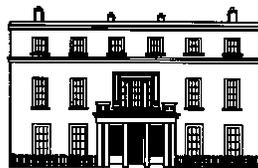


An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Geography
REPORT

Adamstown Community College
Adamstown,
County Dublin
Roll number: 76097U

Date of inspection: 15 April 2013



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

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

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date of inspection	15 April 2013
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 five class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- Teaching and learning were very good in all lessons observed and were excellent in a number of lessons.
- The geography teachers are hard-working, committed and collaborate well in the development and sharing of resources.
- The print-rich nature of the classroom environment was impressive.
- Teaching methodologies were active and varied and included the use of group and pair work.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in collaborative planning and teaching and learning was very good.
- Teaching and learning took place in an atmosphere of positive discipline and mutual respect.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Greater consistency should be established across the geography department regarding the provision of formative, written comments for improvement on students' written work.
 - The geography department should meet more regularly.
 - The geography department should engage in more locally-based projects and initiatives.
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INTRODUCTION

Adamstown Community College is a new, inclusive, co-educational post-primary school under the patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board. The school is located in the developing suburb of Adamstown in west Dublin. The school was officially opened in 2011. The student population is culturally diverse. The school currently has students from first year through to Transition Year (TY) and is actively preparing for its first Leaving Certificate

students in September 2013. TY is optional. The first school entrants sat their Junior Certificate examination in June 2012.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching and learning were very good in all lessons observed with some excellent practice in evidence.
- The teachers of Geography are dedicated and committed and they work in a collaborative manner.
- Instruction was clear, relevant and concise. There was very good explanation of key concepts and good use of appropriate examples and case studies. Key word strategies were used effectively.
- The print-rich nature of the classroom environment was impressive.
- Questioning strategies were used appropriately. Differentiated learning was facilitated by targeted questioning.
- Varied and active methodologies including group and pair work were used routinely and effectively.
- In one lesson, in particular, students were observed to be working very effectively at different levels and at a different pace depending on their aptitudes and abilities.
- Teaching and learning took place in an atmosphere of positive discipline and mutual respect. Teacher-based classrooms and group seating arrangements also facilitated learning.
- The quality of the correction of written work varied. Some good practice was evident but this is an area that needs further development. Greater consistency should be established across the geography department regarding the provision of formative, written comments for improvement on students' written work.
- The geography department has made great progress in the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Appropriate and regular use of ICT to enhance learning and teaching was a feature of all lessons observed.
- A particular feature of one lesson was the use of ongoing student evaluation surveys that asked students how they were progressing and posed questions as to the difficulty or otherwise of the work. Students in this lesson were also consulted about whether they preferred to do work on the computer rather than in their copies.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Timetabling provision for the subject is adequate. There are three periods a week for Geography at junior cycle level which is in line with syllabus guidelines.
- One junior cycle class group has two of its three geography lessons on Monday. It is recommended that geography lessons for this group be spread more evenly throughout the week.

- The world map which is prominently displayed in the school's main assembly area contains information relating to students' countries of origin as well as a brief profile of the countries which was written by students. This theme could be further developed. The generous allocation of wall space to displays of students' work in Geography in classrooms and corridors is commended as is the quality of the displays.
- The school is at an early stage of development in terms of literacy and numeracy planning and is in the process of developing a literacy and numeracy plan, which should lead to a greater focus on literacy and numeracy development within Geography.
- A TY module of six months duration focuses on outdoor pursuits and incorporates geography-related elements such as orienteering and map work.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Subject planning is well developed and the geography teachers collaborate well. However, geography department meetings need to be more frequent.
- A comprehensive plan for Geography has been developed and this is updated annually. This plan has an emphasis on practical skill development such as map work. There is also an emphasis on planning for a culturally diverse society which is very appropriate in the culturally diverse suburb of Adamstown.
- Cross-curricular planning with other subject areas is a feature of planning in Geography.
- The co-ordination of the geography department is rotated every second year which is good practice.
- The use of ICT for storing resources for lessons in electronic shared drives and folders is a real strength of the work of the geography department as is the planning for the integration of ICT in teaching and learning.
- There is insufficient focus on the local area in subject planning and delivery. The geography department should engage in more locally-based projects and initiatives.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the 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; a response was not received from the board.