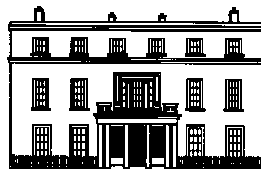


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Irish
REPORT

Corran College
Ballymote, County Sligo
Roll Number: 72300R

Date of inspection: 7 March 2014



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

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| Date(s) of inspection | 7 March 2014 |
| 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 two class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers |

MAIN FINDINGS

- Teaching and learning techniques were of a good quality.
- There is good provision for teaching and learning Irish in the school.
- All the language skills are acknowledged in the formative and summative assessment of Irish.
- The department has made very good progress in the planning process for the subject; particularly in the curricular plans for the junior year groups.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be well worthwhile for the Irish department to have further discussion of teaching and learning methodologies and it would be worth focussing first on the areas for development associated with the structure of the lesson and the teacher's questioning, in particular.
- It would be worth the department's while to use more assessment tools of learning, and for learning. It is recommended that all language skills be acknowledged in homework as part of this work.
- It is recommended that more development be made of the senior curricular plans to teach the four main language skills and various aspects of the courses in a thematic and integrated manner.
- It would be worth the department's while to design an action plan based on the priorities identified by the department itself and on this report's recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Coláiste Chorainn is a co-educational school operating under the auspices of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board. It is a DEIS school, with an enrolment of 102 students; the Junior Certificate School Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied are part of the school's curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning best practices were in use in lessons during the inspection.
- The best techniques in use included an able thematic integration of the four main language skills together with various aspects of the syllabuses.
- In one lesson, very comprehensive pre-skill work was undertaken; this allowed the students to access the meaning of texts. The same was not done for reading in either of the two lessons. It would be well worth the teachers' while to spend more time on the precommunicative period.
- There was a good balance between whole-class work and task-based work in the classes. The teachers catered well for the learners' knowledge gaps when implementing cooperative tasks. It is recommended that this technique be more widely used.
- Pair tasks and group tasks were more successful where each member had a defined role. It was also good practice to set a time for the task in advance and to undertake a feedback session with groups.
- It is recommended that post-skill work be done with the learners also and that a written record of the correct forms be provided in the feedback session.
- In one lesson there was a very good mixture of differentiated questions and the students were allowed sufficient time to answer the questions posed. The teacher gave very good feedback on the quality of answers which greatly enhanced the students' differentiated learning. It is recommended that questioning skills be practised so that each teacher's competence in this area is being developed continuously.
- Irish was in use by the teachers as the medium of instruction in all classes. Good practices were in use as regards directing the students' attention to language accuracy and to strategies to enable students to break new words into syllables.
- The learning environment in which Irish is taught was of a good quality.
- Students displayed good competence in answering questions posed by the teacher in the target language. To build on this good practice, the interactive vocabulary required by students to express themselves, to indicate lack of understanding and to offer opinions should be taught and should also be on display in the classroom.
- The teachers had very good class management ability and a friendly atmosphere supportive of learning pervaded the lessons.
- Homework is regularly assigned but tasks were mostly written work or memorising work. It is recommended that tasks covering all skills be assigned as homework.
- Good practices were employed in the mechanical corrections and in the guidance for learning given in many of the copybooks collected at random.
- It was also reported that self-assessment and peer assessment are used. It would be well worthwhile sharing the assessment criteria for the four language skills with the students, which would enhance the use of self-correction and also provide a framework for peer evaluation.

- It is recommended that the number of assessment tools for assessment of learning and for learning used by the department be increased.
- There was evidence in the copybooks and in some sets of the homework journals that the integrated thematic approach is not always used to teach the language. It is strongly recommended that teaching of the language skills independently of each other should be avoided in short-term and long-term planning.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There are significant strengths to the provision and support given by the management for the learning and teaching of Irish in the school.
- The department has developed good aids and resources. It is recommended that the department prioritise the ongoing updating of these supportive mechanisms within the school's budgetary limitations.
- The teachers who teach Irish in the school are graduates in Irish. It is commendable that the Irish staff participate in continuous professional development at various levels. It is also commendable that the management aims to provide all teachers with experience of teaching in both cycles and at the various examination levels.
- Twenty three point five per cent of the total enrolment of students has been approved for exemption from Irish in accordance with the provisions of Circular M10/94. It is important that approval of applications for exemption from Irish continues to be compliant with the requirements of the circular.
- The Irish department has a good policy and assessment practices in use. The recognition given to spoken skill in the summative assessment of students during the school year is commendable.
- The school has developed a range of methods, including electronic systems, to keep students, parents or guardians informed of progress and attainment in Irish.
- A good range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are provided to foster the students' skills and interest in Irish and in Irish culture.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning for Irish has more strengths than weaknesses.
- Very good progress has been made in the curricular plans for the junior year groups to teach the language in an integrated and thematic manner. It is recommended that assessment methods be specified in these plans also. The coordinated approach needs to be used in the senior plans also.
- The department's literacy and numeracy strategies for Irish are specified in the Irish plan. It is recommended that the strategies agreed for literacy as part of the whole-school self-evaluation (SSE) process be mentioned in the plan and used by the department also.
- It is recommended that the department's priorities be discussed at planning meetings and an action plan drawn up based on these and on the main recommendations of this report.
- The short-term planning in one lesson was of a good quality and good preparation had been made for both lessons. When undertaking short-term planning, it is important

that the steps of the lesson are in order of progression so that one step reinforces another in terms of vocabulary and content.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management of the school 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 are satisfied with the many positives outlined in the school inspection report and are confident that any recommendations made in the report can be implemented in the short to medium term.

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 follow up actions since the subject inspection are as follows:-

The “structure of lessons” is currently being addressed by the Principal and all staff during the eleven hours allocated from our Croke Park Hours for “Teaching and Learning”. A four point lesson plan is being introduced in phases and reviewed over the course of the current school year. The main emphasis is on school self evaluation with the focus on self improvement and on transferring and sharing good practice.

An Introductory workshop on Assessment for Learning (Afl) was undertaken in the third term of 2013/2014 and further workshops on “questioning” and “effective feedback” is planned for the current school year.

The Irish teachers are applying a “thematic approach” to the teaching of Irish at both Junior and Leaving Certificate level.

A Subject Improvement plan was submitted by the Irish department which highlights strengths, areas requiring improvement, improvement targets, an action plan, a timeframe and measurable success criteria. The targets relate to improvement of performance in *Cluastuisicint* and oral skills.

