

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of History  
REPORT**

**CBS Dungarvan  
Dungarvan, County Waterford  
Roll number: 64880T**

**Date of inspection: 4 April 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 HISTORY**

---

**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date(s) of inspection</b>	4-5 April 2011
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Meeting with subject co-ordinator</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The teachers gave purposeful attention to guiding and supporting student learning throughout the lessons observed.
- A range of good teaching and learning strategies was incorporated into the planned development of the lessons.
- The students remained engaged and on task throughout the lessons observed.
- History is taught and studied in a supportive whole-school context.
- The monitoring of students' progress is an inherent aspect of the organisational framework of the school.
- The collaboration of the history teachers supports History as evidenced by the documentation of the department subject plan.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- More widespread use of written, comment-based feedback should be made on students' homework assignments.
  - A history module should be provided in the school's TY programme.
  - Formal department meetings should be convened at more regular intervals and the business of the meetings should be recorded in order to support ongoing collaboration.
  - The planning of the yearly coursework schemes should be further developed to include details of the teaching and learning methodologies, resources and learning outcomes that will be incorporated into the planned study of each topic.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

CBS Dungarvan is a voluntary boys secondary school with a current enrolment of 278 students that offers the Junior Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), the established Leaving Certificate and Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses. History is a core subject for all Junior Certificate students and is provided as an elective subject for Leaving Certificate students. There is an arrangement in place with a neighbouring girls' secondary school whereby the provision of Leaving Certificate History alternates biennially between the schools. This reciprocal arrangement maintains the viability of providing Leaving Certificate History for the senior cycle students in the two schools. In the academic year 2010/2011, History is provided for the fifth-year student cohort in CBS Dungarvan and this provision will be maintained when the students enter sixth year.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The teachers guided and supported student learning from the outset of the lessons observed. The good teaching and learning practices that underpinned the purposefulness of the lessons are commended.
- The planned development of the lessons incorporated a variety of teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of the students. More widespread use of the practice of informing students of the focus and the intended outcomes of the lesson is recommended.
- Questioning was effectively utilised overall as an ongoing learning strategy. The teachers' questioning of their students was incorporated into the correction of homework and set tasks, the recapitulation of prior learning and the gauging of students' understanding of new lesson material.
- The planned use of selected resources such as video clips, the classroom board, the class textbook and worksheets enhanced student learning. In one lesson, however, the video clip shown required a greater degree of introduction before the viewing or a greater amount of questioning afterwards in order to ensure that the clip achieved the desired learning outcome and facilitated the smooth transition of the lesson from one phase to the next.
- Individual teachers made good use of the classroom board to note important points of information and clarify understanding. Reading from the class textbook was also used effectively to increase students' knowledge of their lesson topic.
- The setting of assigned tasks enabled students to demonstrate their learning. Examples included the directing of students individually and in pairs to complete a worksheet based on the video clip that was being viewed and a group work activity. In the case of the latter, the class was organised into small groups and each group was directed to discuss and brainstorm a particular aspect of the lesson topic before reporting on their discussions in a plenary class session.
- The students remained engaged and willingly participated in all classroom activities throughout the lessons observed. The sample of students' copybooks studied during the evaluation also reflected their application to their coursework.
- The teachers monitored the progress of their students through observation, interaction, and the setting of assignments. Teachers' opinions of their students' progress are also informed through their correction of homework assignments, the results of class tests and the students' performance in the formal school and certificate examinations. The practice

of individual teachers of providing written constructive feedback comments on students' assignments should be universally adopted to ensure that students are provided with clear direction on how to improve the quality of their answers.

#### **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- History is accessible to all students in their Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate curricular programmes. It is recommended that a history module be provided in the school's TY programme in order to maintain students' contact with the subject and to increase the profile of the subject with a view to increasing the uptake of the History among senior cycle students.
- The timetabled provision for History is supportive of the subject. It is advocated that, where practical, incidences of the timetabling of the majority of a class's lesson periods for afternoon time slots be avoided.
- The school's four history teachers are deployed to teach History. This good practice enables the full complement of the history team to remain actively involved in teaching the subject.
- The formal school examinations that are organised enable the progress of students to be systematically tracked and recorded.
- The history teachers have a range of resources at their disposal including information and communication technology (ICT). A designated facility for the storage of history materials is recommended.
- The attendance of the history teachers at in-service training is accommodated.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The collaboration of the history teachers in appointing a co-ordinator and in documenting a department subject plan is commended. Currently a formal departmental meeting is convened annually. The practice of meeting formally to collaborate in subject planning should be further developed and the business of the meetings should be recorded.
- The history department plan is a key planning document that contains the yearly coursework schemes for History. The good work that has been invested in the plan should be continued. The planned yearly coursework schemes should be further developed to include details of the teaching and learning methodologies that will be incorporated into the study of each topic, the resources to be used and the learning outcomes to be achieved.
- The development of the plan should also include a section on forward planning for History and elaboration of the support provided for students with special educational needs. The information provided about the organisational framework of the department should outline the agreed responsibilities of the subject co-ordinator.
- The setting up of a shared electronic planning folder for History should be considered. The folder will facilitate easy access to history departmental planning documentation and the sharing of resources that have been prepared by individual members of the history team.

- There was careful planning for the lessons observed. The preparations included determination of the focus and format of the lessons, and the preparation of supplementary resources.

---

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