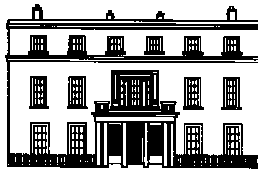


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of History
REPORT**

**Cabra Community School
Kilkiernan Road, Cabra, Dublin 7
Roll number: 701500**

Date of inspection: January 2016



**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	25, 27 & 29 January 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning observed during the evaluation was good.
- Good teacher-led instruction through questioning was observed: however, there was scope for more active methodologies to further engage, challenge and motivate students.
- A commendable range of resources supports the teaching and learning of History
- Management is committed to continuing to offer History to both junior and senior-cycle students.
- Planning is good overall, with scope to develop schemes of work further.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strategies to facilitate active engagement with historical material need to be extended, to support a collaborative approach to learning and greater differentiation in mixed-ability classes.
 - The history department should explore the benefits available from engagement with the History Teachers Association of Ireland (HTAI) and other professional agencies.
 - The history department should use a more structured approach in the preparation of common schemes to inform and direct teaching and learning in all lessons.
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INTRODUCTION

Cabra Community College, formally Coláiste Éanna, is a co-educational school under the auspices of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb). Since 2012, the school has been enrolling post-primary students and currently caters for seventy-one students. The school participates in the Delivering Equality in Schools (DEIS) initiative and JCSP. The school offers Leaving Certificate History to both post-primary students and adults.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed was good.
- Good student-teacher rapport was evident in all lessons observed. Students settled down to work well, were responsive to questioning and co-operative with their teacher.
- There are good resources for the teaching of History. There is a large, subject-specific history room with a commendable range of textbooks, historical novels and reference books available for students. In addition, a subject-rich environment has been created in this room with posters and historical props.
- Learning intentions were shared with students orally at the start of lessons. This was most effective when expressed in terms of what students should be able to do and revisited at the end of the lesson to assess understanding and progress. This approach merits further use.
- There was good continuity with prior learning and linking of the various sections of the course.
- Some use was made of the whiteboard in the course of the lessons to bring a visual emphasis to the lesson. However, greater use should be made of the board to introduce the topic, and identify key words and meanings relevant to the lesson.
- Teacher-led instruction was the dominant methodology in the lessons observed. A more effective balance between teacher input and student activity was achieved during some phases of lessons, for example, when students were challenged to complete tasks on the Plantations or the 1916 Proclamation.
- Further integration of activities that facilitate active engagement with historical material would support a more collaborative approach to learning and allow for greater differentiation in mixed-ability classes. Such activities could include think-pair-share tasks and increased wait time during questioning. More in-depth planning of questions and tasks when using primary sources will allow students to develop skills such as selecting and interpreting information.
- Questioning was used extensively in the lessons observed. A good variety of lower-order questions required students to recall factual information, while higher-order questions sought reasons, motivations or judgements relating to the impact the 1916 Rising or 1913 Lockout. In some lessons, a few students answered the majority of questions: thus, questioning strategies need to be more inclusive of all students.

- There was good use of examples of everyday issues to connect the topics with students' lives. For example, when discussing the Plantations, connections were made with the Troubles in Northern Ireland. These examples enlivened lessons and prompted students to ask 'why' and gain an understanding of how events in the past shape life today.
- Some of the students were involved in a 1916 project where they created audio recordings describing the role of key personalities from the Rising. Students spoke of their character, their role in the 1916 Rising and how their involvement in the recordings and a related drama helped them to learn. This type of active engagement is praiseworthy.
- In one lesson, an electronic presentation accompanied the recorded voices of the students narrating the story of those involved in the 1916 Rising. This was an effective strategy and could be enhanced by the pre-identification of related tasks, such as setting key questions for students to consider.
- In the majority of lessons, there was a good emphasis on the development of students' historical literacy through a focus on subject-specific vocabulary and opportunities to read aloud. The continued development of methodologies that support literacy and numeracy development remains important.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Lessons are scheduled in single, one-hour periods. Timetabling is good across the week.
- First-year students sample History and another subject in term one and then choose their option. Currently, there is a second and third-year class and one Leaving Certificate class. During the course of the evaluation, management expressed a strong commitment to continuing to offer history to both junior and senior-cycle students as the enrolment numbers grow.
- It is commendable that the range of resources purchased to date support the teaching and learning of History. For example, the school has purchased a significant amount of items to support students' involvement in historical presentations and dramas such as costumes, props, a sound system, lights and microphones.
- All classrooms are well equipped with information communication technology (ICT) facilities, including data projectors. In addition, the history department can access a computer room and a class set of iPads by pre-booking.
- The school management is very supportive of teachers' professional development and history department members have availed of in-service in the past. It would be worthwhile for the history department to re-engage with their subject association the HTAI, and other professional agencies, and to avail of further in-service opportunities as they arise.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- History department planning is of good quality. It is good practice that minutes of meetings are kept. Planning for actions directly related to developing and improving teaching, learning and assessment methods should be added to the agenda to further support whole-school targets.
- Good lesson planning was structured in terms of the learning outcomes, methodologies and resources. The history department should use this structure in the preparation of common schemes to inform and direct teaching and learning in all lessons.
- Very good co-curricular planning for History was evident through the production of historical dramas and audio presentations. These involve a cross-curricular approach with various departments such as Art, Metalwork, Music and English. Examples from previous years included the 1913 Lockout, Christmas in the Trenches and Bridge over the River Kwai.

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

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.