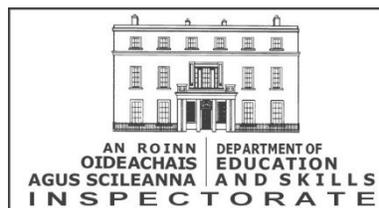


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Spanish
REPORT

Gaelcholáiste an Phiarsaigh
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
Roll number: 68161H

Date of inspection: 8 April 2016



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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	8 April 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two lesson periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was excellent.
- The teacher used the target language at all times and students were very comfortable listening to and using the target language in a level-appropriate manner.
- A very good mix of all four language skills was integrated into lessons and many examples of assessment for learning strategies were observed.
- Use of information and communications technology (ICT) in lessons was highly effective and was integrated into lessons by both the teacher and students.
- Subject provision and whole school support for Spanish is very good.
- Subject planning in Spanish is very good at both departmental and individual teacher level.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are no recommendations at this time with regard to the teaching and learning of Spanish.

INTRODUCTION

Gaelcholáiste an Phiarsaigh is a co-educational voluntary secondary school, serving an urban catchment area in south Dublin. It is under the trusteeship of An Foras Pátrúnachta. This is a new school and is currently in its second year with an enrolment of 53 students. The Spanish department consists of one teacher. The school currently offers the Junior Certificate programme, but this will extend to senior cycle programmes as the school grows.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was excellent.
- The teacher used the target language at all times and students were very comfortable listening to and using the target language in a level-appropriate manner. Student use of the target language was commendable. Students used Spanish regularly with the teacher and among themselves during lessons.
- Excellent use was made of song and language games to reinforce and review learning and to encourage student engagement.
- Song was also used very effectively as a listening exercise where students were asked to identify recently acquired vocabulary. This vocabulary was then reinforced with oral exercises in pairs.
- Drama was used very effectively to consolidate language attainment. Students had written role-plays related to the topic being studied. Some performed them in front of the class, while others used their electronic tablet devices to record and analyse their role-plays.
- A very good mix of all four language skills was integrated into lessons. Oral activities were regularly interspersed, with the result that students expressed themselves very comfortably in the target language.
- Use of ICT in lessons was highly effective. ICT was integrated into lessons by both the teacher and students. Students all have their own electronic tablet devices and used them regularly in lessons under teacher direction. They accessed the schools shared learning platform and researched on-line to carry out class activities. Evidence was observed of the use of electronic tablets in homework assignments also. The quality of student work on their electronic tablet devices was of a very high standard.
- In one lesson students had prepared an electronic presentation for homework and taught the topic to a parent or guardian at home. They then taught it to the class. This was a highly effective way of promoting student engagement and learning.
- Classroom management was excellent at all times. Students enjoyed their lessons and were fully engaged throughout. The teacher made highly effective use of positive affirmation and was observed making students feel valued in the classroom.
- The Spanish classroom was print rich with many examples of student work. A book of poetry was on display which included examples of poems in Spanish that students had written. Students were very proud of their work and this helped their engagement with the language.
- Many examples of assessment for learning strategies were observed in lessons. Learning intentions were shared with students at the outset of each lesson. These were revisited

during lessons and reviewed at the end. Students kept a visual record of their progress in learning in the form of a graph on their electronic tablets. There was highly effective use of questioning strategies by the teacher to evaluate student progress. Evidence was seen of student self-evaluation and teacher-guided peer-evaluation. Formative comments were used regularly in student written work to inform student improvement.

- Examples of literacy in context and of numeracy were observed in lessons. Grammar was integrated into lessons as it arose in the topic being studied. Language games were included in the planning of lessons to enable students to develop their numeracy skills.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Curricular provision for Spanish is very good. All students are offered a short sampling programme of optional subjects at the beginning of first year; this helps them in choosing their subjects. The study of a language is compulsory at junior cycle and students may choose to study more than one modern language.
- Cross-curricular planning is very good in the school with links to Spanish included in other subject plans. Regular co-curricular activities are planned throughout the year.
- The school has established links with a school in Latin America and an exchange programme with a school in Spain is in place. It is commendable that these links have been established so early on in the life of the school.
- Students are assessed formally through Christmas and summer examinations and regular class tests. All four skills are assessed throughout the year.
- Provision of resources for Spanish is very good.
- The Spanish teacher is enthusiastic about continuous professional development (CPD). This has a very positive impact on the learning community. School management actively supports teacher CPD.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject planning in Spanish is very good. Plans are theme-based and time-bound for each year group and include learning objectives and outcomes. Teaching methodologies, resources, and assessments are referenced for each theme and these are differentiated to cater for the different ability groups. The plans could be further enhanced by inserting hyperlinks into the plan directly to the resources on the school's shared drive. This would also improve the functionality of the plan for teachers.
- Termly subject meetings are held and appropriate minutes are maintained. These include review and analysis of student progress and the conclusions drawn from these analyses are used to inform future subject planning.
- Individual planning and preparation for the lessons observed were excellent.
- Record-keeping at departmental and individual teacher level is very good.
- Parents are informed of their child's progress via school reports, parent-teacher meetings, information afternoons and the student journal. Presentation of work to parents is a regular feature of students' homework and this also informs them of their progress.

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

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