

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

Subject Inspection in German

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Salesian College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Celbridge Co. Kildare
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	61661P

Date of Inspection: 08-12-2017



WHAT IS A 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 German 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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	07 & 08-12-2017
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• 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 principal and relevant staff

School context

Salesian College is a boys' post-primary school under the trusteeship of the Salesians of Don Bosco. The school provides the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes and an optional Transition Year programme. The current enrolment is 705 students.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was uniformly excellent.
- Teacher use of the target language was excellent and students were given a wide range of appropriate opportunities to develop their own linguistic competence.
- The highly effective use of active teaching methodologies, Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies and information, communications and technology (ICT) all served to maximise individual student learning and student engagement.
- The rapport between students and teachers was excellent and the print-rich environment in classrooms served as a most stimulating setting for students.
- The quality of whole-school support and provision for German is highly effective and there is a wide range of co-curricular activities provided to support students' learning.
- The quality of planning for the delivery of German and the level of collaboration between the teachers are excellent.

Recommendations

- In developing the skill of listening, increased pre-listening and post-listening exercises should be provided to students.
- Teachers should develop a departmental approach to the correction of students' written work.
- To build on the existing good work in relation to the analysis of certificate examinations, teachers should set targets based on this data and on individual student data.
- Teachers should progress the good practice of peer visits to share the excellent teaching methodologies that were evident in the course of the inspection.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning was uniformly excellent with a wide variety of effective teaching approaches prevalent in lessons.
- Teacher use of the target language was excellent and German was used in all lessons to optimal effect. Student use of the target language was very good and the learners were given ample opportunity in lessons to progress their oral skills.
- Students have very good opportunities to develop the skill of listening in the course of lessons. To promote the development of this skill, it is suggested that increased use of pre-listening and post-listening activities take place and that teachers circulate more while students are answering questions. This will help teachers assess the students' progress more effectively.
- The strong focus on the deployment of active teaching methodologies served to maximise student engagement in lessons and is to be highly commended. Teachers used activities such as brainstorming, pair and group work very well to enhance the quality of student learning.
- The use of AfL strategies was excellent. All lessons began with clear learning intentions which were explained to students. Particularly noteworthy was the effectiveness of student use of individual show me boards in reinforcing key vocabulary and spelling in lessons. Students were also required to engage in self and peer assessment as means to improve their learning.
- Very good differentiation practices were noted. Teachers have established well-thought-out seating plans to ensure that students with differing strengths work together. Teachers had also made excellent individual resources, such as laminated cards with questions and phrases in German, to support and scaffold individual students' learning.
- Appropriate homework was assigned in all lessons. A sample of students' written work was viewed in the course of the inspection and students have completed good work. Teachers are correcting and monitoring student work on a regular basis. Students would benefit from more written formative feedback. Teachers should consider, as a department, how to develop a unified approach to correction of students' written work, such as the provision of a code of common errors to students.
- Lesson content in all lessons was theme based. In addition, teachers ensured that sociocultural awareness was interwoven into lessons through references to the many Christmas traditions in German-speaking countries.
- The use of ICT was excellent and served to optimise student motivation. Students were involved in creating their own video in German as part of the development of exchange of materials for their partner school in Germany. In another lesson students used individual electronic devices to play games relating to vocabulary acquisition.
- The quality of student engagement and learning was excellent. Students are given opportunities to engage in self-assessment in a structured way. The practice of asking students to fill out reflection questionnaires on end-of-term assessments is optimal in encouraging student reflection on learning.
- Teacher-student rapport was excellent and teachers demonstrated great commitment to their students' wellbeing and to their progress in learning. In the first-year end-of-term assessment students were given the opportunity to fill out a wellbeing survey in relation to their experiences in the German class. This is an example of outstanding practice.

- The learning environment served as a highly effective enhancement to student learning. Student work, photographs, grammar charts and a myriad of other materials were on display providing a colourful and stimulating environment in classrooms for students.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for German is very good. All students have access to the subject when entering the school in first year and the uptake of the language is good.
- Senior management is managing resources very well and teacher deployment is very good. Timetabling is good overall. However, the allocation of three class periods in third year merits attention and if possible should be increased in future years so as to optimise student attainment.
- The senior management team is very supportive of teachers' engagement with continuous professional development (CPD) and teachers are deeply committed to developing their own pedagogical and linguistic expertise. The benefits of their engagement with CPD is very evident in their classroom practice.
- The provision of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to support the learning of German is excellent. Students are provided with opportunities to link with their partner school in Germany and to interact with exchange students from Germany. To build on the good links the school has, it is recommended that teachers engage in further promotion of the importance and value of students' spending time in the country of the target language so as to progress their linguistic and intercultural competence.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject department planning is excellent. The level of collaboration between the members of the German department and also with other modern language departments is highly effective and language teachers use electronic platforms to share best practice on a very regular basis.
- The quality of planning for individual lessons was excellent.
- The German department engages effectively with school self-evaluation and conducts a comprehensive analysis of students' attainment in the certificate examinations. To build on this good practice, targets should be set for the student cohort and for individual students and this process could usefully be aligned to student-tracking systems in the school.
- Teachers have visited one another's lessons with a view to sharing best practice and this is most worthwhile. As a future focus, teachers could consider engaging in collaboratively planning individual lessons, to be followed by peer visits, akin to the methods espoused in Lesson Study. The German language assistant who is currently assigned to the school should also be included in this collaborative planning.

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

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;