

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

**Subject Inspection of History
REPORT**

**School Chuimsitheach Chiaráin
An Cheathrú Rua, County Galway
Roll Number: 81012N**

Date of inspection: 17 April 2013



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

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HISTORY

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	17 April 2013
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The standard of learning and teaching was good or very good in the lessons observed.
- Every teacher planned effectively for the lessons observed and the presentations were clear and interesting.
- There was a very good emphasis on local history in lessons.
- The time provision for teaching the subject was good, except in the case of third year.
- Effective efforts were made to improve the students' range of vocabulary in lessons.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- There should be a balance between the teacher's input and the students' activity in lessons.
 - It is recommended that common junior cycle house examinations be prepared which would serve every student in the year group.
 - An additional period should be provided in third year.
 - It is recommended that the assessment in the Transition Year course "An Staidéar Pobail" be reviewed.
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INTRODUCTION

School Chuimsitheach Chiaráin is a co-educational Gaeltacht school. The programmes available in the school are the Junior Certificate, Transition Year and the Leaving Certificate. There are 312 students enrolled for the current school year. Every student studies History in the Junior Certificate and in the compulsory Transition Year as part of the “An Staidéar Pobail” course. History is available as an optional subject in the Leaving Certificate programme. A small group of junior cycle students are registered in the Junior Certificate School Programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The standard of learning and teaching was good or very good in the lessons observed
- In most of the lessons, the teacher presented the lesson’s intended learning objectives clearly and in a couple of lessons the teacher reviewed the learning. These good practices should be extended.
- The teachers’ presentation was clear and interesting in lessons observed.
- Best practice was observed where the teachers encouraged the students to participate actively in the lesson. For example, in one lesson guided discussion was used to consolidate the students’ understanding of the subject. In a couple of lessons the teacher’s voice was to the fore. There should be a balance between the teacher’s input and the students’ activity in lessons.
- The teachers planned effectively for the lessons observed. Effective use was made of electronic resources. The best resources used well-chosen illustrations. These resources should be saved in a folder on the school’s electronic system.
- A strong emphasis was placed on local history and on the development of historical skills in lessons. It was obvious that the students were interested in the subject matter of the lessons and that the standard of learning was good.
- There is a comprehensive assessment system in place in the school. There was plenty of work in the copybooks examined and it is clear that homework is assigned frequently and corrected in accordance with the principles associated with assessment for learning. Class examinations are held regularly. In the case of certificate examination classes, it is recommended that students be informed of the official marking criteria and that their work be corrected in accordance with those criteria.
- Formal house examinations are held twice a year. Most junior cycle students in each year group sit a common paper, apart from a small group of students registered in the Junior Certificate School Programme, for whom a special paper is provided. A common paper should be set for all and a marking scheme prepared which would take into account the aptitudes of all students in the year group.
- In Transition Year each student takes an interesting course called “An Staidéar Pobail” (“Community Study”). Aspects of local history are studied in this course. At the moment no formal assessment is done until the end of the year. Assessment in this course should be reviewed, so that students would have the opportunity to complete projects during the year and receive credit for this work, in keeping with Transition Year principles.
- Irish, noted for its richness, was widely used by the history teachers and worthwhile efforts were made in the lessons to improve the students’ range of vocabulary.
- There was a good atmosphere in each classroom visited and there was obviously a good relationship between teachers and students.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The time provision for the subject in the school was very good as regards the senior classes. There are six periods per week available for the teaching of History at Leaving Certificate level.
- Students in first and second year have three history periods per week. This is satisfactory. Students in third year have only two class periods, however. This is not sufficient. It is recommended that, if possible, an additional period be provided for this year group.
- The arrangements for students' access to the subject are very satisfactory. Students are given an open choice of the optional subjects and bands of subjects are created accordingly. In general there are two Leaving Certificate history classes in each year group as the school provides an additional history class for a small group of students not taking a modern European language. This is commendable.
- There is a good supply of resources for teaching the subject. There is a small history library and it is good that the books in it have been catalogued. The school management give good support to the subject department. For example, new resources are purchased as required. A folder should be placed on the school's electronic system to store electronic resources.
- The history team is diligent and committed to the subject. Both teachers attended in-service history courses through Irish.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- One person is nominated as co-ordinator of the subject department and subject department meetings are held frequently. The minutes show that the teachers work well together.
 - The subject plan is of a very good quality. It contains a description of the subject's aims and objectives as well as medium-term and long-term planning. It is clear that the teachers emphasise the development of the students' critical skills. The plan also contains a description of the support provided to students with special needs. The results of house examinations and certificate examinations are analysed regularly. All of this is commendable.
 - The subject plan contains schemes of work and there is evidence that the teachers adhere to these schemes. At present, the year schemes only contain a list of topics. This list should be added to and learning objectives, assessment methods and teaching resources should be specified for each topic to help the teachers when planning their lessons.
 - To develop the plan, it is recommended that the part of the plan dealing with the Transition Year course "An Staidéar Pobail" be reviewed.
 - Co-curricular planning is good. For example, guest speakers are invited regularly to the school and the students have opportunities to go on history trips.
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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 in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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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 this positive inspection report. The board particularly welcomes the confirmation of good planning, high standard teaching and learning and the richness of Irish as evidenced in the inspection report.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. An extra period in History has been provided for students in third year.
2. The Transition Year course entitled “An Staidéar Pobail” has been revised. In future these students will be credited for project work undertaken.

This is a translation of the school response submitted by the board of management.