

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Spanish

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Castleknock Community College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Carpenterstown Road Castleknock Dublin 15
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	76062B

Date of Inspection: 11-10-2018



SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Spanish under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	10 and 11 October 2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principals and Spanish teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principals and Spanish teachers

School context

Castleknock Community College is a co-educational, multi-denominational post-primary school under the trusteeship of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The school has a current enrolment of 1153 students and offers Junior Cycle, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the established Leaving Certificate in addition to an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. The study of a modern foreign language is compulsory and students choose between French, Spanish and German.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was good overall.
- The quality of teachers' individual practice ranged from very good to adequate with scope to increase the use of the target language by teachers and students in lessons.
- A highly effective balance between student challenge and support was observed in some lessons but in other lessons a lack of differentiation limited students' learning.
- Subject provision and whole school support are highly effective; the principal, deputy principals and other leaders foster a learning culture in the school.
- Collaborative practices within the department and externally are highly effective.
- The quality of departmental curricular planning ranged from highly effective to fair.

Recommendations

- Teachers should share and implement strategies for maintaining target language use in the classroom; they should integrate opportunities for students to talk to each other in Spanish into the fabric of each lesson.
- The highly effective approaches to differentiation observed in a significant minority of lessons should be shared, and implemented in all lessons.
- Curricular planning should be reviewed immediately to ensure the high-quality planning observed in Junior Cycle is extended to all year groups.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was good overall.
- In all lessons, interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and positive, and conducive to well-being.
- Learner experiences were very good in the majority of lessons observed. Students demonstrated high levels of motivation, and enjoyed engaging with work. Teachers skilfully managed their own input to optimise student participation and response. Students were given opportunities to work together in pairs or in groups. In a small number of lessons, teacher input was too dominant.
- The quality of learner outcomes varied in the lessons observed. In a significant minority of lessons, students demonstrated very good knowledge of Spanish for their age and stage of learning. In these lessons, students were given many opportunities to talk to each other in Spanish as the lesson progressed. In other lessons, students had difficulty expressing themselves in Spanish. To increase students' competence and confidence in speaking Spanish, teachers should integrate opportunities for students to talk to each other in Spanish into the fabric of each lesson.
- The quality of teachers' individual practice varied from very good to adequate.
- Teachers' use of the target language in lessons varied. In the majority of lessons observed, Spanish was used consistently as the main language of communication. In a significant minority of lessons, while Spanish was used regularly by teachers, the use of English as the language of communication increased as the lesson progressed. To improve student exposure to Spanish, teachers should share and implement strategies for maintaining target language use in the classroom.
- Teachers' approaches to differentiation in lessons varied. A highly effective balance between student challenge and support was observed in a significant minority of lessons, where teachers meaningfully differentiated content and activities in order to ensure that all students experienced success as learners. This was achieved through differentiating learning intentions, using a variety of questioning techniques effectively in order to stimulate student responses according to ability, and providing worksheets that offered different levels of challenge. The lack of differentiation observed in a significant minority of lessons limited students' learning. The highly effective approaches to differentiation outlined above should be shared and implemented across lessons.
- Teachers' individual preparation was very good in the majority of lessons. Teachers identified clear, relevant learning intentions that were contextualised to students' learning needs. They identified and thoroughly prepared in advance resources tailored to match the specific learning intentions of each lesson and individual students' learning needs. In a significant minority of lessons, while resources were prepared in advance, they were not always well tailored to the learning intentions. Teachers should think about the purpose of an activity and how it will consolidate and extend intended learning when preparing lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, good practice was observed where teachers integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. In other instances, skills were taught in separate lessons, and this needs to be remedied.
- Teachers made good use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support learning in the lessons observed. The Spanish department should consider how to increase creative student use of ICT to promote learning.
- Individual planning for the lessons observed varied. Some lessons were well planned with a good integration of skills, and consideration given to balancing student and teacher voice. In other lessons, planning focused on the textbook and lessons were overly teacher-led.

- A range of effective formative assessment strategies was observed in lessons. Teachers made very good use of questioning techniques to assess learning and adapted their lessons where necessary. In a small number of lessons, students reviewed and reflected on their learning. This good practice should be extended.
- All copybooks reviewed were corrected by teachers. In some instances, teachers provided written formative feedback on student work. This good practice should be extended.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole school support are highly effective; the principal, deputy principals and other leaders foster a learning culture in the school.
- Highly effective whole school strategies support teaching and learning in the school. These include the Learning and Teaching group, a focus on formative assessment and a focus on the implementation of Junior Cycle.
- The school fosters students' holistic development by providing a broad range of curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular learning opportunities. These include school tours to Spain, Spanish plays, cinema trips and invited speakers to the school.
- School leaders have highly effective systems for monitoring students' progress and development. They ensure that these systems are used to help students reach their full potential. All students set academic targets for themselves and students identified as not meeting their potential are assigned mentors. Sixth-year students are invited to meet the principal to discuss their progress.
- School management promotes teachers' continuing professional development to support high-quality teaching.
- Teachers are deployed effectively and all Spanish teachers are qualified in the language.
- The school has one dedicated Spanish classroom at present. This room is a print-rich environment that supports the teaching and learning of Spanish. It contains a library with Spanish DVDs and books that students can borrow. It is suggested that consideration be given to the provision of an additional classroom dedicated to the teaching of Spanish.
- In light of *Languages connect. Ireland's strategy for foreign languages in education 2017-2026*, school leaders could consider the feasibility of student access to the study of two modern foreign languages.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Collaborative practices within the department and externally are highly effective, particularly at Junior Cycle. Teachers use their professional time very effectively to promote teaching and learning. They plan collaboratively with a neighbouring school and have made a highly effective start to planning for modern foreign languages.
- Currently, there are occasional collective meetings of the three Modern Foreign Language (MFL) departments. It is suggested that consideration be given to creating an MFL department, particularly in light of the new junior cycle specification for modern languages.
- The quality of departmental curricular planning reviewed ranged from highly effective to fair. The highly effective plans for junior cycle have been developed collaboratively and integrate the three MFL strands. There is significant scope for development of curricular planning in third year, fifth year and sixth year. These plans are textbook driven and regularly feature the separation of language skills based on separate textbooks. This needs to be addressed immediately. The effective TY plan incorporates innovative approaches to the teaching of language and culture.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and Spanish 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.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

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 Castleknock Community College welcomes the many positive observations around Learning and Teaching reported by the Inspector during the recent Subject Inspection in Spanish.

The Board is pleased that the report comments on the positive classroom environment observed during lessons. The report further states that interactions among students and between students and teachers were very respectful and conducive to well-being.

The Board welcomes the comments regarding the fostering of a learning culture in the College. It is noted that the students demonstrated high levels of motivation, enjoyed engaging with the work and the learner experience was very good. Effective formative assessment strategies were in evidence in lessons with an appropriate balance between student challenge and support observed. Teachers made effective use of techniques to assess learning, with students reviewing and reflecting on their own learning in some classes.

Collaborative practices and the quality of curricular planning was highly commended and noted by the Board.

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 supports the Spanish Department in addressing the recommendations made in the Inspection Report. The staff in the Spanish Department continues to share strategies to assist with maintaining and integrating the use of the target language in the classroom.

The Spanish Department will continue to share good practice and this will be reflected in on-going curricular planning. The Department plans to build on the good practice that is evident in their Junior Cycle planning to review and develop their existing Senior Cycle planning.