

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Italian
REPORT**

**Larkin Community College
Champions Avenue, Dublin 1
Roll number: 760770**

Date of inspection: 27 February 2014



**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 ITALIAN

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	26, 27 February 2014
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from very good to fair.
- There is a strong Italian subject department, consisting of four fully-qualified teachers.
- Subject planning and short-term planning for lessons are very good.
- Whole-school support for the subject is very good.
- The school's resources for the teaching and learning of Italian are very good.
- Students' oral competence in Italian is under-developed, and student attainment in general shows scope for improvement.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- A strategy to improve students' oral language competence should be developed as a matter of priority.
 - Department planning and teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) should focus on developing a wider range of communicative teaching and learning methodologies.
 - To promote learner autonomy among the students, the principles and practices of assessment for learning (AfL) should be embedded.
 - In line with the school's DEIS action plan, definite targets and related actions to improve students' examination attainment should be established.
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INTRODUCTION

Larkin Community College is a co-educational school under the auspices of City of Dublin Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 435 second-level students and participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action plan. The school offers Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, an optional Transition Year (TY), and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). A subject inspection in Italian was last carried out in 2001.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed ranged from very good to fair. In the majority of the lessons, the quality of teaching was good or very good. In a minority, there was considerable scope for development.
- The lessons observed were mostly very well prepared, and a good range of varied learning activities was provided for the students, including group work and pair work. Classroom management was very good in the majority of lessons. In a minority, the management of time and learning activities was less than effective.
- Where teaching was very good, high standards were set for the students and they were encouraged to achieve of their best. In most lessons, however, expectations regarding students' attainment could have been higher.
- In one lesson there was a particularly good warm-up revision activity, where each student had to prepare full, accurate sentences about a friend and then present them to the whole class. It is recommended that activities of this kind be used more widely.
- The teachers modelled very good spoken Italian, and most of the lessons were conducted through the target language. A minority of lessons, however, were conducted largely through English, with an over-reliance on translation. It is recommended that the Italian department aim to reduce translation to a minimum so that students may enjoy the experience of immersion in the target language.
- Although some students' oral production was very good, the use of the target language by the students for classroom communication was generally disappointing and their oral production skills were underdeveloped. A strategy to improve students' oral language competence should be developed as a matter of priority.
- Where appropriate, very good preparation for the certificate examinations was observed; for example, rehearsal of conversation in pairs and preparation of role-play scripts. To encourage and affirm their attainment in spoken Italian, it is recommended that students be afforded the opportunity to avail of the optional Junior Certificate oral examination.
- Some good examples of students' reflection on their learning were observed. It is recommended that teachers continue to promote learner autonomy in order to raise students' expectations and to give them greater responsibility for their own learning. The embedding of AfL techniques such as self-assessment based on student-friendly can-do learning objectives is recommended.
- A tendency was noted at times to work from the written word to the oral, rather than vice versa and to rely unduly on worksheets and printed matter in general at the expense of authentic oral communication. It is recommended that whenever possible, new language should be presented orally to begin with, using visuals, ICT, speech, gestures and real objects.

- At least part of every lesson should be devoted to the generation of authentic oral language, without books or handouts. One way to reduce the dependence on photocopies and written texts in general and to foster oral communication might be to have ‘paper-free’ lessons from time to time.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for Italian are very good. Almost all students in the school study Italian: it is offered in Junior Certificate, TY, Leaving Certificate and LCA.
- There is a strong, committed team of four fully-qualified teachers of Italian, three of whom are teaching the subject in the current school year. The teachers are imaginative and creative in finding ways to promote the students’ interest in Italian language and culture.
- There is a very good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to support students’ learning of Italian, including an exchange programme with a school in Bologna and a link with the Italian department of University College Dublin.
- The teachers’ work over the years in building up a very good range of teaching and learning resources for their subject is commended. These resources include many digital items accessible to the students. Students can set up their own digital folders and can submit projects and other work electronically.
- The Leaving Certificate higher and ordinary level classes run concurrently so as to allow students to change levels. This is very good practice.
- It is recommended that CPD for teachers of Italian, perhaps along with other language teachers in the school, should focus on developing a wider range of communicative methodologies for teaching and learning. Membership of the subject association is also recommended.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The Italian schemes of work are of a very good quality, and contain learning outcomes for each year group. Good records are kept of subject department meetings.
- The subject plan contains an analysis of students’ performance in the certificate examinations. Examination attainment is an area for development, particularly to increase the percentage of students taking higher level. It is recommended that, in line with the school’s DEIS action plan, definite targets and related actions to improve students’ examination attainment should be established.
- In further developing the subject plan, details of methodologies to promote communicative teaching and learning should be included.

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

Published June 2014

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board welcomes the report and will seek to implement the recommendations.

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 Italian department have already undertaken the following:

- 1) Increased use of target language in classes.
- 2) Implementation of “can do” statements to aid student progression.
- 3) Commitment made to J.C. oral optional exam.
- 4) Oral exams established within house exams.