

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

Subject Inspection in German

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Franciscan College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Gormanston County Meath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	644201

Date of Inspection: 06-12-2017



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.

The board of management 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.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Date of inspection	06-12-2017
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 three class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and relevant staff

School context

Franciscan College, Gormanston is a co-educational secondary school. The current enrolment is 467 and the school has experienced a significant increase in the student cohort since it joined the Free Education scheme in 2014. The school offers the Junior and Leaving Certificate programmes. The Transition Year (TY) is optional.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to fair and best practice was noted where there was consistent use of the target language in the classroom.
- Where fair practice was noted, too much material was presented to the learners and there was insufficient or poorly thought-out tasks.
- There were very good assessment practices noted in lessons and a good range of questioning strategies was employed.
- Classroom management and student behaviour were uniformly very good and the learning environment in the base German classroom is excellent.
- The senior management team shows exemplary practice in the area of leading learning.
- The quality of subject planning is overall very good and the yearly schemes of work for most of the class groups are excellent.

Recommendations

- In teaching students the skill of listening, teachers should circulate more frequently to assess the progression of student learning and then adjust their teaching accordingly.
- In all lessons, learning tasks should be devised clearly with the learning outcomes in mind and with a strong focus on how student learning will be progressed effectively.
- Teachers should provide increased written formative feedback and a code for frequently occurring errors to students.
- Teachers should undertake peer visits to lessons with a view to sharing best practice.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from very good to fair.
- Best practice was noted where the target language was used consistently in the classroom. As it is crucial for language learners to be exposed to the maximum amount of the target language, it is recommended that teachers increase their own use of German. In addition, teachers should use a wider range of audio materials including native speakers of German.
- Student engagement was enhanced in lessons when learners were provided with opportunities to speak in the target language. In some lessons, very good question-and-answer sessions were conducted in German. In a minority of instances, learners had insufficient opportunities to express themselves in the target language and this should be addressed.
- In the development of the skill of listening, students, in some lessons, were provided with meaningful tasks to ensure student learning progressed. In teaching students the skill of listening, it is recommended that all teachers circulate more frequently while students are answering questions. This will enable teachers to assess the progression of student learning and to adjust the teaching accordingly.
- There was good integration of the skills of language acquisition in lessons. Students engaged in listening, reading, speaking and writing about particular themes and this process helped to reinforce key vocabulary and structures.
- Where fair practice was noted, too much material was presented to the learners and there was insufficient or poorly thought-out tasks. This impacted negatively on learning and inadequate progress was made, especially given the learners' stage of learning. It is recommended that learner tasks be more clearly thought-out and developed in clear alignment with the intended learning outcomes.
- In some lessons, learner autonomy was well developed and students used dictionaries to good effect. It was evident that learners had been trained to work independently.
- There were very good assessment practices noted in lessons and a good range of questioning strategies was employed. The highly effective practice of students asking questions of each other was noted. Student written work is assessed regularly and, to build on existing good practices, teachers should provide written formative feedback to students and codes for correction of common errors to assist in student self-assessment.
- Students engaged in self-assessment in some instances and the excellent practice of students self-correcting in the oral production phase was noted in one lesson. It was evident that it is the teachers' regular practice to allow students sufficient time to reflect on errors and to come up with the correct version. This is a key strategy in learning to learn and is highly commendable.
- The student-teacher rapport in all lessons was very good and students benefitted from a positive classroom climate. Student behaviour in all lessons was excellent.
- The learning environment in the base German classroom is excellent. It is print rich and contains a good variety of materials that support student learning. Student work is well displayed.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Subject provision and whole-school support for German are very good. The principal is committed to providing German in the curriculum, notwithstanding that there is a low uptake for the subject currently. Ways in which the uptake of German could be improved should be investigated.
- Timetabling for the subject is good. This year some extra teachers, who are new to teaching the subject, have been deployed to teach German including one unqualified teacher. It is recommended that qualified teachers be sought as soon as possible.
- The senior management team shows exemplary practice in the area of leading learning. It provides teachers with good guidance in relation to the key focus for school self-evaluation (SSE) of teachers' collaborative practice and student learning outcomes.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject planning was found to be very good overall. Most of the yearly schemes of work were excellent. They detailed very important areas such as learning outcomes, key methodologies, resources, differentiation, assessment for learning, literacy and numeracy. Schemes of work for all years should follow the same template to ensure consistency.
- A start has been made on planning for the implementation of the new specification for the first-year cohort. This planning should now be progressed in a collaborative way among all teachers of German and also in collaboration with teachers of other modern languages.
- Where best practice in individual planning for lessons was noted, a very clear focus on appropriate methodologies linked to specific learning outcomes was evident. In one instance, lesson planning was poor as there was insufficient focus on what the learner was expected to know at the end of the lesson. Individual lesson planning should be revisited carefully to ensure better outcomes for all learners.
- Subject department meetings are held and good minutes are recorded. The system in the school provides for the most senior teacher in a subject area taking on the role of subject co-ordinator. Management and staff should consider the merits of rotating this role among teachers as there are many benefits in terms of the leadership and professional development opportunities that this role provides.
- As an integral part of SSE, good analysis of student attainment is undertaken by management and by the German department. The pilot student-tracking scheme for the current fifth-year cohort is very good and the German department is working very well on that.
- It is recommended that teachers undertake peer visits to lessons with a view to sharing best practice. To optimise this, teachers should consider planning a lesson collaboratively in advance of peer visits akin to the methodology espoused in *Lesson Study*.

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.

Appendix

School response to the report

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management is satisfied with the report, its findings and recommendations. However, it must be stated that due to a late resignation in August 2017 the board was unable, despite best efforts, to recruit a suitably qualified teacher of German. Hence, the requirement to timetable an unqualified teacher for 1st Year German.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

Teachers and management engaged in SSE process.

Teaching and Learning group established to focus on 2nd four year SSE cycle. Staff decided on areas of focus: Learner Outcomes and Teachers' Collective and Collaborative Practice. Evidence gathering at present.

Management communicated to all teaching staff a whole school approach to learning tasks with learner outcomes in mind and the effective progression of student learning.

A professional collaborative approach has been initiated by school management with a view to peer support, sharing good practice and reciprocal visits to lessons.

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;