

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

**Subject Inspection of History
REPORT**

**Coláiste Chilliain
Clondalkin, Dublin 22
Roll number: 70100W**

Date of inspection: 26 April 2013



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	26 April 2013
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 four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed.
- Timetabled provision for History is very good and arrangements for student access to the subject are very satisfactory.
- The teaching team for History is enthusiastic and committed to the subject.
- A comprehensive system of assessment and reporting is in operation in the school.
- Teachers are highly commended for the history website they have developed.
- There is excellent co-operation within the history department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that targets are set to encourage an increased number of students to undertake higher level in the Junior Certificate examination.
 - It is recommended that History be a mandatory subject in the Transition Year programme.
-

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Chilliaín is an all-Irish coeducational school operating under the trusteeship of the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee. The school offers the Junior Certificate, Transition Year and the established Leaving Certificate programmes. In the school year 2012-2013 a total of 385 students were enrolled. All students take History for Junior Certificate, and the subject is optional in Transition Year and Leaving Certificate.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was very good in the lessons observed.
- Teachers presented lesson content in a clear manner and in the majority of lessons observed recapitulation of learning took place. This good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- Teacher preparation and planning for lessons was very good. Excellent use was made of resources including maps, film clips and a *Prezi* presentation. The excellent work of teachers in creating and accessing resources is to be commended.
- The emphasis placed on consolidating vocabulary was noted in the lessons observed. In each case the special vocabulary relating to the topics was presented clearly by teachers to their students.
- In-class questioning was of a high standard and questions were spread across all members of the class. Students were comfortable answering and posing questions. Student responses in class and their written work in copybooks showed high quality learning.
- In the lessons observed students were given the opportunity to be active in their own learning. This is good practice, for example, in one class students worked in pairs on a worksheet; in another lesson, students worked individually on questions relating to historical documents. In the majority of classes appropriate balance was achieved between teacher talk and student activity. This is in keeping with good teaching practice.
- A good atmosphere obtained in every classroom visited and good rapport was evident between teachers and students.
- Effective assessment methods were in use, and teachers had a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. Homework is regularly assigned and, for the most part, the work is corrected in accordance with the principles of assessment for learning. This good practice should be extended.
- An analysis of certificate examination results in undertaken and generally students are successful in the subject. However, at Junior Certificate level it was noted that a high percentage of students achieve an A or a B on the ordinary level paper. This indicates that a number of these students would be successful at higher level. This issue should be addressed and targets set to encourage an increased number of students to undertake higher level in the Junior Certificate.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabled provision for History is very good. Junior cycle students have three class periods per week and Leaving Certificate students have five class periods.

- Transition Year students who choose History have two timetabled periods per week in the subject. This is satisfactory. It is recommended that History be a mandatory subject in the Transition Year programme, even as a module, so that students would have an opportunity to experience the subject at this level.
- Arrangements for student access to History in senior cycle are very good. Students are offered an open choice of the optional subjects and option bands are then created to maximise students' choices. This is good practice.
- It is evident that the teaching team for History is enthusiastic and committed to the subject. Arrangements for the induction of new teachers to the school are very satisfactory.
- A comprehensive assessment and reporting system operates in the school. Common house examinations are held biannually. A significant aspect of the assessment procedures noted was the assessment cards which are sent home on a regular basis. These provide parents with important information on student progress.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A subject coordinator has been appointed; regular meetings are held and minutes of these meetings are available.
- Excellent co-operation is evident within the department. For example, teachers worked collaboratively to prepare a workbook for students.
- Teachers are highly commended for the history website they have developed for students. Students can access notes, presentations and other materials on this website.
- The subject plan was made available on the day of the evaluation. There is appropriate emphasis within the plan on aims and objectives. Schemes of work are set out for each year group and include references for resources, and, for certain year groups, learning objectives. This good practice should be continued.
- There was evidence that a good deal of work has been done in the department to develop student literacy and numeracy. In addition, long-term planning for the subject was evident. However, this information was not available in the department folder. These good practices should be recorded in the department plan as well as minutes, accounts of assessment procedures and the arrangements in place for students with lower levels of ability. In this way, this plan would be of great assistance to newly appointed teachers.
- Very good planning is in place for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. At the time of the evaluation visit for example, teachers were planning a history trip to Trim for junior cycle students. Senior cycle students are offered opportunity to compete in essay competitions and in quizzes organised by the History Teachers' Association of Ireland.

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.

Published December 2013