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Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Telephone: 020 7421 6800

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The post-16 subject guidance series currently comprises: art and design; business education; classics; design and technology; drama and theatre studies; engineering and manufacturing; English; geography; government and politics; health and social care; history; information and communication technology; law; mathematics; media education; modern foreign languages; music; physical education; religious studies; science; sociology.

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Introduction

This booklet aims to help inspectors and staff in schools and colleges to evaluate standards and quality in classics for students post-16. It complements the *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools* (1999), the supplement *Inspecting School Sixth Forms* (2001) and the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (2001). It replaces the earlier guidance *Inspecting Subjects and Aspects 11–18* (1999).

This guidance concentrates on issues specific to classics. General guidance is in the *Handbooks*. Use both to get a complete picture of the inspection or evaluation process.

This booklet is concerned with evaluating standards and achievement, teaching and learning, and other factors that affect what is achieved. It outlines how to use students' work and question them, the subject-specific points to look for in lessons, and how to draw evaluations together to form a coherent view of the subject.

Examples are provided of evidence and evaluations from college and school sixth-form inspections, with commentaries to give further explanation. These examples are included without any reference to context, and will not necessarily illustrate all of the features that inspectors will need to consider. The booklets in the series show different ways of recording and reporting evidence and findings; they do not prescribe or endorse any particular method or approach.

Inspectors and senior staff in schools and colleges may need to evaluate several subjects and refer to more than one booklet. You can download any of the subject guidance booklets from OFSTED's website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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OFSTED's remit for this sector is the inspection of education for students aged 16–19, other than work-based education. In schools, this is the sixth-form provision. In colleges, the 16–19 age-group will not be so clearly identifiable; classes are likely to include older students and, in some cases, they will have a majority of older students. In practice, inspectors and college staff will evaluate the standards and quality in these classes regardless of the age of the students.

The guidance applies to all courses in classical subjects, which include Latin, classical Greek, classical civilisation and ancient history. Each of these subjects has its own expectations for accreditation in the General Certificate of Education (GCE) at Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced Level (A Level). The details are set out in the specifications published by the examination boards. These specifications provide a wide range of optional units and the choice of these has a major effect on the courses. There may also be students who are working towards the Advanced Extension Award (AEA) in Latin. The demands on inspectors and those monitoring performance within the school or college are thus considerable.

Some colleges and school sixth forms offer beginners' courses. These are usually for accreditation in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and may be very intensive. This guidance booklet does not deal specifically with them, and inspectors should refer to the companion booklet *Inspecting Classics 11–16*, which shows the necessary considerations in inspecting work at this level.

Make sure that you know the examination specification used by the school or college and that you are familiar with the units selected.

This booklet concentrates on the most commonly found courses for students 16–19. However, the principles illustrated can be applied more widely.

Common requirements

All inspectors share the responsibility for determining whether a school or college is effective for all its students, whatever their educational needs or personal circumstances. As part of this responsibility, ensure that you have a good understanding of the key characteristics of the institution and its students. Evaluate the achievement of different groups of students and judge how effectively their needs and aspirations are met and any initiatives or courses aimed specifically at these groups of students. Take account of recruitment patterns, retention rates and attendance patterns for programmes and courses for different groups of students. Consider the individual goals and targets set for students within different groups and the progress they make towards achieving them.

You should be aware of the responsibilities and duties of schools and colleges regarding equal opportunities, in particular those defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These Acts and related codes of practice underpin national policies on inclusion, on raising achievement and on the important role schools and colleges have in fostering better personal, community and race relations, and in addressing and preventing racism.¹

As well as being thoroughly familiar with subject-specific requirements, be alert to the unique contribution that each subject makes to the wider educational development of students. Assess how well the curriculum and teaching in classics enable all students to develop key skills, and how successfully the subject contributes to the students' personal, social, health and citizenship education, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Judge how effectively the subject helps prepare students aged 16–19 for adult life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

¹ See Annex *Issues for Inspection arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson Report)* in *Evaluating Educational Inclusion*, OFSTED, 2000, p13.

1 Standards and achievement

1.1 Evaluating standards and achievement

From the previous inspection report, find out what you can about standards and achievement at that time. This will give you a point of comparison with the latest position, but do not forget that there is a trail of performance data, year by year. Analyse and interpret the performance data available for students who have recently completed the course(s). Draw on the school's *Pre-Inspection Context and School Indicator* (PICS) report or, in the case of a college, the *College Performance Report*. You can find recent A-level results for the separate subjects of Latin, Greek and classical civilisation at www.ofsted.gov.uk/public/index.htm. Also analyse the most recent results provided by the school or college and any value-added information available. When numbers are small, exercise caution in making comparisons with national data or, for example, evaluating trends. For further guidance on interpreting performance data and analysing value added, refer to *Inspecting School Sixth Forms*, the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* and the *National Summary Data Report for Secondary Schools*.

Where you can, form a view about the standards achieved by different groups of students. For example, there may be data which enable you to compare how male and female students or different ethnic groups are doing, or how well 16–19-year-old students achieve in relation to older students.

