

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Subject Inspection of Irish  
REPORT**

**Castlerea Community School  
Castlerea  
County Roscommon  
Roll number: 91493P**

**Date of inspection: 21 May 2013**



**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>Date of inspection</b>	21 May 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 four class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- There were very good teaching and learning practices in half of the lessons observed and good techniques were employed in the remaining half.
- Strengths are evident in the provision and support provided for the teaching and learning Irish in the school.
- Very good use was made of both short term planning and preparation in all the classes visited during the inspection.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is recommended that more strategies be employed for the assessment of and for learning by the entire department.
- It is recommended that the four major language skills be included in regular tests and in summative assessment from first year to Leaving Certificate.
- It is recommended that curricular plans be further developed to teach the four main language skills as well as the various aspects of courses in an integrated and thematic manner.
- It would be beneficial when short-term planning is being carried out that specific learning objectives which cater for the range of abilities in various class groups be chosen.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Caslteara Community School is a co-educational school. It is the only secondary school providing second level education in the catchment area of this town. There are 438 students enrolled and an optional Transition Year programme forms part of the school's curriculum.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- Teaching and learning techniques used in the classes during the inspection were either very good or good.
- All teachers shared the learning objectives with the students at the beginning of the lessons and one teacher carried out a feedback session at the end of the lesson. This practice is commendable and its further use is recommended in order to enable the students to identify their own learning outcomes.
- During short term planning, it is important to choose specific learning objectives which cater for the range of abilities in various class groups and to include objectives about the amount of new language to be learned.
- Variety in teaching and learning activities was observed which created communicative opportunities for the students. The vast majority of the teachers attended to the gaps in learners' knowledge when they were completing collaborative tasks. It is recommended that more use be made of these techniques.
- Most of the teachers carried out very good pre-skill work thus enabling the students to comprehend the texts. It would be very worthwhile to do similar pre-skill work before completing a reading activity.
- Good use was made of both ICT resources and the board during lessons.
- Teachers of all classes employed Irish as the medium of instruction. Good procedures were in place to draw students' attention to linguistic accuracy and points of grammar in all classes. The strategies to enable students to pronounce new words by breaking them into syllables are commended.
- It was evident in the copybooks and textbooks observed that there is an overdependence on the use of translation in many of them. It is recommended that this practice be reviewed.
- There was a very supportive learning environment in all rooms where Irish is taught. It is also recommended that the vocabulary required by students to express themselves, to clarify misunderstandings and to offer opinions should also be displayed also.
- All teachers had very good classroom management skills and there was a supportive atmosphere of learning in all classes.
- Developmental work was evident in all copybooks reviewed. Mechanical corrections were made and grades awarded as a guide to the merit of the work. It is strongly recommended that more strategies for the assessment of and for learning be employed by all members of the department.

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

- There are evident strengths in the provision and support provided for the teaching and learning Irish in the school.
- All teachers of Irish in the school are graduates of Irish and have experience of teaching both cycles and the different examination levels.
- It is commendable that the Irish staff participate in continuing professional development at various levels, including the inservice courses of the Second Level Support Service for Irish. It is recommended that the department make more use of the methodologies suggested at such training workshops.
- Ten per cent of the student body have received exemptions from Irish in accordance with the provisions of Circular M10/94
- Based on an examination which students sit before coming into first year and they are put into class groups according to state examination levels. It is recommended that this practice be reviewed on a very regular basis and that the advantages for students to be in mixed ability classes until the end of the Junior Certificate be included in reviews.
- The department has developed good aids and resources. It is recommended that the department regularly renew these aids and resources and that reference be made to the list compiled by *An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta*.
- The students participate in a good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities during the school year. In-school projects are organised and competitions and events outside the school are also regularly attended.
- There are good systems developed for formative and summative assessment for Irish. It is recommended that the four major language skills be included in regular tests and in summative assessment from first year to Leaving Certificate.
- The teachers have been analysing the results of the certificate examinations in Irish for a number of years. It is recommended that this analysis be one of the main sources to inform language planning.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Good work has been carried out in all curricular planning to the extent that the topics to be taught are articulated in terms of learning objectives for the students. It is recommended that curricular plans be further developed to teach the four main language skills as well as the various aspects of courses in an integrated and thematic manner.
- It is also recommended that the methodologies, resources and modes of assessment be detailed in the curricular plans.
- Good planning has been carried out for TY, which provide the students with an innovative teaching and learning experience during this year.
- The department should discuss their priorities and then devise an action plan based on them and on the recommendations of this report.
- Very good use was made of both short term planning and preparation in all the classes visited during the inspection.

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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.

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