

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of English
REPORT**

**Chanel College
Coolock, Dublin 5
Roll number: 60550B**

Date of inspection: 5 December 2013



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

REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN ENGLISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	3, 5 December 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 eight class periods• Examination of students' work• Interview with subject co-ordinators• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Most lessons observed were good or very good.
- Students were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning in some lessons
- Teachers provided a supportive and encouraging learning environment for all students.
- English teachers have actively supported the implementation of the whole-school literacy strategy through a range of activities.
- Timetabling provision is generally good.
- Higher-level uptake at both junior and senior cycle is actively encouraged and overall attainment is good.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should review the attainment of planned learning outcomes within the lesson framework.
 - Teachers should extend the range of methodologies being used to ensure that students are actively engaged in their own learning.
 - Common subject plans should be developed for each year group and level.
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INTRODUCTION

Chanel is an all-boys post-primary school with a current enrolment of 568 students. The school provides the Junior Certificate programme, Junior Certificate School Programme, Leaving Certificate programme, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. The school participates in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good, with some instances of very good practice. In a small number of lessons, however, there was scope for development of opportunities for learning.
- In all lessons, the lesson plan was shared with students at the start of the lesson. In some lessons, the teachers expressed learning outcomes in terms of what the students should know or be able to do and revisited the outcomes during the lesson. This good practice should be extended to all lessons.
- A range of methodologies was observed including active learning methodologies that incorporated pair and group work. In some lessons, however, there were few independent or active learning opportunities. Teachers should extend the range of methodologies and ensure that all students are actively engaged.
- In some lessons, teachers facilitated students to take responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to record their own progress and develop methods for organising their work. This very good practice should be extended where practicable.
- Planning for resources was good: video clips, ICT based presentations, worksheets and whiteboards were used to support teaching.
- Classroom atmosphere was positive and affirming. In many lessons, teachers used well-considered motivational strategies to encourage all students to engage with the subject.
- Probing and challenging questioning was used in some lessons to assess learning and to encourage critical reflection. Supportive developmental feedback was observed in many copybooks. In some lessons, students were asked to critically review and edit their own work before reading it aloud. The good practice of self-assessment should be encouraged.
- Techniques for differentiation included targeted questioning, and carefully planned pair and group work. In some lessons, additional scaffolding would have helped all students to engage with tasks more fully. Teachers should consider the full range of abilities when designing tasks to support classroom learning.
- A whole-school literacy strategy has been developed in line with DEIS planning targets. Some of the resulting initiatives with which English teachers have been heavily involved include the development of the new school library, the promotion of activities to encourage reading for pleasure and the publication of an anthology of students' writing.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Most class groups have five lessons each week. TY classes have three lessons, while second-year groups are timetabled for four lessons. In the interest of literacy development

and skills acquisition and consolidation, it is desirable that all students should have daily contact with the subject.

- Higher-level uptake at both junior and senior cycle is actively encouraged and overall attainment is good.
- Junior cycle classes are organised in mixed-ability groups. All students follow the higher level course and only opt for ordinary level following consultation with teachers and parents after the “mock” exams in third year. The school has achieved a high success rate at Junior Certificate over the past number of years.
- At senior cycle, higher-level and ordinary-level classes are formed based on Junior Certificate results, teachers’ professional judgement and students’ and parents’ wishes. Concurrent timetabling at senior cycle provides flexibility and supports movement between levels.
- English is a core subject for TY students. Assessment is based on project work, assignments and summative assessments at Christmas and end of the year. The TY programme provides for a range of interesting and worthwhile activities for students across many curricular areas. The school should ensure that the delivery of the TY English programme is not unduly impacted by the other TY activities.
- Learning support is provided through team-teaching, in small groups or individually, depending on the needs of the student. Learning support teachers co-ordinate their work closely with subject teachers.
- A range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities including debating, public speaking, theatre visits, creative writing workshops, book clubs and writing competitions provides students with many opportunities to extend their learning.
- Resources for English teaching are stored in teachers’ own classrooms and are shared on a collegial basis. Electronic resources are stored centrally and can be accessed through the school computer server. The development of a common storage area for physical resources could also be considered.
- Written reports are regularly sent to parents. Homework reports detailing the number of times homework was set and the number of times it was completed are used to inform parents of their sons’ progress during the year. Examinations for all years are held and reported on twice yearly. Parent-teacher meetings are held annually for each year group.
- The English teachers are highly committed to the success and progress of their students. Almost all have significant exposure to the subject and rotate between higher-level and ordinary-level classes at senior cycle. This good practice supports teachers’ skills development and provides a platform for sharing practice and resources.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject plans have been developed for each class group within each year. Further development should focus on plans that are common to each year group and level. Learning outcomes should be linked to assessment strategies, methodologies and resources. Common exams for each year group and level should also be strongly considered.
- The English subject department meets regularly, both formally and informally. Minutes of meetings are recorded.

- State examination results are reviewed and analysed at subject department meetings. This very good practice should be extended so that the DEIS targets which are relevant to attainment are explicitly referenced in the subject plan and meeting minutes.

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 of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.