Make full use of other information which has a bearing on standards and achievement, including success in completing courses, targets and their achievement, and other measures of success.

You should interpret, in particular:

- trends in results;
- comparisons with other subjects and courses;
- distributions of grades, particularly the occurrence of high grades;
- value-added information;
- the relative performance of male and female students;
- the performance of minorities and different ethnic groups;
- trends in the popularity of courses;
- drop-out or retention rates;
- students' destinations, where data are available.

On the basis of the performance data and other pre-inspection evidence, form hypotheses about the standards achieved, whether they are as high as they should be, and possible explanations. Follow up your hypotheses through observation and analysis of students' work and talking with them. Direct inspection evidence tells you about the standards at which the current students are working, and whether they are being sufficiently stretched. If the current standards are at odds with what the performance data suggest, you must find out why and explain the differences carefully.

As you observe students in lessons, look at their work and talk with them, concentrate on the extent to which they:

in Latin/Greek

- have knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and idiom, and show comprehension by:
 - conveying meanings correctly;
 - translating into accurate, idiomatic English;
 - (where the students choose translation into Latin/Greek as an option) expressing the exact meaning of the English, recasting where necessary;
 - writing grammatically correct and idiomatic Latin/Greek, (at the highest levels) with attention to genre and style;

- have knowledge and understanding of the literature which they have studied, so as to discuss and evaluate:
 - the author's intentions;
 - stylistic features;
 - narrative and descriptive techniques;
 - characterisation;
 - the sound and rhythm of the language;
- plan and complete convincing and reflective writing and/or presentations on the literary topics covered by the course, with:
 - knowledge and understanding of the work(s) in question;
 - individual thought and clear argument;
 - well-identified evidence to substantiate the points made;

in Latin

- (where appropriate) show the greater depth of understanding needed for the AEA;

in classical civilisation/ancient history

- gain and communicate knowledge and understanding of the civilisation/historical topics covered;
- make comparisons and point contrasts with the modern world;
- understand and use the relevant technical terms and concepts;
- explore the significance of the issues, characters, events and social and cultural aspects covered;
- use evidence in a clear and measured way to support the views expressed;
- understand established views and representations of the culture and history studied;
- show interest and initiative in the study of classical civilisation/ancient history;

in classical subjects

- go beyond simply amassing information and explain, interpret, question and evaluate aspects of language, literature, and culture or history.

1.2 Analysis of students' work

Look at work drawn from the first and second years of the courses and arrange opportunities to discuss it with the teachers and students.

Use information from the school/college to identify a few students at different levels of attainment. Record the evidence of the students' standards and achievement and the quality of the teaching. Remember that the analysis of work is important for judging the nature of the demands made on the students and their progress over time. Hence, it can give particularly valuable insights into the achievement of different groups.

A-level work in classics will be of different kinds. For the languages, there are likely to be vocabulary, translation and notes on literary texts. It is important to know how far these emanate from the teacher and to what extent the students have looked up vocabulary and worked out meanings for themselves, including their own responses. Thus, it is helpful to find some way of talking with teachers and students about the work.

Oral and rough working may account for much of the 'bread and butter' study. However, in good practice, teachers will also require formally presented work. Pieces of unprepared translation, literary essays and test papers, should provide a good indication of the standards which the students attain. In your analysis of students' work, you need to pick out examples illustrating the quality of their work. Do they have a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar? Can they work out meanings for themselves? Do they appreciate the intentions and style of the authors they study? In the light of their previous attainment in GCSE, how good is their achievement in post-16 work?

In classical civilisation and ancient history, you need to establish the context of notes, research and essays, so as to be clear how far the teacher supports the students and to what extent they use their own initiative and skills. The examples of the students' work should show the extent of their knowledge and insight and whether they can gather, marshal and interpret evidence. Your main task is to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of classics and to keep this distinct from the standards shown in using key skills – for example, in information technology. In

viewing coursework, you must not overtly challenge the grading of the assessments made by teachers: that is for the awarding body. However, you must evaluate the standards and achievement shown by the coursework.

The following evidence shows the standards achieved in Latin and ancient history towards the end of the A-level course.

Example 1: evidence from analysing students' work in a school sixth form; Latin, Year 13; 3 students: 1 higher attaining, 1 average, 1 lower in GCSE Latin.

Regular work is available: translation and essay writing; test papers from 'mock' examination; files of notes on language and literature.

The work covers a very good range. Grammatical exercises and short pieces of prose composition consolidate and extend previous knowledge of the language. The work shows that the students are in the A–C range. One student is of exceptionally high ability.

Language

The high-attaining student produces very accurate translations and shows considerable flair in his use of idiomatic English, while the others gain the overall gist of a passage and express meaning well at times but make many errors of detail. In prose composition, the students have a good grasp of subordinate clauses and participles to produce a periodic structure. Two students make good use of logical links between sentences. Errors of grammar are quite common but the basic knowledge of tense and case is good. Rough working indicates that the students attempt to produce their own translations and interpretations.

