

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of English
REPORT

Marino College
Fairview, Dublin 3
Roll number: 70250S

Date of inspection: 17 October 2013



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 ENGLISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	15, 17 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students• Interview with subject co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during one double and six single class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in the majority of lessons observed.
- Students' literacy is developed and supported by teachers of English.
- A supportive and encouraging atmosphere was apparent in all lessons observed.
- A small number of lessons were predominantly teacher led.
- Timetabling allocation is very good; however, the spread of lessons across the week is unbalanced in some cases and not all students have daily contact with the subject.
- Teachers encourage students to study the subject at the highest appropriate level and uptake of higher-level English at both junior and senior cycle is improving.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should review learning outcomes within the lesson framework.
 - Teachers should facilitate students to take responsibility for their own learning and ensure that all students are challenged to achieve the best possible outcomes.
 - The timetable should provide daily contact with the subject and an appropriate spread of lessons across the week.
 - The subject plan should be further developed so that it is aligned with the school's self-evaluation process and DEIS plan.
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INTRODUCTION

Marino College was established in 1936 and operates under the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The post primary school has a current enrolment of 254 students. A further 339 students follow Post Leaving Certificate courses on a separate campus. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative and provides the Junior Certificate, Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Leaving Certificate and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programmes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in the majority of the lessons observed. There were, however, other lessons where there was scope for development.
- In most lessons, teachers stated the planned learning outcome or lesson objective. In a small number of lessons, teachers revisited the planned learning outcomes at the end of the lesson by asking the students to tell them what they had learnt. This good practice should be extended to all lessons to ensure that students' attainment of clear and realistic learning outcomes is assessed within the lesson framework.
- Probing and challenging questioning was used to explore alternative viewpoints and perspectives and to assess students' comprehension. Teachers should ensure that students have sufficient time to formulate and articulate responses.
- Students' literacy is developed and supported by teachers of English, all of whom model sophisticated and accurate language usage. Teachers should employ strategies to ensure that new vocabulary is consolidated through oral and written usage.
- A range of active learning methodologies was seen in some of the lessons observed. In one lesson, students were encouraged to analyse texts using previously taught skills and concepts. This very good approach facilitates skills development and encourages independent thinking.
- A supportive and encouraging atmosphere was apparent in all lessons observed. Students were well behaved and engaged willingly in classroom activities.
- A small number of lessons were predominantly teacher led. Students should be facilitated to take responsibility for their own learning, whether through investigative group work or through independent learning.
- Planning for resources was very good. For some class groups, notes were made available, and assignments were submitted, through the internet. Teachers should ensure that possible barriers to inclusion, such as limited access to technology or an insufficient level of keyboard skills, are addressed.
- Differentiated methods of teaching were observed. In one lesson, the teacher facilitated all students to complete the assigned tasks by differentiating the level of difficulty, and the acceptable standards for participation and completion. Teachers should ensure that differentiation is used to challenge students across the full ability range.
- Many instances of extensive formative feedback were observed. Examples of very thorough assessment of electronically submitted assignments were seen in the subject folder. Teachers should devise strategies to ensure that students reflect on and learn from developmental comments.

- Some good examples of student self-assessment were seen. In one instance, a student had annotated an essay to indicate how the quality of the assignment could be improved. Peer assessment that offered mature and focused developmental feedback was also observed.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabling allocation for English is very good. However, the spread of lessons across the week is not always balanced and not all students have daily contact with the subject. The timetable should be structured to give a better balance for all year groups
- Students' access to the subject at all levels is very well catered for. Junior cycle classes are taught in mixed-ability groups for the first two years. In third year, and again at the start of fifth year, higher and ordinary-level classes are formed. The criteria for class formation include student motivation and achievement as well as teachers' professional judgement. Concurrent timetabling allows for mobility between levels and co-operation between teachers.
- Teachers encourage students to study the subject at the highest appropriate level and uptake of higher-level English at both junior and senior cycle is improving. The English Department has overseen a decrease in the number of students taking the subject at foundation-level, in line with DEIS planning targets.
- There is very good provision for learning support. Team-teaching methods are being developed and are used to provide support where practicable. This approach may provide a foundation for teachers to share classroom practice with an open-door policy.
- The school provides a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities some of which are supported through the JCSP library which is used extensively as a resource by English teachers. Reading is actively encouraged through library-based activities which derive from the school's DEIS plan. A parents' book club is one of many initiatives to promote reading and literacy development in the school community.
- Students and their parents are provided with regular information about their progress in the subject. Common exams for year groups and levels are set at Christmas and summer. Third and sixth-year students have "mock" exams in the spring. Reports are sent home following exams. Parent-teacher meetings are arranged annually for each year group, with two meetings for parents of students sitting state exams.
- All teachers have subject-specific qualifications and rotate across levels and programmes. Resources and practice are shared regularly and informally.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The English department has developed comprehensive subject plans over a number of years. The department should now look to the future and further develop the plan so that it is aligned to the school's school self-evaluation process with attainment targets and goals that are based on the school's DEIS plan.
- Some very good schemes of work that link learning outcomes to assessment, resources and methodologies were seen.
- Assessment and attendance records are maintained by all teachers.

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