

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Subject Inspection of Irish  
REPORT**

**Coláiste na Rinne  
Ringsend, Dublin 4  
Roll number: 70200D**

**Date of inspection: 24 September 2013**



**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**

---

**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	24 September 2013
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with Principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to Principal and teacher</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The use of Irish as the language of management, teaching and communication was good on the whole in the classes observed.
- Active learning formed a central element of all the lessons observed and the lessons were accordingly well paced.
- A broad range of strategies was utilised during lessons so as to encourage the students to speak the target language and this approach is commended.
- Use was made of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in some lessons but its use on a more extensive scale would greatly enhance the students' learning in general.
- Significant work has been done on drawing up comprehensive work schemes and this work is commended.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is recommended that more language exemplars and other materials would be clearly displayed during lessons as a support for the students' learning.
  - As a means of catering for a wide range of abilities in Irish, it is recommended that differentiated comprehensive notes should be provided for the Leaving Certificate repeat students.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste na Rinne is a multid denominational, co-educational, second-level school with a current enrolment of 156 students, under the patronage of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board. A range of programmes is offered including the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Junior Certificate, the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) and a repeat Leaving Certificate class comprising up to 35 students in the current year. The college also provides Post Leaving Certificate courses in computer studies and 2 full-time FETAC level 5 courses in computers and administration.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The use of Irish as the language of management, instruction and communication was good on the whole in the classes observed. More care should be taken, however, with the use of translation into English. A broader range of strategies should be gradually implemented with a view to avoiding the overuse of translation.
- Learning objectives were listed on the board at the beginning of all lessons and the students were informed of what would be undertaken during the lessons. This is good practice. At the end of one of the lessons these objectives were reviewed; this is an effective approach and its use should be extended to all classes.
- Active learning formed a core element in all lessons and included a range of varied activities which encouraged students to participate in their own learning. This approach is greatly commended. The lessons were well paced and there was good continuity in the learning.
- A range of teaching resources was used during lessons, including ICT and this is commended. The use of ICT could be further extended and developed as a support for students' learning. Rather than having to continually write grammar lessons or instructions on the board, this work could be prepared beforehand and displayed with the help of technology.
- Strategies implemented during lessons, in order to expand students' vocabulary, are commendable. Particular praise is due for the language template and profile used in one case. However, it is recommended that students would be asked to draw up profiles of their sporting heroes and television and music stars, so as to ensure that they have a real interest in the subject matter. Such an approach would support students' interest in the language and the raising of their standard of learning accordingly.
- Some support material was on display on the walls of the classrooms so as to assist the students' learning. It is recommended that the range of materials should be expanded significantly in order to assist students to compose sentences, either written or spoken. The teacher should refer to this display material on an on-going basis during lessons and direct the students' attention to it, so as to help them to compose accurate sentences from the beginning.
- It must be ensured, however, that the display material and the material shown on the white board are clearly visible from the back of the classroom. It should also be ensured that the students are able to hear the teacher, and one another, clearly.
- Some use was made of spoken repetition during the lessons observed and this approach is commended. It is essential that the use of repetition should be greatly extended so that the

teacher can be sure that the students' pronunciation is accurate and that they are able to say new words and phrases correctly.

- It was obvious from the copybooks examined that homework is regularly assigned and corrected. Homework, based on the work done in class, was assigned in the course of the lessons observed, thereby ensuring good continuity in the work.

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

- The provision for Irish on the school timetable is generally satisfactory and five periods are allocated to all year groups, including a double period each for second, third and sixth year. While single periods would ensure that there is daily contact with the target language, a double period affords an opportunity for the teacher to implement activities which require a longer time period than a regular class period.
- Because of the small number of students presently enrolled in the school, all classes are taught in mixed-ability situations. This creates particular challenges for the teacher but differentiation strategies are implemented in the Irish classes and this is commended. The effectiveness of these strategies should be reviewed on a continuing basis, so as to ensure that the best use is made of the teaching time.
- Seachtain na Gaeilge was organised in the school last year for the first time and it was reported that it was highly successful. The school management is committed to raising the profile of Irish in the school and among the students. It is recommended that continuing discussion should take place on ways in which this aim could be supported. The greater the emphasis placed on the use of Irish, the better the teacher will succeed in enhancing the students' interest in learning the language.
- Last year, oral Irish examinations were introduced for all students at Christmas and in summer. This is good practice and it is recommended that the marks attained in the oral examinations should be shown as a separate item in the reports sent to parents.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- A plan for the teaching and learning of Irish was made available on the day of the evaluation. The work completed on the work schemes is highly commended but more work needs to be done on the subject plan. It is recommended that the schemes and the plan should be written totally in Irish.
- Only one teacher teaches Irish this year. However, it was reported that there is good collaboration between the Irish teacher and the teacher of French as regards effective teaching strategies and approaches. This co-operation is commended.
- It is intended that a comprehensive analysis of results in the state examinations will be carried out and that they will be compared with national norms. The results will be made available to interested parties. The school management is committed to focusing on the attainments of students and to significantly increasing the numbers of students taking higher-level papers in the various subjects over a particular period of time.

Draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the Principal and subject teacher 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 May 2014*

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The School Board and CDET B wish to acknowledge with gratitude the inspection report. We consider the process of the inspection to have been very beneficial to the school and especially to the subject department of Irish.

With regard to the contents of the report and its constituent parts: Teaching and Learning, Subject Provision and Whole-school Support, and Planning and Preparation, we find the observations to be accurate and comprehensive. We feel the comments are very fair, very realistic and well-thought out and will serve as a very useful reference document for the school and teachers into the future. It has been a very supportive experience for the school.

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The School Management and the Subject Teacher will hold a series of meetings to discuss the findings and recommendations of the report. This will lead to an action plan that will be incorporated into the subject plan for Irish and also inform our plan to increase the usage of Irish across the whole school. We will report on our progress to incorporate this report's findings and recommendations to our School Board and to the CDET B.

We believe a key to achieving successful outcomes for students in Irish is to increase their interest in the language, both within the setting of the classroom and in the whole school. We believe that as students' interest in the language increases, so too does their motivation to learn and use it. We want them to enjoy using the language.

**In the classroom**, we aim to continue to use techniques of differentiation to manage the mixed-ability situation. We will incorporate all of the recommendations including the request for more language exemplars on display. We are eager to increase our use of techniques associated with Assessment for Learning in all our classrooms, including the Irish classroom. We believe that timely and meaningful feedback to learners, especially perhaps in language learning, is fundamental to their progress and enjoyment. Also, in general, we are keen to increase the development of oral and aural skills through effective use of digital media in the classroom.

The main way we are aiming to increase our promotion of the Irish language **across the whole school** is by expanding activities which were initiated during Seachtain na Gaeilge. This will include increasing the amount of signage, posters and displays in the Irish language around the college, bringing in some guest speakers who use Irish in their working lives, increasing traditional music, song and dance activities and, in general, incorporating an Irish language element into any whole-school extra-curricular and co-curricular events, where the opportunity arises. We also aim to organise and sponsor periodic trips to Gaeltacht areas. In addition to this, we aim to increase awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of Irish in our students' homes by providing parents with free classes in Irish language through our Adult Education Service.

Finally, we agree with the findings and we will follow the recommendations as outlined in the report.