Literature

The best work shows maturity in essay writing (two students). They put their arguments clearly and support them with quotations. Two students occasionally generalise rather than convince by good explanation and examples, but overall standards are above average. The students produce their own essay plans, with good use of diagrammatic presentation to identify the different aspects under consideration. The essays reveal individuality of response; research includes use of information technology.

Attainment is above average in Latin language and literature. Good achievement overall in the light of previous GCSE attainment.

[Attainment above average (3)]

Commentary

These students show above average attainment and good progress in the development of advanced skills. They have clearly benefited from effective teaching, which has placed important demands on them. These are clear indications that their achievement is good, judging from the progress from their GCSE base. It is a good feature that they go beyond received notes and are used to presenting their own ideas in essays. They know the common features of Latin prose style and attempt to translate from Latin into natural English. Their standards would be higher if all three had a stronger grasp of grammatical constructions and did more to substantiate their views in essays.

Example 2: evidence from analysing students' work in a sixth-form college; ancient history, second year; 4 students: 1 higher attaining, 3 average in GCSE all-subject point score.

Students' notes and essays are available.

The students have largely overcome an initial tendency towards factual and narrative writing, although three of them do on occasion miss the main point of an essay title. All have written about the advantages and disadvantages of Roman rule. The higher attaining student has marshalled his evidence and expressed his views fluently, while the others show reasonable understanding of a smaller number of factors, but with occasional misunderstanding. All

make references to evidence from Sallust, Caesar and Cicero. In their coursework, an investigation into the Augustan age, they have done thorough research and included a 'synoptic' approach by comparing and contrasting the different evidence from the *Res Gestae*, Cassius Dio and Tacitus. The quality of this work is average for three students and rather better for the fourth – on course for grades B–C.

[Attainment average (4)]

Commentary

All the students make at least reasonable use of original sources. The evidence suggests satisfactory achievement since the beginning of the course.

1.3 Talking with students

You will talk to students as the opportunity arises, but it is particularly useful to arrange formalised time after you have seen several lessons and examined the written work. Hold a discussion with a few students representing different groups and the range of attainment and ask them (a) general questions about their work and (b) specific questions on material which they have studied previously. For a language course, this could be a passage of Latin or Greek. Those studying classical civilisation or ancient history might answer questions based on pictures, diagrams and sources in translation.

Reference to a specific passage of Latin allows an evaluation of the students' general understanding of an author. It also gives an opportunity to test competence in reading Latin and understanding linguistic and stylistic features. For example, where the students have been studying Lucretius, the investigation might refer to these lines.

*'iam iam non domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor
optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
non poteris factis florentibus esse, tuisque
praesidium. misero misere' aiunt 'omnia ademit
una dies infesta tibi tot praemia vitae.'
illud in his rebus non addunt: 'nec tibi earum
iam desiderium rerum super insidet una.'
quod bene si videant animo dictisque sequantur,
dissoluant animi magno se angore metuque.
'tu quidem ut es leto sopitus, sic eris aevi
quod superest cunctis privatu' doloribus aegris.
at nos horrifico cinerum te prope busto
insatiabiliter deflevimus, aeternumque
nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.'
illud ab hoc igitur quaerendum est, quid sit amari
tanto opere, ad somnum si res redit atque quietem,
cur quisquam aeterno possit tabescere luctu.*

(Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* III)

It is best to start with wider questions so that the students can draw on their general understanding and have scope to refer to the text as they choose.

- *What is the importance of poetry in Lucretius' writing?*
- *What is poetic about this passage?*
- *What is Lucretius' view of death and how does it stem from his scientific beliefs?*
- *What does he gain by quoting the mourners?*

It is useful to ask the students to prepare a couple of lines to read aloud and to comment on the metre and special effects. This passage could yield evidence of accuracy in reading and understanding such features as enjambement, elision, rhythmical variation and alliteration. It is also possible to test understanding of aspects of grammar.

For classical civilisation, a similar approach, with some familiar material or a text to hand, will yield information on the standards which the students reach.

Example 3: evidence from talking with students in a school sixth form; classical civilisation, Year 13; 3 students: 1 higher attaining, 1 average, 1 lower in GCSE all-subject points score.

The students answer general questions about their work and then study material which they have used previously – pictures of Greek sculpture and architecture and an extract from a play by Aristophanes. Pieces of the students' work are to hand for them to use in discussion.

The ablest student has a very strong understanding of the work covered. He uses terms such as distyle in antis and opisthodomos. All students are aware of the differences between sculptures on friezes, metopes and pediments. They can describe familiar examples in considerable detail. They are able to trace the development in free-standing kouroi and korai, with precise examples. All are very well aware of the themes in Aristophanes' Frogs and its overall plot. The ablest student has a highly perceptive understanding of the differences between Euripides and Aeschylus as tragedians, and all the students are precise in their knowledge of contemporary characters such as Lamachus. They present very clear opinions on the extent to which the play reflects Aristophanes' own views. All are precise in their references to the play and the ablest student quotes verbatim from the translation which he has used.

This student shows exceptional insight. Of the other two, one is well above and the other clearly above average. Their achievement since GCSE is very good, particularly since none of them studied classical civilisation in GCSE and their time allocation is lower than in other A-level subjects. They have used their own study time very productively to make up the deficiency in direct teaching.

