

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Italian  
REPORT**

**Ardcoil na Tríonóide  
Athy, County Kildare  
Roll number: 68077S**

**Date of inspection: 15 May 2011**



**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 ITALIAN**

---

**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Date of inspection:</b> 15 May 2012	
<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 two class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The standard of teaching was good in the lessons observed.
- The approach to teaching was communicative, and students are helped to develop good oral competence.
- The quality of students' learning and attainment in Italian is good and in some cases very good.
- Whole-school provision and support for Italian is very good.
- The work of the language assistant is a notable support to teaching and learning and encourages students' use of the target language.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Specific learning outcomes, in the form of 'can-do' statements should be shared with the students at the beginning of every lesson, and checked as the lesson progresses.
  - The section of the subject plan dealing with assessment should be further developed.
  - Appropriate written tasks should be assigned regularly to all year groups, from first year onwards.
-

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ardcooil na Tríonóide is a co-educational voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers an optional Transition Year programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied. Enrolment in the current school year is 804. Italian was taught in Scoil Eoin CBS, one of the two schools which amalgamated in 2007 to form Ardcooil na Tríonóide. A subject inspection of Italian in Scoil Eoin was carried out in May, 2003.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- In the lessons observed, the teaching approach was communicative and of a good quality. Lessons were very well prepared, and a range of methodologies was used. The four main language skills were integrated around the theme of the lesson.
- Very good use was made of the target language as the language of instruction and communication, and the students responded well, showing good understanding of questions and instructions.
- Students' engagement and motivation were very good, and they were active in their own learning, especially during pair work activities, which were used well in both lessons. The classes were of mixed ability, and good attention was paid to individual students' learning needs.
- Classroom management was good, and lessons were characterised by a very good rapport between teacher and students.
- The teacher was supported in teaching the lessons by the Italian language assistant, who also circulated and worked with the students during pair work activities. It is suggested that the language assistant could also model communicative language with the teacher — dialogues, for example—so that students can hear authentic Italian spoken by adults.
- The learning outcomes were shared with the students, but these could have been made more specific. In line with the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), it is recommended that the specific learning outcomes for each lesson be shared with the students at the beginning of the lesson, and then assessed as the lesson progresses and especially towards the end.
- It was clear that the curriculum was being covered well, in line with the subject plan, and the students gave evidence of good prior learning. Students responded well to questioning by the inspector. Overall, the quality of students' attainment in the classes visited was good or very good.
- Students use hard-backed notebooks to record grammar and vocabulary taught in class, and these notebooks are a good record of their learning. Homework is assigned regularly and written assignments are corrected thoroughly. In some classes, however, the amount of written work in copybooks was less than would be expected for the time of year. It is recommended, in line with the recommendations in the Chief Examiner's reports, that students be accustomed to producing written texts regularly from first year onwards.
- Regular tests and examinations, both written and oral, are set. Students are prepared well for the certificate examinations, and the uptake of Higher Level Italian in the Junior Certificate is very good. To foster students' confidence and competence in spoken Italian,

it is recommended that the school consider offering the optional Junior Certificate oral examination.

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

- Italian is very well supported by school management, and arrangements for students' access to the subject are very good. Uptake of Italian is good, especially in junior cycle. The first-year taster programme, which gives all students an opportunity to sample each of the three modern European languages on offer before they make their choice, is highly commended.
- The continued success of the subject in the school is largely due to the commitment of the Italian teacher, who is also actively involved with the subject at national level. For the third year in succession the school has had the benefit of an Italian language assistant, and this has been a significant support to students' learning and to their preparation for the oral examinations.
- Resources for the teaching of Italian are very good. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly Power Point. It is recommended that the school explore the potential for the use of ICT by the students themselves—for computer-assisted language learning, for their written assignments and for communication with their peers in Italy.

#### **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Subject planning in Italian is good: the plans for each year are clear and set out learning objectives term by term for each year group. To foster learner autonomy, it is recommended that these medium and long-term learning objectives, expressed in the form of 'can-do' statements, be shared with students, along with assessment criteria.
- It is also recommended that the section of the subject plan dealing with assessment be further developed, in line with the principles of AfL and the school's assessment policy.
- As part of the school's self-evaluation and improvement process, the subject plan should include analysis and comment on the results of the certificate examinations, along with commentary and targets for improvement.

---

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the subject teacher 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, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

# Appendix

## SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

### Submitted by the Board of Management

#### **Area 1: Observations on the content of the inspection report.**

The Board of Management welcomes this very positive Italian Subject Inspection report. In particular we wish to acknowledge the affirming of good teaching, Learning, Whole school provision and support of Italian in Ardscoil na Tríonóide.

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

The Board of Management will ensure that the recommendations from this subject inspection will be implemented immediately.