

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Irish**  
**REPORT**

**Old Bawn Community School**  
**Tallaght, Dublin 24**

**Roll number: 91336W**

**Date of inspection: 6th of April 2016**



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

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

---

**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	5 and 6 April 2016
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• A preliminary evaluation meeting with members of the Irish department and the principal</li><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during eight class periods</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with the students</li><li>• Review of samples of the students' work and samples of their school diaries</li><li>• Feedback to individual teachers</li><li>• Feedback to management and the Irish teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged between very good and fair, good in the majority of classes.
- Irish was used as the medium of instruction in all classes but it was clear in many cases that this was not the students' usual experience.
- Good use was made of technology and the work was appropriately paced in the majority of classes.
- Very good time provision was made for Irish.
- The plan for Irish was of fair quality.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is recommended that a full review is carried out on planning for Irish teaching and learning in all year-groups and that clarity is provided with regard to how Irish is delivered in the Transition Year.
  - It is recommended that the use of best practice is further developed and extended in relation to differentiation of learning generally, teacher questioning, planning and the implementation of cooperative learning activities and practices in relation to formative feedback.
  - It is recommended that strategic planning is carried out to increase the number of students undertaking higher level in the certificate examinations and that development and assessment of the spoken Irish ability of the students in each year-group is a central part of this.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

Old Bawn Community School is a co-educational school that operates under the trust of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board, the Dominican Fathers and the Dominican Sisters. There are 843 students on the roll. The Transition Year is provided on an optional basis.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged between very good and fair, good in the majority of classes.
- In almost all cases, the aim of the class was shared with the students. It is recommended that the language used for this purpose is reviewed so that the students will understand what they will be able to do or what they will have learned as a result of their participation in the work.
- Although Irish was used as the language of instruction, it was clear in many cases that the students' experience was to use English and traces of this were also found in their written work. It is recommended that this practice is avoided.
- Certain aspects of practice in each class were of good quality. These include practices in relation to answering of the roll, the use of whiteboards in assessment, language games and the development of the accuracy of students' pronunciation.
- In a little over half the classes, opportunities were created for students to cooperate in learning through tasks based on pair work or group work. In some cases, these tasks were well-organised and the work had a worthwhile outcome.
- In order for worthwhile learning to be a part of tasks of this kind, the language needed by the students to cooperate with each other in learning through the medium of Irish must be considered at the planning stage. As well as this, appropriate scaffolding should be prepared to advance the work as necessary.
- With regard to the majority of classes, scope was identified for placing further emphasis on the use of Irish among students. Emphasis should be placed on practising appropriate language structures, full answers and their ability to frame questions, especially in the case of junior classes.
- A small number of examples of differentiation of learning through teacher questioning were observed in less than half the lessons. With regard to differentiation of learning generally, this is an area for development that attention must be focused on.
- In order to optimise questioning in class, it is recommended that students are given time to respond and, in certain cases, that a greater number of students are given an opportunity to respond, and that the use of higher-order questions is extended as appropriate.
- The behaviour of students in all classes was very good and they were greatly commended.
- The senior management team and the department recognise that student attainment at higher level in the certificate examinations must be improved. It is recommended that strategic planning is carried out to achieve this goal and to identify and agree success criteria. As part of this, and in order to be loyal to the aims of syllabi and the school's assessment policy, it is recommended that assessment is carried out on spoken Irish in the

case of all classes in the junior cycle in addition to the assessment practices already established in senior cycle.

- Homework was given in all classes. It was clear from students' diaries that this was not a regular practice, however. It must be ensured that students regularly record their work, including in the Transition Year.
- A very small number of examples of formative feedback were found in the students' written work. It is recommended that constructive corrections are carried out on written work on a more regular basis. It is also recommended that the correction practices are included in assessment and homework policies.
- Good use was made of technology and the work was appropriately paced in the majority of cases. With regard to one particular case, it is recommended that more effective use is made of class contact time and the resources available in order to develop learning.
- There was little evidence found of work carried out by Transition Year students in Irish classes during the year. It is recommended that it is ensured that the students' organisational skills are a central part of their learning and that a portfolio showing their learning is available in all cases.

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

- The time provision available for Irish is very good.
- Timetabling arrangements facilitate the students' access to the subject at an appropriate level.
- With regard to the Transition Year, there was a lack of clarity in relation to the allocation of students to classes and how the Irish plan is implemented during the year. It is recommended to ensure that the allocation of students to classes is in line with the programme's principles and that there is clarity in relation to the implementation of the Irish plan for the programme.
- The spoken Irish competence of all teachers was satisfactory for teaching purposes.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The subject plan was of fair quality.
- A full review of the subject plan is recommended. As part of this, learning outcomes should be defined for each year group, showing the gradual development of learning and how literature will be integrated into the rest of the learning. Conclusions of the analysis of examination results should be included in the plan and improvement targets should be set out based on the analysis.
- To maximise the benefit from the analysis of student attainment, it is recommended that pedagogy is placed on the agenda of department meetings, focusing especially on the use of Irish as the target language, differentiation of learning and formative feedback on written work.
- In support of the self-evaluation process, it is recommended that the plans are used as working documents and that the conclusions of any monitoring and review are set out therein.

- Planning and preparation for individual classes was generally good and very good in some cases.
- 

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, the deputy 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.