[Attainment well above average (2)]

Commentary

The interview suggests that the students have benefited from thorough and demanding teaching, which has enabled them to make very good progress on post-16 work. In their study of literature and of art and architecture, they have their own views and are ready to present the evidence for them.

1.4 Lesson observation

Example 4: evidence from AS Latin lesson in a tertiary college; 4 students, all higher attaining in GCSE Latin.

Lesson on Catullus, LXIV, with reference to the coverlet on the marriage bed (line 50 and following). The students have prepared in advance, using dictionaries, a commentary and a literal translation. In the previous lesson they read the earlier part of the poem in translation and explored the description of Catullus as a doctus poeta.

They are able to set the Latin in the context of the earlier part of the poem and one shows an acute critical sense in noting the apparently incongruous nature of coverlet, which depicts the unhappy ending to the love between Ariadne and Theseus. This leads to lively discussion of Catullus' possible intentions in referring to heroum virtutes. The students translate fluently from the Latin, without reading directly from their preparatory work. They are accurate in translating the present and perfect participles and they are very strong on case endings. They know the more unusual and poetic vocabulary, having looked it up in advance.

They each prepare five lines to read aloud, which they do after accurate scansion. They read aloud with excellent expression. They discuss in pairs the 'learned', artistic and rhetorical effects in the passage and return to the full class with very clear identification of points of interest. The notion of 'golden line' is new to them but they are able to

compare it with previous experience of 'chiasmus'. They comment very convincingly on the effects of repetition, alliteration and rhythm.

[Attainment very high (1)]

Commentary

These students had GCSE attainment which was well above average. Two of them had A* grades in Latin. From this high base, their post-16 achievement has been good. They have gained a very strong grasp of Latin vocabulary and grammar. For this lesson, they have benefited from systematic preparation of the text, making excellent use of all the supporting resources available to them. Their teacher has been successful in stimulating an outstanding degree of self-reliance. They show sharp perception in stylistic and literary discussion.

Example 5: evidence from Year 13 Latin lesson in a school sixth form; 3 students, all average attaining in GCSE Latin.

The teacher goes over a piece of unprepared translation (from Livy) done for homework. She then provides practice in aspects of language which the students found difficult.

The students' work reveals considerable weakness in grammatical understanding. Two of them take the opening accusative case as if it were the subject and completely lose the meaning of the sentence. None recognise the indirect statements in the second sentence or the verb introducing them. The length of the sentences and the use of subordinate clauses and participles prove major problems for them. Their knowledge of vocabulary is not strong. They do not know ignarus, vereor, pars maior, acies, praeter, luctus or pavor. Only one translates res other than literally, and all take superesse as meaning 'to be superior'. In subsequent questioning, they confuse indirect statements and questions. They do not recognise accurately the difference between dative and genitive cases. However, they do identify ablative absolutes and they are able to discuss the effects of alliteration and, to some extent, word order. Overall, their work does not present a coherent meaning for the passage of Latin, although many phrases are correct. The teacher does well to emphasise the importance of the verbs introducing indirect speech and to revise the relevant constructions. Achievement is poor since average GCSE performance. The reasons for this need investigation.

[Attainment well below average (6)]

Commentary

The weakness in the students' linguistic knowledge and understanding indicates unsatisfactory achievement in advanced work. Their attainment is well below average in grammar and syntax and they need a stronger grip on Livy's vocabulary. The shortcomings are such that standards are well below rather than below average. They are not very low because the students do understand a certain amount of the language (for example, many phrases, including ablative absolutes) and they show some awareness of style. Discussion with the head of department (confirmed by the headteacher) reveals that they had a weak teacher in Year 12, who has now left the school. In addition, it appears that the students have had outside interests and commitments which have affected the quality of their study.

2 Teaching and learning

2.1 Evaluating teaching and learning

Interpret the *Handbook* criteria with specific reference to classical subjects, and keep in mind the characteristics of effective teaching and learning, in which:

- through the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm, students see the fascination of classical subjects in illuminating understanding of many other things, such as the vocabulary and grammar of English and other languages and the basic elements of modern civilisation (*subject knowledge, expectations, planning, methodology*);
- through carefully set work, clear explanations and the correction of errors, the students extend their knowledge and understanding and develop their insight into the Latin/Greek language and/or classical literature and the social and historical context in which it is set (*subject knowledge, expectations, planning, methodology, assessment*);
- because of the teacher's high expectations, the students appreciate the importance of accuracy in the use of vocabulary, grammar, technical terms, and the names of people and places (*subject knowledge, expectations*);
- in Latin/Greek, because of the teacher's good example and questioning, the students read for sense, and endeavour to translate accurately and idiomatically (*subject knowledge, expectations, methodology*);
- in classical civilisation/ancient history, through a well-planned and skilfully presented curriculum, the students show interest and work productively on classical material in areas such as literature, art, architecture, science, philosophy, historical writing and other sources of evidence (*subject knowledge, expectations, planning, methodology*);
- the students advance their knowledge and skills and develop their ideas by preparing, investigating, discussing and writing about important aspects of language, literature, civilisation or ancient history (*planning, methodology, organisation*);
- the students increase their understanding through the teacher's stimulating use of audio-visual/reference material and visits to sites, museums and theatres (*resources*).

