

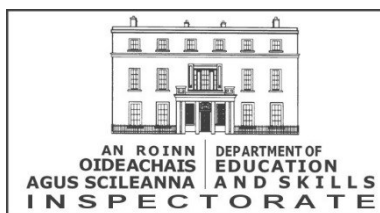
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Saint Tiernan's College
Crossmolina, County Mayo
Roll number: 72100J**

Date of Inspection: 26 January 2016



REPORT ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN IRISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of Inspection	26 January 2016
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

- Most lessons were characterised by good teaching and learning methodologies and exemplary teaching practices were in use in a significant minority of cases. There was also scope to develop the methods used in another small number of lessons.
- The quality of the teaching and learning resources that have been developed for the language had significant strengths and these additional learning aids are shared between department members.
- Good systems are in use for the assessment of learning in which all the language skills are recognised for each year group.
- Great progress had been made in most curriculum plans but a small number were in need of development.
- The department has designed an action plan based on the priorities that have been identified by them for this school year.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The department would find it beneficial to discuss teaching and learning methodologies in order to develop and share practices between department members.
 - The assessment for learning aspect of the department's practice is the one most in need of development in the case of the majority of lessons observed.
 - It is recommended that certain curricular plans be developed to teach the language in an integrated thematic manner and that the best curricular plans be used as exemplars to guide this work.
 - It would be beneficial to devise attainable steps in order to achieve progress in the identified areas of the action plan for the development of the language.
-

INTRODUCTION

Saint Tiernan's College is a co-educational school that operates under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board. This school is one of two schools providing second level education in this town and it is attended by 190 students. An optional Transition Year programme forms part of the school curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The teaching and learning techniques were of good quality in most lessons and in less than half the classes exemplary teaching and learning methodologies were in use. There was scope for the development of methods in another small number of lessons observed.
- The learning objectives were formally shared with the students at the beginning of the lessons as part of the teachers' normal practice and in the case of two lessons the teacher carried out a comprehensive review of the learning objectives with the students.
- Best practice was evident in lessons where the content being presented was developed in an incremental manner, where all the language skills had been integrated, where the class work proceeded with purposeful pace and where very good pre-skill work had been carried out with the students, which enabled them to complete the different tasks.
- Pre-skill work should be carried out for all teaching and learning activities. It would also benefit learning if post-skill work were carried out as normal practice in all lessons.
- The needs of learners were well catered for during the task based work in all classes.
- Effective questioning strategies were employed in most lessons and using such an approach on a more widespread basis would be very beneficial.
- The teachers used Irish in all classroom interactions. In the majority of classes good practices were used to draw students' attention to language accuracy as well as points of grammar and dialect.
- There was limited evidence in the lessons observed of agreed whole school strategies for literacy and numeracy.
- Mechanical corrections of students' work had been carried out in most copy books and there were also copy books where monitoring was carried out by means of a tick only. It is recommended that this practice be reviewed.
- Examples of formative feedback were in evidence in one set of copy books of those collected at random in each class. It was reported that students are given oral feedback during lessons and there was evidence of this in one class.
- It would be beneficial if the department were to have a discussion on their expectations in relation to providing developmental feedback in writing to different year groups and agree an approach accordingly.
- In order to foster student responsibility in the assessment process, it is recommended that more use be made of self-assessment and peer-assessment methods with all year groups.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The teaching and learning of Irish is well provided for in the school and all the teachers are experienced teaching both cycles and at the different examination levels.

- All teachers teaching the subject are Irish graduates and very active in continuous professional development.
- The resources being developed and shared for the teaching and learning of Irish are of an exemplary standard.
- Thirteen per cent of the overall number of students are exempted from Irish in accordance with the provisions of Circular M10/94 and the arrangements in relation to the students who are exempted are satisfactory.
- The students in this school take part in a good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and it is the department's aim that the students experience Irish as a living language, as well as fostering the students' interest in Irish and in Irish culture.
- The quality of the learning environment in the classrooms was good in regard to the amount and range of the language on display in all classrooms.
- The department uses comprehensive methods for the assessment of learning on a regular basis. The four language skills are included in the tests carried out with all students. The students' oral competence is specified in the reports that issue to homes twice during the school year.
- The teachers carry out very good analysis of the results of the certificate examinations in Irish in the context of the national norms. It is recommended that the results of this analysis be taken into account when an action plan for the development of the language is being agreed by the department.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Very good progress had been made in most curricular plans but a small number were in need of development.
 - The curricular plans showed evidence of being working documents and included teachers' reflective annotations.
 - It is recommended that certain curricular plans be developed to teach the language in an integrated thematic manner and that the best curricular plans be used as exemplars to guide this work.
 - Good work has been carried out on the programme of study for Transition Year. It is recommended that the *European Language Portfolio* be included as one of the assessment tools to be used during this year.
 - The department has designed an action plan based on the priorities that they have identified for this school year. It would be very beneficial now to devise attainable steps in order to achieve progress in the identified areas.
 - The quality of short-term planning and the quality of preparation for lessons ranged from good to very good based on practice in most lessons. There was need for development in a minority of cases.
-

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 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 2016

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

School management continue to support all CPD in relation to this subject but paying further attention to aspects of AFL and AOL.

The whole staff have already had in-service this term on numeracy and formative assessment.

We feel that summative and formative assessment work side by side and both have their place.

The Irish Department will put further emphasis on SnaG to build on the good work already taking place.

As part of Croke Park hours, time will be given to teaches to share teaching and learning initiatives not only within their departments but also as a whole staff. This will give an opportunity to further collaborative teaching at a whole school level.

We intend to implement the 'Two Stars and A Wish' initiative for assessment of homework within our dept.

We will review our schemes and ensure all reflect a thematic approach.

The European Language Portfolio is currently being reviewed by the department as a possible assessment tool for TY.