

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

**Subject Inspection of Latin**  
**REPORT**

**Loreto College**  
**St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2**  
**Roll number: 60820E**

**Date of inspection: 11 January 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 LATIN**

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection</b>	11 January 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 teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good with exemplary practice observed in most cases.
- Resources and methods were designed to promote learning and there was commendable emphasis on collaborative learning.
- Student engagement was very good and students demonstrated very good skills and understanding.
- Attainment is very good.
- Whole-school support is very good
- There is a good level of co-operation in the department and lesson planning was good.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Over time, the department should document planning for each year of each programme within a learning outcomes framework linked to methods, resources and assessment.
  - The department should build on its strengths in the development of student literacy through the teaching and learning of Latin and should document specific areas in the subject plan.
  - The department should explore the range of professional development supports and opportunities available for Latin both nationally and internationally and record engagement with continuing professional development (CPD) in the subject plan.
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## INTRODUCTION

Loreto College is a fee-paying voluntary secondary school and has a current enrolment of 566 girls. Latin is provided as an optional subject in the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes. To enrich the curriculum, the school reintroduced the subject and the class of 2013 will undertake the Leaving Certificate examination for the first time in many years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good with exemplary practice observed in most cases.
- Preparation for learning was very good. Lessons were well paced and structured. In all cases, the learning intention was clearly communicated to students and in the best examples, was written in the form of achievable learning outcomes. This is very good practice. To develop this further, in all cases the outcomes should be reviewed at the end of lessons to ensure they have been achieved.
- Resources selected, including teacher-generated text resources, supported learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) reinforced learning in one lesson. Of particular merit was a slide that recorded subject keywords and these were clearly explained to ensure understanding.
- Commendably, a classroom was used as a learning resource and walls featured displays and charts, some of which were created by the students. It is positive to note that a wall chart displayed well-known quotations, for example, *carpe diem* and *veni, vidi, vici*. To build on this good practice and emphasise further the integration of language and culture, the origin of such phrases could be noted on the chart.
- Methods deployed engaged students in learning. Students worked collaboratively and there was a strong emphasis on problem solving, higher-level thinking and independent learning especially noted in the language classes. This is very good practice.
- In both senior and junior cycle classes, students had a good knowledge of the inflected endings of nouns and regular verbs. Senior cycle students demonstrated an impressive understanding of newly introduced grammatical and syntactical structures such as the formation and use of the gerund and gerundive. Commendably, these forms were closely linked to reading exercises and not learned in isolation. To develop cultural awareness, some exemplars used by writers and political figures of the Roman world could be highlighted.
- The emphasis on vocabulary acquisition for reading purposes is very positive and students demonstrated a good level of skill in translation. However, there is scope for teaching students to read Latin aloud in line with syllabus aims.
- A history homework task prepared for new learning by challenging students to discover interesting facts about political figures. The task was specific and achievable and developed research skills. This is good practice.
- Commendably, in a history lesson, terms such as *dictator* were a focus. There is scope to develop a fuller understanding of such roles. There is also an opportunity to explore the cultural impact of such words on the English language. Linguistically-based concepts for example, *gravitas* should be reinforced to develop students' knowledge and understanding of the Roman character. In addition to chronologically tracking the careers

of first century BC political figures, students should develop a broad understanding of the cultural context and the impact of such individuals on the decline of the *res publica*.

- Assessment practice is good with a strong focus on assessment-for-learning.
- Students are supported in their learning, relationships are very good and small class groups permit individual attention. The learning atmosphere in all lessons was very positive.
- In all lessons, students showed a very high level of interest in the content and were engaged and challenged by the subject matter and tasks set.
- Students' understanding of etymology was demonstrated in their illustrations of word derivations. This is very good work.
- Commendably, students were able to make connections between their learning of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives in both Irish and Latin. Such linguistic links should be strengthened at every opportunity to reinforce literacy in both modern and ancient languages and to strengthen syllabus aims.
- Attainment in the subject is very good.

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

- Whole-school support for Latin is very good. Access to the subject is very good and all students who opt for Latin are offered it.
- Timetabling for the subject is in line with syllabus requirements.
- Resources, including ICT, are good and the department should take advantage of the ever-increasing range available on the internet.
- It is positive that there is a whole-school assessment policy and parents are kept well informed of their daughters' progress in a variety of ways.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- The department plans collaboratively. Currently, the subject plan consists of a chronological scheme of work based on syllabus content. Over time, the department should document planning for each year within a learning outcomes framework and specific outcomes should be linked to resources, methods and assessment for each syllabus area.
- Roman history is taught discretely in first and second year. Commendably, there is a very good level of communication between the two teachers. This is important as history, civilisation and language should be integrated, where possible, in the teaching and learning of Latin.
- To deepen their cultural experiences, the school provides a classical civilisation course in Transition Year (TY) for all students. Some of the content complements Latin. While bearing in mind that this is a discrete subject, and cognisant of the principles of the TY programme, it is suggested that the Latin department input into planning some aspects of this course to develop meaningful links between the two subjects. Such input could help form a useful bridge between areas of the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Latin syllabuses.

- Individual lessons were well planned.
- With regard to the development of literacy, the Latin department should build on the good work being done in the classroom and should formally document outcomes and content that would enhance students' competence in both English and other languages through study of the subject.
- The department should explore the range of professional development supports and opportunities available for Latin both nationally and internationally and record CPD engagement in the subject plan.

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

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