Be alert to teaching that may have superficially positive features but which lacks the rigour, depth, insights and the command of good subject teaching. Examples might be teaching in which:

- translation and discussion are lively but there is insufficient emphasis on systematic learning and consolidation of vocabulary, morphology and syntax (*planning, methodology*);
- there is thorough translation of Latin/Greek but insufficient emphasis on comprehension or the social/historical context (*methodology*);
- the grammatical work is rigorous but lacks a realistic context (*methodology*);
- the pace of teaching is brisk, but the students do not sufficiently think for themselves because the teacher gives too much help in translation and comprehension of original Latin/Greek texts (*expectations, students' intellectual effort*);
- copying of notes is accurate and well presented but does not give scope for fresh interpretation or insight (*expectations, methodology*).

2.2 Lesson observation

The most effective teaching in classical subjects at A Level is evident in the teacher's expertise. Features of this are:

- knowing how to help students to understand concepts such as good translation, *oratio obliqua*, uses of the gerundive, the nature of historical sources, stylistic artistry and metrical effects;
- providing good examples and showing similarities and differences with the modern world;
- being aware of common misconceptions and dealing with them effectively.

The following example of a classics lesson shows how a teacher's expertise is a strength.

Example 6: evidence from AS-level Latin lesson in a school sixth form; 6 students, all higher attaining in GCSE Latin.

The students work as a class on a section of Ovid, Metamorphoses XI. They answer the teacher's questions to set the context. They go over 20 lines with the teacher's help, discuss the stylistic features of the passage in two groups of three, and report back. Each student checks the scansion of three or four lines for reading aloud in a 'relay' presentation.

Teaching	Learning
<p><i>The work is demanding and proceeds by well-established routines. The teacher has an obvious delight in Ovid's verse. Her pronunciation is Italianate and rhythmical, with nearly all quantities correct. She insists on accuracy in translation and brings out meaning with helpful questions. However, she does involve the two ablest students rather too much.</i></p>	<p><i>The students are thoroughly prepared and concentrate well. Most ask good questions to ensure that they understand fully. Two are quiet, but contribute thoughtfully when asked. All appear alert and interested. They readily pick up technical expressions such as 'diaeresis'.</i></p>
<p><i>The teacher's preliminary questions elicit not only the story of Daedalion but also earlier information on Peleus, his exile and his lie to cover the reason for it. She comments on the 'tragic' and high-flown language of the herdsman's messenger speech, and invites the students' opinions of it.</i></p>	<p><i>The students establish clearly the different characters and review what they already know of Peleus. This ensures that they are fully clear about the context and able to understand Peleus' reaction at the end of the passage.</i></p>
<p><i>The teacher is rigorous in getting the students to establish a good literal translation which reveals the grammatical functions of the Latin. From time to time, she also looks beyond this to idiomatic renderings. She asks individuals to consolidate a fair (if somewhat over-literal) translation and to give explanations in their own words.</i></p>	<p><i>The students draw profitably on their private study work in translating, and they contribute freely. The two ablest students take a leading role in the group discussions, but allow scope for the views of the others also. The development of linguistic and literary understanding is very good.</i></p>
<p><i>She allows the students to develop their ideas in group discussion and reinforces a few of the main points covered.</i></p>	<p><i>The students relish the opportunity to identify different elements in the style of the passage, and refer perceptively to the descriptive, narrative and psychological elements. They are quick to quote examples of alliteration, repetition, and choice of vocabulary, although some of their interpretations are fanciful rather than sound.</i></p>
<p><i>The teaching is very good, forming a productive blend of scholarship, emphasis on meaning and encouragement of individual response. Relationships are also very good.</i></p> <p>[Teaching and learning very good (2)]</p>	<p><i>The students' good application and distinct advances in learning are a direct product of the teaching.</i></p>

Commentary

Here the teacher's expertise is evident; she understands the author's methods and knows how to explain them well. She has conveyed her enthusiasm to the students and developed their confidence in forming their own ideas. In discussion after the lesson, the teacher revealed a very good acquaintance with Ovid's work and knowledge of relevant books and articles. The teaching prompts very good achievement and high attainment, but has a few shortcomings which prevent it from being excellent.

The following example shows how negative features in the teaching affect the students' learning (L).

Example 7: evidence from Year 12 Latin lesson in a sixth-form college; 4 students, all average in GCSE Latin.

Grammatical work on a passage from Caesar's De Bello Gallico. This is part of a programme to strengthen the grammatical knowledge of students relatively new to post-16 work and to give experience in unprepared translation. The main points for the lesson are (a) uses of the subjunctive, (b) the impersonal passive, (c) passive and deponent verbs, (d) participles, (e) gerund and gerundive.

