

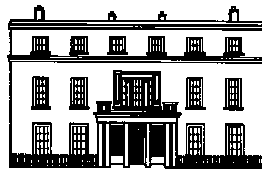
**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Irish**  
**REPORT**

**Coláiste Pobail Setanta, Phibblestown,**  
**Clonee, Dublin 15**

**Roll number: 76098W**

**Date of inspection: 1 May 2015**



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

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

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	30 April and 1 May 2015
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Preliminary evaluation meeting with the Irish department's coordinator</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during seven class periods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Examination of examples of the students' work and examples of their school diaries</li><li>• Feedback do individual teachers</li><li>• Feedback to the principal, the deputy principal and the Irish teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in most of the classes and it was fairly good in a minor number of cases.
- Irish has a very high status in the school.
- The Irish department is coordinated effectively and the planning work for the subject is of a high standard.
- There were plenty of exemplary examples of assessment for learning as a regular part of the work of the Irish Department and proper emphasis was placed on the formative and summative assessment.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The language essential for the students in co-operative learning through Irish in pair work and group work tasks should be taken into account at the planning stage.
  - The students' confidence in speaking Irish and in the accuracy of their pronunciation needs to be developed.
  - In planning for the first year, more focus must be placed on the immediate environment and on the relevant language functions.
  - It is recommended that the excellent examples observed of the use of questioning to support learning differentiation and the development of students' higher order thinking skills become general practice.
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste Pobail Setanta is a co-educational post-primary school established in 2008 and which operates under the auspices of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire's Education and Training Board. There are 913 students enrolled in the school. The Transition Year Programme is provided on an optional basis.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or very good in most of the classes and it was fairly good in a minor number of cases.
- The pre-preparation done in most of the classes was of a high standard. In a minor number of classes more focus needs to be placed on the students' learning requirements during the planning and to be prepared to differentiate the material accordingly.
- The work was very well structured in most of the classes.
- It was evident that the teachers had a suitable range of methodologies and these were used effectively in the majority of cases, which ensured that the students were active in their learning.
- In all instances the teachers used effective strategies to check and underpin pre-learning and to help the students start using Irish before the class begins formally.
- In line with the whole school policy which supports the promotion of the assessment for learning, the learning goals were disseminated effectively to the students in more than half of the classes. In the other cases, particular attention needs to be made to the language that is used when disseminating the goals and the students' understanding of them needs to be checked.
- Plenty of opportunities were created for the students in co-operative learning in all of the classes. However, while planning, it is important to ensure that the language essential for them to undertake pair work or group work tasks through Irish is taken into account.
- Learning progress was assessed effectively through questioning in the instances where questions of different styles were used; this challenged the students appropriately in line with their ability. There is scope for questioning which focuses in particular on supporting the development of students' higher order thinking skills to be used as general practice.
- In some instances, students asked questions on the class material. It is recommended that this practice be expanded and as part of the teachers' development of questioning, that the students' own skills to ask and assess questions be developed.
- Adequate efforts were made to create speaking opportunities for the students in all instances. However, it would be desirable to hear them speak more in some cases and, in general, they could be supported in improving their pronunciation, as was done in one instance.
- Homework based on the lesson material was given in all the classes and the examination of an example of the students' diaries illustrated that regular homework is given in the majority of cases. In line with school policy and as was evident in most instances, the very good practice of checking that students record homework should be implemented as general practice.

- In the examination of an example of the students' written work, exemplary examples of constructive corrections could be seen; these corrections identified what was done well or correctly and gave direction for improvement based on gaps in the learning.
- The students' written work in some cases demonstrated that there was too much emphasis on translation to English. It is recommended that this practice be avoided..
- There was a very positive and supportive atmosphere for learning in all of the classes.
- The classroom environments included displays of samples of student work and print material. Very effective use was made of these materials in some cases to support student learning.
- The students' level of participation in the certificate examinations at higher level is increasing and it has been identified as a goal by the school to add to the number achieving the highest grades.
- A good level of emphasis is placed on formative and summative assessment.
- Students' progress in the four main language skills is regularly assessed. This very good practice includes the assessment of students' oral and aural competences in in-house assessments in the case of each year group and students' participation in the optional oral in the Junior Certificate since 2010.
- The students' skills to undertake self-assessment and peer-assessment are fostered and in those cases excellent practice was observed where successful criteria were disseminated to the students.
- The teachers carefully analyse the students' achievements in house and state examinations and the implementation of the work plans are monitored and reviewed accordingly.
- In the interests of further improving the house examination papers, and in line with what has been said already in relation to questioning, it is important to ensure that there is a clear assessment aim in the range and type of questions used.

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

- The status of Irish is very high in the school and the school has recently achieved the award *Gaelbhratach*. Irish is used regularly in school activities and it is visible in the surroundings.
- Very good provision of time and resources is available for the subject and great support is given to the staff to provide co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The students' access to Irish at the higher level is very good in the two cycles.
- A strong emphasis is placed on the teachers' continuous professional development and in particular on sharing new learnings and best practice through peer learning. Furthermore, the role of learning leader has been assigned to a member of the department.
- For the most part the teachers' spoken Irish ability was appropriate for teaching purposes but in some cases there is a need to pay attention to the accuracy of the examples presented to the students.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The Irish department is effectively co-ordinated.
- It is evident that there is a very good level of shared planning and co-operation amongst the staff and the regular discussions on pedagogy are particularly commendable.
- The Irish plan is of high quality as are the plans for the year groups and the different programmes, which set out examples of learning results in a differentiated manner.
- In the review of the plan for first year, it is recommended that the order of topics are reconsidered that there is reflection on the use that could be made of a subject-based approach such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.