

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of: Irish
REPORT**

**Moville Community College
[Coláiste Pobail Bhun an Phobail]
Moville, County Donegal
Roll Number: 76084L**

Date of inspection: 25 March 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

Date(s) of inspection	24, 25 March 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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to acting principal, acting deputy principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- A diligent, consistent approach is evident in the teaching of the subject, which is commendable.
- The quality of learning was at a sound, adequate level: students showed full co-operation during lessons and in general answered questions reasonably well.
- Subject provision within the timetable is very good in general and excellent for second year.
- Data relating to participation in the subject shows that the number of students taking higher level in the Junior Certificate is healthy and has increased in recent years.
- The school website, which is being developed for the subject as a reference source for students, is a positive measure.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that differentiation in the questioning strategy be developed in order to further challenge the competent learner in particular.
- Students should be empowered to use spoken Irish more often and practise appropriate key vocabulary for asking questions.
- Particular efforts should be made to make sure that the teacher is not solely engaged in delivering information during the lesson and that students are urged to participate more, of their own accord, and express themselves more freely.

INTRODUCTION

Moville Community College was opened as a coeducational post-primary school in 2001 under Donegal Education and Training Board. The school participates in the Department of Education and Skills action plan for educational inclusion, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). The Transition Year programme is available on an optional basis. There are 559 students registered for the present school year 2014/2015.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- There is a consistent approach notable in the teaching of the subject, which is commendable; this approach is marked by enthusiasm and is focused on developing students' vocabulary during the lesson. Teachers were central in the work observed and students were encouraged to do their utmost to make their own of the new vocabulary, which they did.
- The quality of learning was at a sound, adequate level. Students showed full co-operation with the guidance they were given and in general answered the teacher's questions reasonably well. The next stage in learning worth targeting would be to develop the students' capacity to ask questions spontaneously, independently of the teacher's promptings. In that regard, there is scope to develop differentiation in the questioning strategy, and there is a particular need to further challenge the competent learner.
- Lessons began with the sharing of learning outcomes: learning outcomes planned for lessons should be more focused and explained more fully. A good way to do this is to make it clear to students from the start what they would miss out on if they were absent.
- The quality of Irish used in teaching was a good exemplar for students of how to use the language accurately and the target language was used as the general medium in the lesson, in line with best practice. However, some students were inclined to use English to confirm information in the lesson. Students should be empowered to use Irish more often, and the key vocabulary should be practised with them, especially in relation to asking questions.
- Translation from the target language to the mother tongue was widely in use as a teaching methodology to quickly establish students' understanding. This practice should be limited as overexposure to the translation method slows easy language acquisition for the learner.
- It would be worthwhile to have more opportunities available for students to demonstrate their own existing learning and their contribution should be praised, even if it is limited. It is best to do this at the beginning of the lesson to provide an opportunity to build on the positive atmosphere created by recognising the learners' knowledge.
- Active learning opportunities were used throughout all lessons, especially group work which is a worthwhile approach: there is scope to further develop this approach and to better identify group work tasks.
- Special efforts should be made to ensure that the teacher is not solely involved in delivering information during the lesson and that the teacher encourages students to participate more fully of their own accord and to express themselves more freely. This approach accords well with the subject department's motto: *'Irish without fear'*. It is important, therefore, that learners are encouraged and trained to ask questions of one another and answer one another's questions as a next step beyond having the teacher as the main figure in the oral interactions.

- There was a good atmosphere of co-operation among members of the Irish department: the department should consider initiating peer observation for the benefit of sharing and extending good practice.
- Co-operation was evident in all lessons visited and the discussion between learners and teacher in the senior cycle was at an appropriately mature level. There was proof that the students here were being well prepared as independent learners: they showed great familiarity with the correct implementation of the marking scheme for the Leaving Certificate oral examination and they were sufficiently confident to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their fellow students when engaged in this good practice among themselves.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Provision for the subject on the timetable is very good in general and particularly good in second year where there are six periods per week available as a support to encourage more students to do higher level. It would be worthwhile to spend one of these periods working exclusively on oral work.
- A programme of events included in the subject department plan showed commendable efforts to take Irish outside the classroom and to make these events enjoyable. Worthwhile activities are also taking place to send more students to Gaeltacht areas and a group of second-year students visited Gweedore shortly before the inspection.
- The optional oral examination has been available for a while and its positive influence is noted in attainment in the subject. This outcome underpins the recommendation in this report to prepare the students more to be independent speakers of the language.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The collaborative planning of the Irish department is good and high expectations are set for students in the subject. The Irish department is committed to better promote the subject and there is supporting evidence for this. It would be worthwhile to take it in turns to have a subject co-ordinator in place to share leadership.
- Subject participation data show that the number of students taking higher level in the Junior Certificate is healthy and has increased in recent years. Subject attainment data show an improving trend in the same period.
- A school website for the subject, being developed by the Irish department as a reference resource for students, is commendable. Included in the content available are exemplar material for composition work, written advice for the oral examination and much else that is valuable. The most valuable development has been the recently commenced practice of adding the students' own authentic work to the site as exemplar material.
- Homework is given on a regular basis and teacher recognition of this homework was evident from copybooks. However, it was not apparent that the students acted upon the corrections written in the copybooks; this should be practised. A related aspect for development in this context is the use of formative assessment in the assessment of students' written work.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the acting principal, acting deputy principal and subject teachers at the conclusion of the evaluation.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations of the report; the board chose to accept the report without response.

Published October 2015