their ability.
- Students who are entitled to an exemption but who chose to study Irish, and the teachers who support them, are highly commended.
- It is commendable that the majority of teachers have their own classrooms and that they strive to create a print-rich learning environment. They should, however, be mindful of the importance of keeping reference material displayed on the walls up to date so that students recognise and refer to previously-learned aspects of the language.
- Teachers' competence in spoken Irish was satisfactory overall, with certain teachers very much at ease communicating through Irish. The general openness towards integrating modern approaches into established practices is commended. In light of this, it is recommended that more teachers gain experience in teaching higher-level classes.
- Formal oral examinations for fifth and sixth-year students form part of the in-house examinations system. This is commended. This initial step should be built on by recognising all students' spoken abilities, especially in the Christmas and summer examinations.
- Special provision is made for students of higher ability through the provision of additional classes and holding regular conversation classes. It is recommended that opportunities for other activities that could be integrated with ordinary schoolwork be explored so that students could use their Irish in conjunction with other key skills.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Prior reflection on the activities to be carried out was the most common approach to planning for learning during individual lessons. Teachers often shared the learning intention as lesson outset. The preparation of additional resources to enliven classwork is commended.
 - Preparation was particularly commended in cases where the aspects of the language that would be required to complete tasks were identified in advance. This good practice should be expanded to all lessons.
 - Planning documentation is very well organised and this is indicative of the overall commitment within the department to developing students' competence in Irish. The identification of targets for improvement as part of the department's self-evaluation would further enhance levels of collaboration. The merits of rotating the role of department coordinator should also be considered.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.