

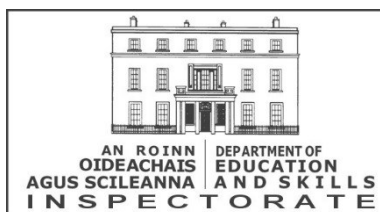
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Spanish
REPORT**

**The Teresian School
Donnybrook, Dublin 4.
Roll number: 60892G**

Date of inspection: 4 April 2016



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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	4 April 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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good and the linguistic competence of the Spanish teachers was of a very high standard.
- Teachers used Spanish as the main language of instruction.
- Despite being very confident communicators in the target language, some students used English at times in class with each other and with the teachers.
- Subject provision for Spanish is very good.
- A good start has been made to planning in the department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should encourage students to use Spanish as their main language of communication in class, and students should avail of all opportunities afforded them to develop their oral Spanish.
- To build on the practice observed, the subject department should develop collaborative plans, common assessments and common examinations for each year-group, including Transition Year.

INTRODUCTION

The Teresian School is a Catholic fee-paying secondary school for girls, established in 1965, with a current enrolment of 211 students. The study of a modern language is obligatory in all years. All students study Spanish in first year and the language is offered as an option up to Leaving Certificate. The school provides a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. A wide range of activities designed to promote engagement in the learning of all four language skills was observed in lessons.
- The linguistic competence of the Spanish teachers was of a very high standard.
- Learning intentions were shared orally with students in all lessons. It is recommended that this good practice be further extended by revisiting learning intentions during lessons and reviewing them at the end.
- In one lesson, new vocabulary was explained through Spanish definitions and students were asked to provide synonyms. This is very good practice and should be used in all lessons to minimise the need for translation into English.
- Very good practice was seen in one lesson, where there was excellent exploitation of a current Spanish film trailer which was related to the topic being studied. New vocabulary and colloquial expressions were reinforced and the inclusion of higher-order questions challenged the more able students.
- In another lesson new vocabulary was introduced with pictures and reinforced with a related oral grammar activity. Links were made to prior learning and cross-curricular language learning which developed students' language awareness.
- A board game was used to very good effect in one lesson to develop and reinforce the grammatical topic being studied.
- Teachers used Spanish as the main language of instruction. However, occasionally, translation was used unnecessarily. Excessive use of translation should be avoided and teachers should share strategies for avoiding the use of English translation in lessons.
- When the inspector interacted with students, many were very confident communicators in the language. However, some of these same students used English as their main language of communication in class with each other and with the teachers. Students need to accept an appropriate level of responsibility for maintaining and further developing their oral competence in Spanish. It is recommended that teachers encourage students to use Spanish as the main language of communication in lessons.
- All classes are of mixed ability throughout the school and a range of abilities was noted in lessons. The department liaises with the special needs department and the use of differentiation strategies was evidenced during the course of the evaluation. For example, the planning of one lesson incorporated a very effective vocabulary review with pictures designed to be inclusive for students with dyslexia.

- A review of student work revealed a variation in assessment practices by teachers. Best practice was seen where teachers made written formative suggestions on how students could improve their work. This approach should be adopted by all teachers.
- TY students are entered for the *Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera* (DELE) examination offered by the *Instituto Cervantes*. This offers students an external international qualification in Spanish which encourages student engagement.
- Homework is set regularly, and students are assessed periodically in class, formally and informally.
- Students develop their numeracy skills by converting fractions to percentages in their written work and class-test scores. There is scope to further develop approaches to numeracy in Spanish.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision for Spanish is very good.
- Students have the option to study two languages. All students study both French and Spanish in first year and may choose to continue the study of both languages to Leaving Certificate.
- The school offers a range of co-curricular activities in Spanish which encourage student engagement with the language. The school regularly enters a team into the Spanish Debating League, which provides an opportunity to extend more able students.
- The school has links with Teresian Association schools in Spain and an exchange programme is offered to TY students.
- Currently, teachers set their own exams. In order for all students to have access to the same curriculum, it is recommended that the department develop common assessments and examinations for each year group. In-school examinations should assess speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Regular attendance by teachers at continuous professional development events was evidenced by certificates in the subject department folder.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- A good start has been made to planning. Plans are theme-led with references to language and cultural objectives. Year plans include general references to methodologies, differentiation and literacy. Some year plans are more specific and provide details of resources to be used for each topic, which is good practice. It is recommended that this good work be further progressed by referencing theme-specific methodologies, resources and assessments, to include any differentiated resources used. These could be hyperlinked to the school's shared-learning platform.
- The TY Spanish subject plan currently provides a broad overview of content to be covered during the year. The department has devised modules which are of particular relevance to their school in addition to other task-based modules. Currently the DELE is taught as a stand-alone module. The department might consider ways of integrating the

language content of the DELE course into the other modules. The department should further develop the TY plan to include time-bound, theme-specific methodologies, resources and assessments, along the lines described above.

- Currently, teachers have individual plans. In order for all students to have access to the same curriculum, it is recommended that the department develop collaborative plans for each year group.
- Lessons observed were well planned. They were well prepared and had a good pace.
- Communication with parents is good, via school reports and parent-teacher meetings.

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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.