

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Cistercian College
Roscrea, County Tipperary**

Roll number: 65410K

Date of inspection: 12 May 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

Date of inspection	12 May 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Meeting with the Irish department• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with students• Review of a sample of students' work and a sample of their school diaries• Feedback to an individual teacher• Feedback to the Irish department and to senior management

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in one class and fair in the other class.
- Irish was the language used for teaching and communication in all classes and the very good ability of students to interact through Irish was noted in the case of one class.
- The department's assessment practices, including regular correction of written work and student participation in the Junior Certificate optional oral Irish and analysis of student achievement in certificate examinations, was very good.
- Regarding one class, there was scope to further develop the learning to ensure appropriate challenges for every student.
- There is very good provision for Irish on the school curriculum.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the learning needs of students be included at the planning stage for classes by differentiating the learning intentions appropriately and by more effective designing of tasks that require cooperative learning from students.
 - It is recommended that the outline plan for Transition Year be completely reviewed ensuring that there is substance in the content and that it is in line with the particular interests of students.
 - It is recommended that the practices for formative feedback on written work based on the principles of assessment for learning be extended so that it becomes the customary practice and that Irish is used for that purpose.
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INTRODUCTION

The Cistercian College Roscrea is a seven day-a-week post-primary boarding school for boys. There are 184 students enrolled in the school. The school operates under the trusteeship of Mount Saint Joseph Abbey and Community. Provision for the Transition Year programme in the school is on an optional basis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The quality of teaching and learning was good in one class and fair in the other.
- In all cases Irish was used as the language of teaching and interaction. In one class, the students displayed very good ability in using the language and they were at ease and confident in questioning the teacher on the content of the lesson.
- In one class the content was at an appropriately challenging level but there was scope for improvement pertaining to the level of challenge in the other class.
- In all cases students were informed of the content of the lesson. As an alternative to this, it is recommended that students be made aware of the learning intentions of the lesson and that language be used that informs them of what they will have learned, or of what they will be able to do, as an outcome of their participation in the class. Those intentions should be differentiated appropriately and used to assess learning progress during the lesson and at the end of the lesson.
- Furthermore, the learning intentions should be differentiated appropriately to ensure that the work is challenging for students, in accordance with their abilities.
- In each class, students had to undertake different tasks. Some of the work, that focused on preparation for certificate examinations, was effective.
- Regarding tasks to be undertaken in pairs or in larger groups, some aspects of their implementation was not effective. When tasks requiring cooperative learning from students in pairs or small groups are being organised, it is recommended that it be ensured that every student belongs to a group, that there be a time limit for the task and that students are allowed to focus on the task without being interrupted with further questions.
- During feedback sessions from groups, some examples of students questioning the feedback from fellow students was observed. This is very good practice and it is recommended that it be extended.
- Matters of classroom management were very good and the mutual respect of teacher and students for each other was evident in each case.
- For the most part, an appropriate range of questions was used to assess progress in learning. There is scope, however, to use a greater number of higher-order questions, and this would support differentiated learning.
- Students' written work is regularly corrected and marks are given for the work. A small amount of formative feedback was written on the work and, in some instances, English was used in this practice. It is recommended that more use be made of formative feedback and that Irish be used in these notes.
- Students' attainment in certificate examinations is analysed and minutes of meetings indicated that the staff reflected on the outcomes and that targets for development are set out as a result of that discussion.

- In line with best practice, the four main language skills are included in the assessment of students' learning. Arising from a review of matters pertaining to attainment, staff has made significant progress regarding the assessment of spoken Irish and it is now policy that third year students undertake the optional oral Irish in the Junior Certificate.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Irish has very good support from school management and there is very good provision for the subject.
- The timetable arrangements facilitate students' access to the subject at the highest level in both cycles.
- The teaching staff for Irish are engaged in worthwhile work to achieve a high status for the subject by means of, for example, scholarships and developing students' experience of using the language outside formal classes through their participation in debating competitions, trips to the Gaeltacht and also the organisation of events during Seachtain na Gaeilge.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of the Irish plan was good.
- The plans for individual year groups were good in general. The plans where learning outcomes were outlined and where the literature was being thematically integrated with the content and the language is, in particular, commended.
- The quality of the Transition Year plan was weak. It is recommended that the plan be completely reviewed ensuring that there is substance in the content and that it is in line with the particular interests of students.
- The planning for individual classes was good in the case of one of the classes and fair in the case of the other. In terms of the class where there was scope for development regarding this aspect of the practice, the appropriate learning challenge for students should be taken into account at the planning stage so that maximum benefit can be derived from the class contact time.
- Resources were well prepared for all the classes that were observed.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the senior management and the Irish department at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

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Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

We note the following observations:

- The mutual respect of teacher and students
- The very good classroom management skills
- The very good ability of students to interact in Irish
- The regular correction of students' work
- The students' participation in the Junior Certificate optional oral Irish
- The very good provision for Irish on the school curriculum
- That resources were well prepared
- The promotion of Irish within the College and students' participation in organised events to promote the use of Irish in everyday contexts.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

As a follow up the subject inspection report the College will continue to promote a student centred learning environment that is in line with best practice around instruction, feedback and assessment.

The school management will work to address each of the recommendations in the coming year.