

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in German

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Old Bawn Community School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Old Bawn Tallaght Dublin 24
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	91336W

Date of Inspection: 11-09-2018



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

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.

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 September 2018
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 seven class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and relevant staff

School context

Old Bawn Community School is a co-educational post-primary school operating under the trusteeship of the Dominican Fathers, the Dominican Sisters and Dublin-Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The current enrolment is 923 students. The school offers all curricular programmes including an optional Transition Year programme.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from excellent to good with the overall quality being very good.
- Notwithstanding good teacher use of the target language there is scope to increase the use of authentic listening materials in lessons.
- Student engagement in all lessons was highly effective and students were clearly motivated to learn.
- Classroom management in all lessons was optimal and a most positive rapport between students and teachers was evident.
- Whole-school support for German is very good and the numbers taking the language have increased in recent years.
- The quality of teacher collaboration in the German department is excellent; teachers develop action-based teaching and learning research projects annually and teachers have engaged in peer review visits to lessons.

Recommendations

- Teachers should use more authentic listening materials in lessons and provide students with focussed listening comprehension tasks.
- Students should be provided with more structured tasks that so that they can develop good oral competence in the language and develop self confidence in speaking German.
- School management should apply for a German language assistant under the Department's *Foreign Language Assistant Scheme* and consideration should be given to establishing links with a school in a German-speaking country.
- Teachers should develop a theme-based approach to the subject department plan for German for senior cycle in line with the syllabus guidelines for the Leaving Certificate.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The quality of teaching and learning ranged from excellent to good with the overall quality being very good.
- Teachers used active methodologies to very good effect in lessons. Strategies such as paired work, sentence-matching exercises and brainstorming activities provided the learners with opportunities to actively engage with the language. Teachers provided students with optimal activities that developed independent-learning skills, particularly in relation to working with dictionaries.
- Teacher use of the target language ranged from very good to good and this provided an effective source of linguistic input. However, students would benefit from increased exposure to audio content from native speakers of German. Teachers should therefore increase the amount of authentic listening materials and specific listening comprehension tasks in lessons.
- The use of strategies associated with formative assessment was very good. Teachers used 'show me' boards to assess students' progress relating both to vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The structured facilitation of students in senior cycle to self-assess their written work through use of a systematic correction code is an example of outstanding practice.
- Student engagement in all lessons was very good and students participated very well in tasks that were set. Students were given opportunities to work together, to engage in pair and group work. It was evident that this enhanced their motivation to learn. Student learning was very well supported through effective teacher circulation which enabled differentiated support for individual students.
- Students were provided with learning activities which facilitated the development of the skills of language acquisition, in particular reading, writing and listening with slightly less emphasis in some lessons on students' oral production. All teachers should provide students with more structured tasks so that they can develop good oral competence in the language and self confidence in speaking.
- Classroom management in all lessons was optimal and teachers' individual practice of establishing a secure and orderly environment is commended. A most positive rapport between students and teachers was evident and classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning. The excellent practice of greeting each student individually in German at the beginning of the lesson was noted in a junior cycle lesson.
- There are three base classrooms assigned for the teaching of German and these provide excellent learning settings for students. The layout of students' desks in groups optimises teaching and learning strategies associated with the development of students' key skills of learning to communicate and working with others. The provision of maps and posters on the walls and key German phrases laminated on desks all supports the teaching and learning of the language in a most effective manner.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good. The taster programme in first year provides a highly effective opportunity for students to sample the

modern languages that are on offer. This is working very well and the uptake for German is very high.

- Timetabling is good overall. However, in senior cycle the provision of double periods means that class contact for the students is reduced to three days a week for German and this is not as optimal as daily contact. It is advised that, if possible, future timetabling arrangements in senior cycle provide for more frequent contact.
- Senior management provides very good leadership of teaching and learning and one deputy principal has responsibility in this crucial area. As part of the school's strategic plan there is a strong focus on improving teaching and learning and SMART targets have been devised in this regard.
- To date the school has not availed of the Department of Education and Skills' *Foreign Language Assistant Scheme* which provides for additional human resources for the school. It is recommended that application for this scheme be considered in the future as it would be of benefit to students and teachers alike.
- To support the teaching and learning of German, a number of visits to countries of the target language are offered to students on annual basis. To build on this very good practice and to contribute to the fulfilment of national targets in *Languages Connect: Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education*, the school should seek to establish links with a school in the target language country which would provide students with very rich learning opportunities to develop their linguistic and cultural competence.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of subject department planning is mostly good with some areas for development. Very good work has been done in planning for the implementation of the new specification for Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). However, plans for the delivery of German in senior cycle are not theme based as is suggested in the syllabus for the Leaving Certificate and this needs to be addressed.
- The quality of teacher collaboration is excellent. There is clear evidence of the dividends of this collaboration in teachers' classroom practice with many examples of department-wide teaching approaches in lessons.
- As part of peer collaboration the German department engages annually in an action research project relating to innovative teaching and learning strategies. This is outstanding practice and it was evident in the course of lesson visits that this is having a very positive impact in the classroom.
- School self-evaluation (SSE) practices are evident and the German department analyses examination data and sets targets for improvement. The excellent practice of engaging in peer lesson visits and review meetings also contributes very well to SSE.
- Members of the German department engage in continuous professional development (CPD) and some members have availed of significant CPD. It is recommended that a record be kept of attendance at various CPD events and follow-up activities that take place.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principals and subject 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 are delighted with the positive nature of the report and in particular the effective and innovative German Department. The collaboration among teachers is particularly exciting while the positive student engagement reinforces for the Board the great student cohort in Old Bawn.

The Board are particularly proud of the professional practices among the teaching staff that contributes to the positive learning environment. The whole school community is enthused by the positive nature of this report.

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 German team, in consultation with senior management team, has already made initial enquiries to endeavour to forge a link with a German school and we are making preparations to apply for a foreign language assistant from Germany.

The teachers in the German Department are using their professional time effectively to review their planning in line with the recommendation to develop a theme based approach.

The inspection experience, along with findings and recommendations, have already been shared with other subject departments via a Whole School subject planning meeting to endeavour to adopt a Whole School approach to promoting learning and teaching.