The teacher explains each grammatical point carefully. He requires close attention and note taking. The students follow the work closely and keep a record of the examples and explanations. (L+) However, the teaching is over-ambitious and gives the students little opportunity to be involved in making the explanations or testing out their understanding. This slows learning (L-). For example, stemming from the text, there is a detailed explanation of subjunctives in result clauses, with cum, and in indirect questions. The students make notes and look up vocabulary, but the teacher does not ask them to use the knowledge they are gaining. In a similar way, the teacher explains the impersonal passive pugnaretur and compares it with the personal passive anteferretur and the deponent subsequitur, but does not test out the students' understanding, although other passive and deponent verbs occur in the passage.

The routine continues for the participles veritus, percusso, and procurrentem. (L-) Because of the retiring role played by the students, it is difficult to gauge their understanding: hence the need to talk with them after the lesson. (L-?). The homework is to translate the passage. The quality of the teaching is good in its explanations, but loses impact because the meaning is only considered in isolated units and there is no immediate reinforcement for the students. (L-)*

The students are attentive and appreciative, but do not challenge their passive role.

**In discussion after the lesson, they recognise their need to improve grammatical understanding. They appreciate the detailed explanations which they receive. However, when questioned on other examples of the grammatical usages, they are hazy about passive and deponent verbs and cannot use the information from the lesson to explain similar uses of the subjunctive. On this evidence, achievement in grammatical understanding is unsatisfactory.*

[Teaching and learning unsatisfactory (5)]

Commentary

Here, the teacher has the necessary subject expertise. However, he is over-ambitious in trying to cover so many potentially difficult pieces of grammar and he lacks the teaching skill to involve the students in the work and ensure their understanding. Because the learning is unsatisfactory, so is the teaching.

The following are further examples of teaching and learning in different aspects of classics.

Example 8: evidence from AS classical civilisation lesson in a school sixth form; 7 students: 1 higher attaining, 3 average, 3 lower in GCSE all-subject point scores.

The students revise their reading of Thucydides. The theme is the nature of Thucydides' writing. Each student has chosen short extracts from a particular book to read to the class and invite discussion. The teacher guides the discussion as necessary, but has no clear method for seeing that the main points are registered by the class as a whole. However, he does refer helpfully to a detailed article on Thucydides, which the students have read previously.

The teaching reflects secure subject knowledge of the Peloponnesian War and suitable expectations. The teacher intervenes occasionally on matters of fact and interpretation, and insists on use of a large map to locate the narrative. He very occasionally encourages the students to look for modern parallels. The quality of the teaching is also apparent from the students' good choice of extracts (plague, funeral speech, Mytilenian debate, stasis in Corcyra, victory at Pylos) and the way they illustrate historical approaches noted in earlier work. Relationships with the students are good but a little too 'easy going'. There is only very cautious assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the presentations and questioning, so that opportunities for improvement are less extensive than they might be.

The students are, for the most part, well prepared, but two read from their notes rather than present their ideas and questions in a direct and spontaneous fashion. The students listen carefully, make notes and try hard to answer the questions. They are initially diffident in handling the complex ideas they encounter in the text but gradually gain in confidence as the nature of the discussions becomes more familiar. Concentration and interest are apparent in the discussions and several students are self-critical when faced with interpretations which they had not considered. Sound learning stems from the consideration of the nature of historical evidence, the sophistic movement, medicine, speeches, democratic decision-making, human psychology, national characteristics and political power. In particular, the students make thoughtful contributions on the 'usefulness' of history. In view of the maturity of the work, achievement is good for these students.

[Teaching and learning good (3)]

Commentary

The students are willing, and good teaching results in good learning. The lesson is not better than this largely because the teacher, having set up a very good exercise, does not exploit it sufficiently to improve the quality of the presentation or reinforce the main messages.

Example 9: evidence from Year 13 A-level Greek lesson in a school sixth form; 2 students, both of average attainment in GCSE Greek taken in Year 12.

The students have prepared a section of Homer's Iliad and go over this in class, with the teacher's help.

The teacher has clearly set 25 lines of text to be prepared for this session, with a focus on translation and grammar. The students have done the work thoroughly and speak openly of difficulties which they have found. The teacher asks for a summary of the preceding text, to ensure a clear context for the work. The students give this with precise reference to indications of Hector's attitude towards Achilles. The teacher is purposeful, with a good concern to bring out the meaning of the translation, although his reading of lines is competent rather than inspired. The periodic questioning of grammar and metre reduces the fluency and impact of the translation, which both students do well. The work on the language is rigorous and leads the students to strengthen their understanding of the metre in particular. They readily appreciate the importance of correction, digamma and omission of augment.

During the lesson, the teaching gives little attention to the effectiveness of Homer's narrative in description, depiction of character and heroic code. It is through the students' own questions and observations that justice is done to these aspects and to the question of divine intervention by Athene.

Overall, the teaching is well informed and pleasant, ensuring that the main objectives are well met. However, the mixing of the objectives is rather too much of a 'grapeshot' approach and detracts from the narrative. The students consolidate and extend their learning very well. Because of their commitment, learning is very good. Their achievement is excellent in view of their late start in learning Greek.

