

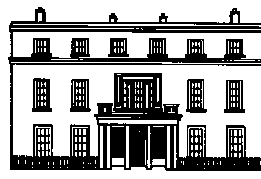
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT

Adamstown Community College
Adamstown, County Dublin

Roll number: 76097U

Date of inspection: 24 March 2015



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	23 and 24 March 2015
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• A preliminary evaluation meeting with the department of Irish coordinator• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with the students• Review of samples of the students' work and samples of their school diaries• Feedback to individual teachers• Feedback to the principal, to the deputy principal and to the Irish teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching was good or very good in all of the classes.
- The Irish department is coordinated effectively and the subject plan, including the development targets, is of very good quality.
- The assessment practice in place for Irish is a key strength.
- The management provide very good support for Irish and provision for the subject very good.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The ongoing development with regard to increasing student participation and attainment at the highest levels in certificate examinations should be continued.
- Questioning during class must be developed to support differentiation of learning and to ensure that certain students, commensurate with their ability, are further challenged in their learning.
- It is recommended that the language needed by the students to carry out pair work or group work through the medium of Irish be included in prior preparation.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 2009, Adamstown Community College is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the auspices of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. There are 864 students on the school's roll. The Transition Year Programme is optional in the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in all of the classes.
- The structure of the work was very good in most of the classes.
- In the majority of cases, clear learning intentions were shared with the students and they were informed of their homework at an appropriate time.
- The teachers made use of a very good range of methodologies and strategies to provide opportunities for, and to support, students' active participation.
- Although Irish was being used as the language of instruction and communication in all of the classes, it was clear in certain cases that more attention must be focused on its use among the students while they are cooperating in learning while engaged in tasks in pairs or in groups.
- There was a very positive and supportive atmosphere for learning in all of the classes and the students were greatly praised for their efforts.
- Print material in Irish and samples of the students' work were on display in the classrooms and this material was used very effectively in a couple of classes to support the learning, a practice that could be expanded.
- Low-order questioning dominated. A focus on the development of questioning practice, which will further support differentiation of learning, is recommended.
- In order to consolidate students' learning and develop their experience of using Irish spontaneously, it is recommended that they are conversed with regularly on topical matters related to their immediate environment, for example, while they are settling down for the class.
- The number of students undertaking Irish at higher level is increasing in both cycles. Improving the students' level of attainment at the highest level in both cycles has been identified as a learning target by the management and the Irish teaching staff.
- The Irish department's assessment practice, a practice that is rooted in assessment for learning is a key strength. Assessment is regularly carried out on the four main language skills in the case of all year-groups, the students' skills in carrying out peer-assessment are developed and work is undertaken to develop their awareness of themselves as language learners.
- The students' written work is corrected regularly and the best practice based on constructive feedback that was evident in certain cases could be expanded.
- A review of a sample of the students' diaries showed that it is necessary to ensure that students record their homework to support both their skills in organising themselves and the school's assessment/homework policy.
- In a minority of cases, care must be taken in the accuracy of the language exemplars presented to the students orally or in writing.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The level of provision for Irish is very good and the teachers' classrooms are all together – this creates a space in which Irish can be used informally.
- Irish is prominent in the school environment and the management supports a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular events for Irish.
- The allocation of students to mixed-ability classes in first year and in the Transition Year, the very good time provision available for the subject, concurrent timetabling in the other year groups and the management of student transfer between classes facilitate student access to the subject at the highest level.
- There is a very good provision of resources available, including Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- Strong emphasis is placed on the teachers' continuous professional development. The Irish teachers' participation in professional collaborative review is especially praised, a practice that is being developed as part of the whole-school policy.
- Analysis is carried out on student attainment in certificate and house examinations and the students' progress and attainment is discussed at meetings of the Irish department.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The Irish department functions effectively and the teachers recognise the opportunity the coordination of the department provides for their professional development with regard to curriculum organisation and for their leadership skills, a role they take in turn.
- There is a very good level of collaborative planning and cooperation among the Irish teaching staff and the discussion of pedagogy is especially commended.
- The Irish plan is of very good quality. In the development of plans for first year and the Transition Year especially, the team is advised to consider a wider range of topics related to the immediate environment of the students in order to support students' capacity to acquire the classroom meta-language and to tackle the language functions. A content-based approach such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) could be beneficial in that respect.

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 of the school 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, October 2015

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The senior management and Board of Management are happy with the content of the report. The board further confirms that it will oversee the implementations of the recommendations made in the report.