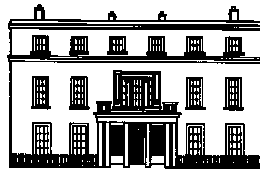


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of German
REPORT

Coláiste Pobail Setanta
Phibblestown, Dublin 15
Roll number: 76098W

Date of inspection: 14 March 2014



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	11 and 14 March 2014
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy-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 quality of teaching and learning was excellent, and a wide variety of effective methodologies designed to foster communicative competence among learners was in evidence in all lessons.
- The use of strategies associated with Assessment for Learning (AfL) was excellent.
- Classroom management was exemplary, and the print-rich learning environment created in classrooms was outstanding.
- Very high expectations are set for students, and all learners are expected to take German at higher level in junior cycle.
- The commitment of senior management and the German teachers to continuing professional development (CPD) is most commendable, and the benefits to students of the level of teacher engagement in CPD was evident
- The quality of subject planning, departmental collaboration and self review is excellent.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A short taster programme for first-year students in modern languages merits consideration, as this would help students to make a more informed choice regarding language options.

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Pobail Setanta, established in 2008, is a large, co-educational post-primary school which operates under the aegis of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The school serves a rapidly expanding area in North County Dublin and its current enrolment stands at 773. The school offers a wide range of curricular programmes including the Transition Year (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was excellent, and teachers and students displayed great enthusiasm for German.
- The use of the target language by teachers and students was of a very high standard and it is particularly noteworthy that every individual student was given opportunities to speak in German in the course of the lessons observed.
- The methodologies used were learner-centred and focused on the development of communicative competence in German. Students were actively engaged in learning tasks such as brain storming, pair and group work, colour coded grammar exercises, games and songs.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) was used to very good effect in lessons. Interesting video clips from German television were used to support learner engagement and motivation. ICT is also used by students to Skype with counterparts in Germany and to access learning materials which are placed on a shared drive.
- Learner autonomy was fostered through opportunities for independent learning such as the use of dictionaries, work sheets and other learning materials. It is suggested that students be encouraged to organise their copybooks and notebooks by numbering pages, writing the titles of themes and creating a table of contents. This will enable them to access information quickly and will support independent learning.
- The use of strategies associated with AfL was excellent. Strategies such as stating and revisiting intended learning outcomes, using mini white boards, “think, pair, share” and “no hands up” were all used frequently to support and develop student learning.
- Written work is assessed by the teachers on a very regular basis. In order to build on the AfL strategies in place, it is recommended that codes for common errors be devised and shared with students. They should be required to review their own written work before and after submitting it to teachers, and encouraged to work out their own errors.
- Teaching approaches were differentiated to cater for the diverse needs of the learners. In the lessons observed, students of different abilities and levels worked together in pairs and in groups, and learned from one another. In addition, materials containing extension activities based on class work were provided so that students could work at their own level. Meeting the needs of the gifted and talented students in this manner is an example of excellent practice.
- Classroom management was exemplary in all lessons. Particularly noteworthy was the use of entry and exit routines which established excellent discipline and motivation for learning. All students were greeted individually by teachers on entry to the classroom and were asked a question based on the previous lesson. At the conclusion of the lesson, this strategy was repeated to assess student learning.

- The learning environment created in the classrooms was outstanding. The variety of posters, maps, learning materials and very high quality student work on display was a credit to teachers and students alike. It was evident that students' creativity in the target language is actively fostered.
- The physical layout of the classrooms is conducive to student learning, as all desks are arranged in a group layout. At each group setting learning materials are available, and as students took their seats at the beginning of lessons they immediately selected some materials to work on. It was clear that this is a well-established practice and part of the daily routine.
- Very good records of assessment are kept and student outcomes are analysed on a regular basis. Very high expectations are set for students and they are all expected to take German at higher level in junior cycle.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for German is very good and senior management has put in place very good structures to support the subject. German is very well resourced and timetabling is good.
- German is optional and the number of students taking the language is increasing. Students must decide in advance of starting first year whether or not they will study it. It is suggested that, if resources permit, a short taster programme for languages in first year might be considered. This would help students to make a more informed choice regarding language options.
- Currently German is not provided in the TY programme. This situation is under review, and it is intended that there will be provision for all languages in TY in the future.
- There is a comprehensive whole-school assessment policy. Students are assessed formatively and summatively at regular intervals. It is most commendable the students are given the opportunity to avail of the optional oral assessment in the Junior Certificate examination.
- Students attend parent-teacher meetings, which is a way of ensuring that they take responsibility for their own learning, and is a good example of partnership in education.
- The commitment of both management and the German teachers to continuing professional development is outstanding. Teachers are encouraged to be truly reflective practitioners through a number of whole-school strategies such as keeping a learning journal and the *Aisling na Scoile* project, which involves teachers' peer collaborative visits to lessons.
- There are very good extracurricular activities to support the learning of German, in particular the German exchange programme.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject department planning is excellent. In line with best practice, the subject plan specifies the learning outcomes in terms of the skills of language acquisition. The clarity of what is expected of students in terms of the development of writing, reading, speaking and listening is most impressive.

- The planning for including other aspects in the teaching of German, such as the development of literacy and numeracy skills, cultural awareness and cross-curricular links with other subjects, is excellent.
- Individual planning for lessons was excellent and the preparation of resources and learning materials was very good.
- The quality of self-evaluation practices is exemplary. The results of the state examinations are reviewed comprehensively. There is very good evidence of review of teaching and student learning, high quality professional dialogue and a most impressive commitment to an improvement agenda.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal/deputy principal/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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report.

The Board is delighted that the excellent teaching in the college was acknowledged so clearly by the DES inspector.

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

The college has already made provision for the study of all three modern languages in TY9 as was planned from last year).

The language departments are happy to look at a coding for correction for use in the college.