[Teaching good (3); learning very good (2)]

Commentary

Teaching is rigorous and knowledgeable, with clear objectives. However, in practice these are not kept sufficiently distinct from the many other points of interest. As a result, the teaching loses impact by being something of a 'hotch-potch'.

The students' learning scores more highly than the teaching because they have prepared very thoroughly, and they show considerable interest. They advance their learning and extend their thinking very effectively in class by raising their own questions and making their own observations independently of the teacher.

The following example identifies the learning of students at contrasting levels of attainment. The text in brackets refers to the *Handbook* criteria for teaching and learning.

Example 10: evidence from Year 13 A-level Latin lesson in a school sixth form; 4 students: 2 higher attaining and 2 lower in GCSE Latin.

The students work on a section of Livy I. They have prepared vocabulary in advance. Individuals translate, with the teacher's help, and engage in brief discussion.

Teacher	Below average	Above average
<i>Does not check homework. General requirement was for vocabulary alone. Has no policy on use of published translation. [assessment, expectations, enabling learning, use of time]</i>	<i>Brief homework, with many unfamiliar words not included. [intellectual effort, learning for self]</i>	<i>Careful homework, well presented and with reference to meaning in context. [intellectual effort, increasing understanding]</i>
<i>Questions and corrects translation and points out grammatical features such as use of participles and indirect statement. [subject knowledge] Does not have clear policy for establishing written record of translation and linguistic, stylistic features. [methodology]</i>	<i>Many errors in translation. Initially unsure of tense and voice in participles. However, they learn from their mistakes. Written record of work not good enough for accurate revision. [increasing understanding, question of productive outcomes]</i>	<i>Improve translation by ready response to teacher's comments and sensitivity to good English. Identify parallel examples of grammar. Keep good record of translation and points covered. [acquiring new knowledge, developing ideas, productive outcomes]</i>
<i>Elicits features of style such as direct speech, contrast, word order, alliteration and rhetorical elaboration. No evidence that he has used visual aids or encouraged research into Etruscans, to illuminate 'foreign' rule in Rome. [methodology]</i>	<i>Are able to identify several of the features, but find it difficult to show their significance. [developing ideas]</i>	<i>Fascinated by the stylistic considerations, and work out their relationship to meaning at a moment of high drama. [interest and thinking]</i>
	<i>Can identify evidence for Lucretia's distress and desire for vengeance, but need help to appreciate her 'stoic' virtue. [increasing understanding]</i>	<i>Work out more subtle facets of Lucretia's character - for example, her premeditated suicide (abditum cultrum). Fertile in ideas - question whether the story is 'true' or a means of glorifying Rome. [developing ideas, applying intellectual effort]</i>
<i>Achievement satisfactory. Attainment average.</i>		
<i>[Teaching and learning satisfactory (4)]</i>		

Commentary

The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, being better for the above average students and weaker for the others. Achievement and attainment follow a similar pattern. The teaching has several good features, but the pace of working is slow because homework preparation depends on the individual diligence of the students. Help is no more than adequate for the below average students, but the above average are quick to follow the teacher's lead.

2.3 Other evidence on teaching and learning

Lesson observation is usually the most important source of evidence on the quality of teaching and learning, but the analysis of work and discussions with students can also yield valuable information. This is particularly important when the work includes a coursework component undertaken over time. Under these circumstances, the observation of individual lessons may give a very partial picture of the students' learning experience and of the support provided by teachers.

The work analysis will give you a good feel for the overall rate of progress, and therefore the pace of the teaching and learning. It will show the range and depth of the work which the students are required to do. For example, it will show whether students of classical civilisation and ancient history have been taught to make their own use of primary source material to develop and support their ideas rather than simply rely on textbooks and the teacher's notes. It will show whether the teaching of classical languages follows a systematic programme to increase students' understanding of vocabulary and grammar. It will also help you to judge whether the quality of teaching and learning is high enough to develop the skills needed for success in the AEA.

Discussions with students will give you a sense of their motivation and the range of their experiences. You can ask questions to show whether they understand clearly how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

3 Other factors affecting quality

Other factors are only significant if they have a noticeable impact on the students' learning and standards. Note and evaluate any significant features of the curriculum, leadership, management, staffing, accommodation or resources. The following are possible examples specific to classical subjects.

Curriculum

Where the numbers of students are small, some schools may seek economies in a classical subject. In such cases, it is important to establish the effectiveness of the arrangements. If the number of periods is below the standard allocation in the school/college, much may depend on the use of private study and the library and Internet resources available. If the department teaches first and second year classes together, it is important to judge how difficult each group finds the topic studied. In particular, in Latin or Greek language and literature, is one year being disadvantaged for the sake of the other?

Leadership and management

It is frequently the case that different teachers teach different civilisation/history topics or different aspects of a language course – grammar, unprepared translation and particular prescribed texts. Does this capitalise on the individual teacher's expertise and enthusiasm or is it simply a timetable constraint? Are there effective ways of ensuring overall co-ordination of the subject?

