

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of SPANISH
REPORT**

Presentation Secondary School
Castleisland, County Kerry
Roll number: 61260U

Date of inspection: 18 October 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 SPANISH

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	18 October 2013
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teacher• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during three class periods• Examination of students' work• Examination of planning documentation• Feedback to principal and teacher

MAIN FINDINGS

- The quality of teaching and learning of Spanish in St Joseph's Presentation School is very good.
- In lessons observed, a good variety of classroom activities and co-operative learning tasks enhanced the learning experience for students.
- Teacher-student rapport was very good, the classroom atmosphere pleasant, and students were fully engaged in the learning process.
- It was evident from students' oral skills and examples of written production work that good learning is taking place.
- Whole-school support for Spanish is good, with appropriate timetabling, a teacher-based classroom and ICT provision in the classroom.
- Teachers are actively encouraged and facilitated to further their professional development and whole-school in-service to date has included very practical elements relating to classroom practice.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- The long-term subject plan does not reflect the good practice observed. Plans for each year group should be developed, over time, to include clearly defined aims and learning outcomes for each of the language skills around each of the themes.
 - There is a need to build up a resource bank for Spanish which would include more visual aids and supplementary reading material for students.
 - It is suggested that a greater variety of authentic resource materials, and preliminary exercises such as mind-mapping carried out through the target language, could provide more support for students' creative writing work.
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INTRODUCTION

St Joseph's Presentation Secondary School in Castleisland is an all-girls' voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST. Enrolment currently stands at 168 students and the school provides the Junior Certificate programme, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme, the established Leaving Certificate programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. In the summer of 2012 an educational partnership was established with the local St. Patrick's Boys' Secondary School. This facilitates subject sharing between the two schools and a joint TY programme has been developed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Very good quality teaching of Spanish was in evidence.
- It was evident from classroom interactions and examples of students' written production work that good learning is taking place. Student achievement in state examinations is good.
- Teacher's use of the target language was very good and students demonstrated good oral fluency. However, it is suggested that students should be required to use the target language for all classroom interactions.
- There were some good examples of well-managed, co-operative learning activities, maximising the opportunity for individual oral practice.
- Learning outcomes were clear and lesson content linked with previous learning.
- Planning ensured sufficient practice for each of the different language skills and scaffolding exercises were used in preparation for listening comprehension tasks.
- The teacher demonstrates a good awareness of students' individual needs and works closely with the special needs department.
- Students were producing good quality written work. However, it is suggested that a greater variety of authentic resource materials, and preliminary exercises such as mind-mapping carried out through the target language, could provide more support for students.
- Teacher questioning of students was clear and effective and elicited a good response from students. The teacher was appropriately affirming of students' efforts.
- Good use of visual aids, such as prompt cards, together with teacher-generated listening exercises and worksheets, facilitated learning. The further use of film or DVD clips for listening practice is suggested.
- Good attention is being paid to the structure of the language and this is being incorporated into all activities. Students are acquiring a good range of vocabulary and conscious efforts are being made to build this up.
- The teacher shows good awareness of literacy and numeracy development both in lesson content and supports such as classroom word charts.
- Teacher-student rapport was very good and students were fully engaged in the learning process.
- Ongoing formative and summative assessment, and recording of students' progress is carried out in line with the school's assessment and homework policies, and includes the assessment of students' oral skills in all year groups. This is very positive. The students' journal is an effective means of communication with parents in this regard.

- Further development of comment marking of students' written exercises is recommended.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Whole-school support for Spanish is good, with appropriate timetabling, a teacher-based classroom and ICT provision with internet access in the classroom.
- Access to languages in the school is very good, with all students studying both French and Spanish in first year, before choosing to continue with both or either language for the Junior Certificate. All students study a language right through to Leaving Certificate. It is particularly commended that students with special educational needs are given the opportunity, and encouraged, to study a modern foreign language.
- All students study Spanish together in TY. This presents challenges as the group consists of *ab initio* students together with continuation students of Spanish. Some suggestions were given in relation to planning for this group. It is also suggested that an end-of-year review of TY Spanish be carried out to inform future arrangements for the language in TY.
- The school has effective whole-school assessment and homework policies in place.
- Teachers are encouraged and facilitated to further their professional development. Recent whole-school in-service has included work on classroom methodologies such as active-learning methodologies, assessment for learning and differentiated teaching strategies.
- The Spanish teacher is an active member of the Kerry Association of Spanish Teachers.
- The Spanish department organises a very successful Spanish week every year, highlighting Spanish culture and food, and liaising with other subject departments such as the home economics and geography departments.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The Spanish and French departments in the school are at present discussing a draft Modern Languages Policy. This is a positive development and is encouraged.
- A long-term subject plan has been prepared for Spanish. However it is mostly text-book based and does not reflect the good practice observed. It should be developed, over time, to include clearly defined aims and learning outcomes for each of the language skills around each theme. Plans should also include details of assessment tasks and criteria, together with the resources used.
- It is positive that the subject plan includes a mission statement for the teaching of Spanish; comparison of state examinations results with the national norms; plans for the annual Spanish week and planning for the teaching of students with special educational needs.
- There is a need to build up a resource bank for Spanish which would include more visual aids and supplementary reading material for students, such as short Spanish novels and magazines, together with a set of dictionaries.
- Preparation for individual lessons was very good, with clear learning outcomes and incorporating a variety of resources.
- The teacher maintains an ongoing record of each individual student's progress which is then communicated on a regular basis to parents via regular school reports, parent-teacher meetings and ongoing communication through the student journal.

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

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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

The Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School Castleisland welcomes the Report on the Teaching and Learning of Spanish in the school. The Board is very pleased that the strong commitment to the teaching of Spanish in the School has been endorsed in a very positive way.