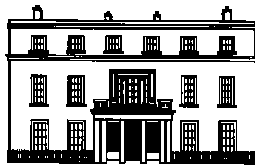


Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT**

**Castletroy College
Castletroy, County Limerick
Roll number: 76073G**

Date of inspection: 9 December 2015



**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 IRISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	8th and 9th December 2015
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 seven class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and subject coordinators

MAIN FINDINGS

- Good teaching and learning methodologies were a feature of the majority of lessons and exemplary teaching and learning practices were employed in more than half of them. As well as this, there was scope for developing aspects of the methods that were used in the other classes.
- The standard of planning for teaching and learning ranged between good and very good.
- The department has made good progress in providing an assessment experience for students in which the four main language skills are included from first year through to the Leaving Certificate year.
- There was a high level of cooperation among the Irish teachers with regard to planning for the teaching and learning of the language.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that a wider range of teaching and learning methods be used in all lessons.
 - The Irish department should discuss reducing the current practice of using the translation method in the Irish teaching and learning, as the current practice is excessive.
 - It is recommended that strategies be devised to develop self-assessment and peer-assessment in the learning and teaching of Irish.
 - An action plan for the development of the language should be agreed and attainable steps devised in order to achieve progress in the identified areas.
-

INTRODUCTION

Castletroy College is a co-educational school operating under the auspices of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. There are currently 1,211 students on the roll and the Transition Year (TY) programme is part of the school curriculum on an optional basis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The teaching and learning techniques were of good quality in all the lessons and, in the case of more than half, exemplary teaching and learning methods were in use. There was scope for developing aspects of the methods used in the other lessons observed.
- Best practice was in evidence in those classes in which active opportunities had been created that enabled students to engage with the lesson content in a meaningful manner. The variety in these activities was of high quality and the students revisited the same vocabulary as part of the different tasks. As is appropriate, the range of activities ensured that teacher-talk did not dominate the lessons.
- Effective use was made of a good mix of directed and open questioning that motivated participation among all the students in the class.
- There were also lessons in which too many items were planned for the lesson period without a thematic link between them. The result of this was that the main vocabulary and language functions of the lesson were not consolidated by the end of the class period.
- The teachers attended well to the learners' needs during the task-based work in the majority of the classes. It would be very worthwhile to use a similar approach on a wider basis instead of the teacher remaining separate at the top of the classroom.
- Irish was used by the teachers for all classroom interactions and discerning use was made of the translation method during all classes. However, in the vast majority of copybooks and textbooks reviewed, evidence of this practice was not found, and the use of the translation method was excessive. It is recommended that the department discuss the use of translation in the teaching and learning of the language in order to agree strategies to reduce the current practice.
- Both good and very good efforts have been made to provide a rich learning environment in classrooms. It is recommended, as a means of building on this good work, that the type of vocabulary needed by students to express themselves, to show misunderstandings and to express opinions is also on display.
- Mechanical corrections were made to the students' work in the majority of copybooks. It is to be commended that the department has developed a system for such corrections within the whole-school framework agreed for school self-evaluation. It is recommended that this system be on display on a chart in classrooms.
- It was reported that self-assessment and peer-assessment is used with certain year-groups. It is recommended that further use be made of both of these approaches to afford greater responsibility to students in the assessment process.
- Formative feedback was evident in only one set of copybooks that were collected randomly in every class. It would be greatly worthwhile for the department to discuss their expectations in relation to providing developmental feedback to the different year-groups and to agree an approach accordingly.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Very good provision is made for the teaching and learning of Irish in the school. All students are encouraged to take higher level until the end of the Junior Cycle.
- The department has developed good facilities and resources. It is recommended, as a matter of priority for the department, that these supportive aids be regularly renewed to support teaching and learning of Irish.
- All the teachers teaching Irish in the school are Irish graduates and the vast majority of the team members have experience of teaching at both cycles and at different examination levels.
- The Irish staff take part in continuing professional development at various levels. The courses they have attended include in-service courses organised by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) for Irish.
- Ten percent of the total number of students have an exemption from Irish, and these are granted in accordance with the provisions of Circular M10/94.
- Commendable efforts are being made to promote the use of Irish outside the classroom.
- The department has carried out result analyses for Leaving Certificate only. It is recommended that analysis be carried out over a number of years on students' results in Irish in the certificate examinations in both cycles,. This analysis should to be one of the main sources that guides the planning process for the language.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Good curricular plans were developed for the different year groups and for each examination level.
- It is recommended that these curricular plans be developed and that the teaching and learning of the language be based on the integrated thematic approach. The learning objectives should be defined in the curricular plans in the form of "can do" statements and should be linked to methodologies, appropriate resources and assessment methods.
- When reviewing the TY plan, it is recommended that every effort be made to provide learning and assessment experience that is different from the established certificate courses.
- Based on the practice in the majority of lessons, the short-term planning and preparation for lessons were of good quality or high quality. However, there was scope for improvement in a significant minority.
- It would be worthwhile to agree an action plan for the development of the language and to devise attainable steps in order to achieve progress in the identified areas.

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

Published May 2016