

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Coláiste de hÍde
Tallaght, Dublin 24
Roll number: 70021D**

Date of inspection: 24 March 2011



**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 IRISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	23 and 24 March 2011
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Meeting with the subject co-ordinator• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with students• Examination of students' work and school diaries• Feedback to individual teachers• Feedback to principal and teachers of Irish

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in some lessons, and good in the majority of cases.
- Although different methods and strategies were in use in the majority of lessons, their effectiveness varied because of the manner in which they were implemented.
- Class management was very good and, combined with the mutual respect between students and teachers, created an atmosphere which was very supportive of learning.
- Provision of time, facilities and resources for Irish was very good.
- The subject plan was of a good standard and demonstrated a focus on the development of students' literary skills.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the standard of Irish as well as the expectations for learning the subject across the curriculum be raised.
- It is recommended that the expected learning outcomes for every year group be set out in the subject plan, as was recommended in 2004.
- That it would be common practice to share expected learning outcomes with students, as was recommended in 2004.
- Differentiation in the tasks to be completed by students and in the type of questions posed is recommended in order to better serve the learning needs and ability levels of students, and to develop their higher order thinking skills.

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste de hÍde is a co-educational, all-Irish, post primary school situated in Tallaght. The school operates under the management of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee. Transition Year is offered as an optional programme in the school. A previous inspection of Irish was carried out in Coláiste de hÍde in 2004. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- In the majority of lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning was good and, very good in some cases.
- Best quality teaching and learning was evident in lessons where teachers had high learning expectations for their students; had planned tasks and content accordingly; used and demanded a very good standard of Irish; and where student were active in their learning.
- In a small number of classes teachers shared the expected learning outcomes with students at the beginning of the lesson and in one case students were asked to reflect on what they had learned at the end of the lesson. As previously recommended in 2004, the use of these practices should be extended.
- Some very good examples of the thematic integration of the development of language skills and the use of information and communications technology were observed in a small number of lessons. With regard to one lesson however, the prepared lessons selected must be amended and adapted to the needs of students in the school.
- Although different methods and strategies, such as group and pair work, were in use in the majority of lessons, their effectiveness varied because of the manner in which they were implemented.
- Differentiation is recommended in the tasks to be completed in class and as homework, and in the type of questions posed in lessons so that the ability range and learning needs of students are better served, and student higher order thinking skills are developed.
- Very few students asked questions in class regarding the content of the lesson. It is recommended that students be more active participants in their own learning.
- Class management was very good and, combined with the mutual respect evident between teachers and students, created a very supportive learning atmosphere.
- Almost all students undertake higher level in the certificate examinations.
- An analysis is carried out of student achievement in the state examinations. Trends should be noted and an account of an analysis included in the subject plan and used to identify targets and possibilities of how to increase the number of candidates who achieve the highest grades, in junior certificate in particular.
- It is recommended that the results students achieve in the ‘entrance’ examination, as well as the *Curaclam na Bunscoile: Gaeilge*, be used to form the basis of planning for the subject in first year.
- Students rarely record homework in their school diaries.

- It is recommended that teachers revisit the principles of Learning for Assessment since these are not being implemented on a whole-department basis. In this context, an approach to correction of student work with feedback to students must be agreed and documented in the assessment/homework policy. A similar recommendation was made in 2004.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabled provision for Irish is very good. That being said, it is recommended that further class periods per day be timetabled for one particular class group.
- A small number of classes are divided between two teachers. However the subject plan offers no information regarding the division of work. This is not good practice and such an arrangement should be avoided.
- There is very good provision of aids and resources for Irish. Good use is made of these.
- Common examinations are set for the majority of year groups.
- A review of the implementation of the homework policy is recommended. A comprehensive assessment policy should be developed, and should include the methods used for assessment of the principal language skills in every class. This recommendation, concerning the assessment of the principal language skills, was made previously in 2004.
- School management supports teacher participation in professional development events.
- Teacher proficiency in Irish, with one exception, was satisfactory. School management must provide appropriate guidance and support from the point of view of the language to any teacher who needs it.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Department meetings are regularly convened, minutes of formal meetings are recorded, and the role of co-ordinator is rotated among teachers.
- The subject plan is of a good standard. Monthly schemes of work are set out for the different year groups and, where appropriate, there are common schemes. However, particular reference should be made to the recommendation in the 2004 report regarding the setting out of expected learning outcomes for each year group, and the plan should include the teaching and learning strategies to be used.
- It is evident from the subject plan that focus is placed on: the development of student literary skills by means of strategies for spelling; the development of language awareness through grammar and literature. All of these form part of student learning from first year onwards.
- The Transition Year plan reflects the established Leaving Certificate too closely. This plan should be more innovative and in keeping with the philosophy of the Transition Year programme. An approach, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), could be undertaken here or, in first year.

- Aims and objectives for Irish have been set out in the subject department plan. However, a review is required to ensure that these can better respond to the needs of students in Choláiste de hÍde. For example, references to Gaeltacht schools should be removed.
- Good quality planning and preparation was completed for individual classes and, in some cases, this was of a very good standard.
- It is recommended that evidence of monitoring and review be included in subject plans.
- In general, teachers maintain very good records and reports of student progress.

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

