

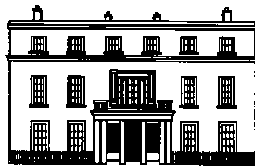
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Subject Inspection of History
REPORT**

**Castleknock Community College
Castleknock
Dublin 15
Roll number: 76062B**

Date of inspection: 14 November 2012



**AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS**

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN HISTORY**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Dates of inspection	13 and 14 November 2012
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 seven class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was of a very high standard.
- Assessment practices in the subject are outstanding and there are very good student outcomes in certificate examinations.
- A highly professional and collaborative team of teachers teach the subject.
- Department planning is at an advanced stage and of a very high quality.
- Very good planning for students with additional educational needs was evident.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students should be given purposeful and frequent opportunities to engage in independent or collaborative learning.
 - All lessons should conclude with a short review.
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INTRODUCTION

Castleknock Community College is a co-educational post-primary school under the trusteeship of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC). At the time of the evaluation there were 1126 students enrolled. The school offers the full range of programmes including an optional Transition Year (TY) programme. All TY and junior cycle students study History. It is available as an option for Leaving Certificate students.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was of a very high standard.
- Teachers had prepared a wide range of resources including visual resources and information and communications technology resources (ICT).
- Lessons were well structured. In most lessons the topic of the lesson was presented to students at the outset and in some lessons it was broken down into proposed learning outcomes. This good practice should be extended.
- Good links with prior learning were evident in most cases. Some very engaging lesson starter activities were observed.
- Teaching approaches were focused, purposeful and relevant to students' needs. Teacher exposition was clear.
- Very good development of historical skills and civic understanding was evident. The use of an enquiry question to develop the lesson in some lessons is commended.
- In most lessons there was very good use of questioning. Some well-phrased higher order questions led to very considered responses from students. There was good use of "wait time" when posing questions in some lessons.
- Combining higher-order questioning with pair work can be a very useful strategy to engage students in an inclusive manner. This was recommended in some instances.
- In one lesson observed, while teacher exposition and preparation was of a high quality, questions were posed only to a small number of students of one gender. It was recommended that a more inclusive questioning approach be adopted in this instance.
- In another lesson observed much of the lesson was taken up with administration and the material that was taught was covered at too fast a pace.
- The quality of student learning was very good as judged by student responses and student work in copybooks.
- Students had the opportunity to engage in independent or collaborative learning in a small number of lessons only. However, where this took place very good practices in relation to self-directed learning were evident. It is recommended that students be given purposeful and frequent opportunities to engage in independent or collaborative learning and discussion.
- A review of learning was observed in a small number of lessons. Teachers should build in time for a review of learning in lessons.
- Overall, classroom management was of a very good quality and good relations between students and teachers were evident.

- Assessment practices in the school are outstanding and there are very good student outcomes evident. Teachers set frequent homework which is corrected according to Assessment for Learning principles. Frequent testing and project work were also evident. Students are invited to set their own assessment targets and teachers are involved in tracking and reviewing these targets. Self and peer-assessment is well integrated into classroom practice.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- There is very good curricular and co-curricular provision for the subjects in line with syllabus or programme requirements. Timetabling, in general, is very good. Junior cycle history lessons should be spread across the week, where possible.
- Best practice in relation to student access to the subject at Leaving Certificate level is in place to ensure that most students get the optional subjects of their choice. A large percentage of students study History at this level which is a reflection of their positive experience of History in junior cycle and TY.
- Resource provision for the subject is excellent. Management is very open to the provision of resources. A history folder is available on the school system. Hard copy resources have been catalogued.
- A highly professional and collaborative team of teachers is involved in teaching the subject. It is very positive that many on the team are involved in teaching history to both senior and junior cycle students.
- Teachers are facilitated in their attendance at in-service both in-house and externally. The school pays membership of subject associations and very good engagement with the subject association was evident. Effective mentoring systems for teachers new to the department are in place.
- An assessment and homework policy for History has been prepared. This is highly commended. Planning for student attainment is very good. An analysis of results is undertaken. Students' results of house examinations are analysed and compared to the results of trial and certificate examinations in order to track progress and promote student attainment.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Department planning is at an advanced stage and of a very high quality. The subject department is very ably coordinated.
- Subject plans are based on an appropriate set of aims and objectives with due cognisance paid to the development of historical skills.
- Subject plans are collaboratively developed and guide teaching and learning. They clearly indicate the expected learning outcomes for each topic and the teaching approaches and resources that will facilitate the achievement of those outcomes. This is very good practice. They are at present laid out on a yearly basis. A small adjustment should take place so that the schemes of work are laid out termly.

- It is highly commended that the department have compiled literacy and numeracy strategies for the history classroom. Very good attention to provision for students with additional educational needs was evident, for example good attention to the development of students' knowledge of key words was evident in many classrooms visited. There are effective links in place to the learning support department.
- The plan also contains a very good section on methodologies for independent and collaborative learning. However, these methodologies were not always reflected in classroom practice.
- Record-keeping and reporting of outcomes is very satisfactory.

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 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.

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 is very pleased with the History Inspection Report. The Board welcomes the acknowledgement of the “highly professional and collaborative” team of teachers in the History Department. In particular, the recognition that “the overall quality of teaching and learning observed was of a very high standard” and that the History Department planning is “at an advanced stage and of a very high quality” is very positively received. The Board wishes to acknowledge the high level of professionalism displayed by the Inspector.

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, Senior Management and staff welcome the recommendations of this report. All are committed to continuing to improve the quality of Teaching and Learning as experienced by our students. The History Department are incorporating the recommendations regarding “independent and collaborative learning” and “lesson reviews” in their subject planning. Furthermore, senior management have ensured that all subject departments are apprised of these recommendations to inform their department planning.