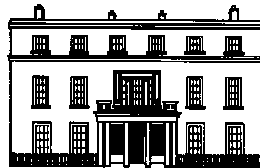


**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**Subject Inspection of Italian**  
**REPORT**

**Coláiste Bríde**  
**Clondalkin, Dublin 22**  
**Roll number: 60122D**

**Date of inspection: 11 May 2012**



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

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

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**INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION**

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	10 and 11 May 2012
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Interaction with students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during five class periods</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

**MAIN FINDINGS**

- The quality of teaching in all the lessons observed was very good or excellent.
- Students' learning and attainment in Italian is very good.
- Subject provision and whole-school support for Italian is optimal.
- The teachers of Italian are highly professional and fully committed to their students and to their subject.
- The Italian department is characterised by very good planning, self-evaluation and commitment to improvement.
- Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) for teaching and as a support to the school twinning initiative.

**MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The school should consider offering the optional Junior Certificate oral examination to students of Italian.
  - The section of the subject plan dealing with assessment should be further developed, with reference to the school's assessment policy and the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL).
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Coláiste Bríde is a girls' voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Catholic Education in Irish Schools Trust (CEIST). Enrolment in the current school year is 918. In addition to the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes, the school offers the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), the Transition Year programme (TY), the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocation Programme (LCVP). Italian has been taught in Coláiste Bríde since 1995, and a subject inspection in the subject was carried out in 2002.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- In all the lessons observed, the teaching was of a very high quality. It was dynamic and communicative in style, with a definite emphasis on developing students' oral language competence. While attention was paid to grammatical elements, this was always in the context of communication.
- Lessons were very well prepared, and a range of varied and stimulating methodologies was used. Learning outcomes were always clear and were shared with the students. The four language skills were integrated skilfully and naturally.
- The use of the target language by the teachers for communication and instruction was optimal. The teachers model excellent spoken Italian, and the students have good or very good levels of spoken Italian, appropriate to their level and ability.
- ICT was used very effectively for teaching and learning. In one lesson, for example, the students participated in a web conference by Skype with their Italian partner school.
- All classes are mixed ability, and teaching is differentiated according to students' abilities and needs. There were very good examples of collaborative learning in all the lessons; group work and pair work were used effectively.
- Classroom management was excellent, and lessons were characterised by a very good rapport between teachers and students. Seating arrangements were flexible, and this facilitated communication. An attractive Italian environment had been created by displays of posters, maps, flags and students' work. Language and culture are skilfully integrated in the teaching and learning.
- Written work was purposeful, and always related to the learning objectives. The standard of written work was very good. Students make good use of ICT for their written assignments and are encouraged, for example, to submit their homework by email.
- Students' engagement and motivation was very good, and they were active in their own learning. Overall, the quality of learning in the classes visited was very good or excellent and the students' attainment was good or very good, according to their level and ability.
- Assessment practices are very good. Students are given regular tests in all four language skills. To encourage and affirm students' attainment in spoken Italian, it is recommended that the school consider offering the optional Junior Certificate oral examination.

## **SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Italian enjoys good status and very good support in the school: it is offered in junior cycle, TY, Leaving Certificate and LCA. All TY students study Italian for ten weeks, and a very good programme has been devised, which allows students to study the language *ab initio* and includes elements of language and culture.
- There is a team of two highly professional teachers, who are hard-working and committed to developing the language in the school.
- Arrangements for student access and timetabling are very good. Uptake of Italian is very good: there are two classes in first year and second year, and there is an upward trend in the number of students taking the subject.
- ICT facilities for the teaching and learning of Italian are excellent and are very well utilised by teachers and students. ICT and collaborative learning have been focuses of whole-school continuing professional development (CPD). The Italian teachers are also very committed to their own CPD and both are involved with the subject at national level.
- The school has recently been twinned with a school in Bassano del Grappa, Italy. This initiative is an incentive to the study of Italian, and gives a particular relevance to the study of the language and culture.

## **PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

- Arrangements for collaborative subject planning in the school are very good, and the Italian subject team has dedicated time and commitment to developing high quality subject plans.
- The subject plan is comprehensive, and sets out clear learning outcomes for each year group, with a focus on communicative competency.
- Individual teachers' planning is of a very high standard, as are the teaching and assessment materials prepared by the teachers.
- The subject plan is strategic and includes a long-term plan for Italian and year-by-year objectives for developing the subject. Students are surveyed at the end of the year on their learning experience and asked to make suggestions as to how Italian classes could be improved on. This emphasis on self-evaluation and improvement is highly commended.
- A recent whole-school evaluation recommended that the school develop its homework and assessment policy, with AfL integral to the policy. It is recommended that the Italian department review and develop the sections of the subject plan dealing with assessment, in line with whole-school policy.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal and the 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 welcome the Italian Subject Inspection Report and thank the Italian Inspector. The Board are delighted to congratulate the Italian teachers and students on the high quality of teaching and learning that the Inspector observed in the school. This reflects great commitment, dedication and passion for the subject. Coláiste Bríde has placed the promotion of Assessment for Learning as part of the key focus under improving the quality of teaching and learning 2012 – 2015.

#### **Area 2: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection**

For the 2012 – 2013 academic year, staff have engaged in training with the PDST in order to develop further AFL classroom strategies and resources for the school. “Show Me” boards are provided to all students through the school journal for usage in classrooms. Also as part of the new Junior Certificate Network of schools, Coláiste Bríde is promoting the usage of AFL in teaching and learning to include peer assessment, pair work and group work. In addition, a checklist has been given to Italian students modelled on the European Common Framework of Reference (ECFR) to self assess their learning.

Regarding the Junior Certificate, oral assessment in Italian will be introduced formally for the current first year students, this follows the example of Roinn na Gaeilge in the school, who introduced oral assessment 2 years ago for students at Junior Cycle.