Does the departmental handbook or scheme of work include helpful guidance on developing students' skills? For example, does it have a clear programme for strengthening and developing understanding of the language? Does it indicate effective ways of preparing Greek or Latin texts? How does it seek to promote awareness of the rhetorical nature of Latin literature? Does it suggest links with other subjects and comparisons between the classical and modern worlds?

Resources

Students need to have access to resources for classical literature, history and civilisation. It is important to have good maps of the classical world either on display or readily available in atlases. Apart from books, slides, CD-ROMs, Internet sites and videos are valuable resources, and students should learn to be critical in their use. Those studying art and architecture need to use good-quality illustrations in colour. Visits to the theatre, lectures, museums and archaeological sites are a good way of capturing students' interest, giving opportunities for individual research and extending acquaintance with the classics.

4 Writing the report

The following is an example of a post-16 subject section from a school inspection report. (It does not necessarily reflect the judgements in any or all of the examples given elsewhere in this booklet.) The summative judgements in these reports use, for schools, the seven-point scale: *excellent*; *very good*; *good*; *satisfactory*; *unsatisfactory*; *poor*; *very poor*. For colleges, there is the five-point scale: *outstanding*; *good*; *satisfactory*; *unsatisfactory*; *very weak*. The summative judgements *excellent/very good* used in school reports correspond to *outstanding* in colleges; *poor/very poor* used in schools correspond to *very weak* in colleges.

Classics

The school provides courses in Latin and classical civilisation. On this occasion, the focus of the inspection was on Latin. Two lessons for the classical civilisation course were observed; the teaching was good in one and very good in the other. With only small numbers of students taking the course, examination results in classical civilisation have fluctuated but there has been an upward trend in the last five years. In last summer's examinations, all students made better progress than expected, taking account of their overall performance at GCSE.

Latin

Overall, the quality of provision in Latin is **good**.

Strengths

- In the most recent A-level examination in Latin, all students gained A or B grades.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good; students show a very good knowledge of the texts they study in literature.
- Teaching is good; teachers show enthusiasm and have high expectations.
- Students respond well to the work and show considerable interest.
- The department is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- Students' knowledge of tense and case is not always accurate.
- By delaying the use of practice tests until a late stage, the teaching has lost the opportunity to build the students' confidence in examination technique.

In Year 13, the current standards in Latin are above average and the students' achievement has been good following a mixture of average and above average GCSE results. The most recent A-level results paint a similar picture, with all students gaining A or B grades. This is a distinct improvement over standards at the time of the last inspection. There have usually been more female than male students, and more recently an increasing number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no obvious differences in the relative attainment of students by gender or ethnic background.

An important strength is the very good knowledge which the students have of their prescribed texts. The progress in the appreciation of literature starts well in Year 12. By Year 13, the students have an excellent understanding of the authors they study. They benefit from placing their work in a clear context, partly by undertaking associated reading in English. They have done very good work on characterisation in Virgil's *Aeneid* and shown perception in analysing the moral dimension in Livy's history of early Rome. They are capable in their critical comments on rhetorical and stylistic features and they are aware of poetic devices such as similes and metaphors. Their reading aloud is reasonable, and can be good when they prepare it in advance.

Their knowledge of Latin grammar is average overall. Although they have good familiarity with the main constructions, such as indirect speech and ways of expressing purpose, their knowledge of tense and case is not always accurate. In unprepared translation and comprehension, one of the students has considerable flair in grasping the overall gist of a passage and expressing meanings well in natural English, while the others adopt a safe and predominantly literal approach. All have a good knowledge of vocabulary, which aids their translation considerably.

The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. The two teachers are both well qualified and have their own interests within the subject. They have high expectations, which show in their determination to cover a good amount of work in each lesson, with clear guidelines for the advance preparation of Latin texts and the learning of vocabulary. This has a good effect in boosting the confidence and achievement of all the students, including those whose performance in GCSE was no more than average. The teachers' enthusiasm sparks the interest of the students, whose learning, attitudes and application are consequently good. The teachers vary their methods effectively. For example, they sometimes teach a class as a whole, sometimes divide it into two small groups, and sometimes require the students to prepare and make presentations on grammar or literature. As a result, the students develop significant self-reliance. The teachers have a good knowledge of relevant Internet sites and encourage their use for studying texts and finding out about authors. The students have responded well to this work and their interest has carried them beyond the confines of the examination requirements. However, the teaching has delayed practice tests on literature and the writing of formal essays until a late stage. This has lost the opportunity to make the students confident and familiar with examination technique as a natural part of learning.

Two years ago, there was a reconstitution of the department, when the two full-time classics teachers succeeded the previous string of part-time staff. Standards have subsequently risen. Under the new leadership, the sharing of expertise is good and the department has produced a comprehensive handbook. This helpfully includes close references to the resources in the library and on Internet sites. It also makes clear the progression of skills needed for advanced work and it ensures a firm understanding of syntax. However, it does not provide a specific method for improving the students' basic grammar, such as knowledge of cases and tenses.

The department has a lively approach to the classics. By organising visits to lectures, plays, museums and places of interest in Italy and Greece, it has successfully extended the scope of the classical education it provides.

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