

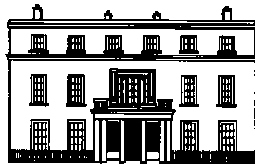
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Irish  
REPORT**

**Coláiste Chilliain  
Cluain Dolcáin, Baile Átha Cliath 22  
Roll number: 70100W**

**Date of inspection: 22 May 2012**



**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 IRISH**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	11& 22 May 2012
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Meeting with the subject coordinator and principal</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Review of samples students' work and school journals</li><li>• Feedback to individual teachers</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the majority of classes and fair in the remainder of classes observed.
- A sample of student journals showed that homework is not regularly assigned and a small number of constructive corrections were evident in student work.
- In the majority of cases, appropriate emphasis was placed on the development of student imagination and the use of media with which they were familiar.
- Two Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) students, who were on teaching practice in the school, had full responsibility for some classes.
- Almost every student undertakes higher level in the certificate examinations.
- The Irish department sets out schemes of work and common examinations and the main language skills are assessed.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Best practice based on differentiation, on questions which support the higher order cognitive development of students and the principles of assessment for learning is recommended to develop and extend learning.
- To support the progressive development of learning, the use of language functions included in the syllabuses and reference to the primary curriculum for Irish – *Curaclam na Bunscoile: Gaeilge* – are recommended in order to set out a framework for the learning outcomes expected at the different stages in learning.
- As in 2009, it is recommended again that teaching and learning strategies and methodologies be included on the agenda of department meetings, and a brief account of the discussion noted in the minutes.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste Chilliaín is an all-Irish, coeducational post primary school. The school operates under the patronage of the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and has an enrolment of 400 students. The Transition Year programme is mandatory in the school. A Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was carried out in the school in 2009.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in the majority of classes and fair in the remainder.
- Classes were most effective where links were created with prior learning; clear and challenging learning outcomes were shared with students; well organised tasks created opportunities for differentiation and collaboration in learning and an appropriate pace of work.
- In the classes where the quality of teaching and learning was only fair, there was need for: better structure; appropriate planning and preparation for differentiated learning to serve the variety of levels of student proficiency and learning styles; the full class period to be used in a worthwhile manner for the benefit of learning development.
- In the majority of cases, good efforts were made to encourage and develop student imagination and to present the content by means with which they were familiar.
- Questioning was used to assess the progress of learning during classes and used very effectively in some cases. To optimise this strategy it is recommended that teachers focus on questions which support the development of student higher order thinking skills and allow students time to provide answers.
- Student behaviour was very good and in almost every case good relationships based on mutual respect were evident between teachers and students.
- In some lessons students asked questions about the class content. This practice should be fostered and extended.
- Although homework was assigned in the classes observed, a review of a sample of student journals showed that this is not regular practice.
- A small number of constructive corrections were evident on student written work.
- While homework and assessment policies are of good quality, in order to extend best practice it is recommended that practices based on assessment for learning principles be included in the next review of the homework policy. This recommendation was made previously in the WSE report of 2009.
- In a minority of cases it is recommended that care be taken with the accuracy of language in the materials presented to students.
- Almost every student undertakes the higher level in Irish and the good practice of analysing the results of the certificate examinations is carried out. The levels of student achievement in the Junior Certificate, where the majority of students attain the higher grades, are very good. In the Leaving Certificate there is scope for an increase in the numbers achieving the higher grades.

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

- Provision of time, facilities and resources for Irish is very good.
- Various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are organised to develop students' cultural awareness and their experience of using Irish outside formal classes. Effective use is made of the school environment to support learning.
- Two PDE students, who were on teaching practice in the school, had full responsibility for some classes. It is strongly recommended that school management avoids this type of arrangement.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- In keeping with good practice, teachers rotate the role of subject coordinator. It is recommended that teachers would undertake this role for a three-year period.
- It is recommended that the department agrees an action plan with clear development objectives for every period and that the action plan be used to direct the self-evaluation process.
- Minutes of department meetings are recorded. As was recommended in 2009, it is recommended that teaching and learning strategies and methodologies be included on the agenda of meetings, and what is discussed or agreed noted in the minutes.
- The good practice of setting out common schemes of work for the various year groups and using common examinations operates in the Irish department. These schemes of work are of a high standard.
- In the further development of the schemes, including the TY scheme, and as recommended in 2009, it is recommended again that the learning outcomes expected at the various stages in learning, and for every term, be specified and show the development in learning year on year.
- To support learning from primary school forward, consultation with the primary curriculum for Irish – *Curaclam na Bunscoile: Gaeilge* –and with other subject departments in the school is recommended, with the purpose of developing a special learning module for first-year students in first term. Results should be used as a baseline for planning first-year learning for the remainder of the school year. An approach based on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) should be used here and in TY. It was recommended in the WSE report of 2009 that teachers of Irish discuss the CLIL approach.
- Management has taken appropriate steps to prepare the team to implement the requirements of the national numeracy and literacy strategy.
- Plans are working documents. As part of the planning work and to support self evaluation, monitoring and review practices must be developed. This includes the use of student achievement in house and certificate examinations.
- Planning and preparation for the majority of classes was very good.
- The main language skills are included in the assessment process and teachers maintain regular account of student achievement.

- A very good system of recording student attendance and other records operates in the school. However, every member of the subject department should, as a matter of common practice, create live records.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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; a response was not received from the board.