

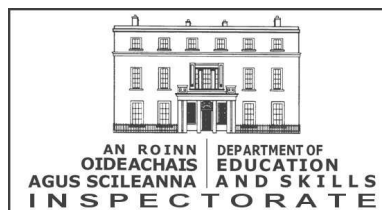
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

**Follow-Through Inspection
REPORT**

**Saint Muredach's College
Ballina, County Mayo
Roll number: 64510J**

Date of inspection: 3 December 2015



Date of original inspection	4 December 2013	Type of original report	Subject Inspection Science	Date of FT inspection	3 December 2015
Report published	Yes				
Follow-through inspection activities					
<p><i>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection:</i></p> <p>Meeting with principal Meeting with members of the in-school management team or subject coordinator Meeting with relevant teachers Observation of teaching and learning Interaction with students Review of school documentation and records and students' work Review of resources and facilities</p>					
Recommendation in original inspection report		Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation			
The science department should increase the emphasis on investigation and enquiry-based learning as well as the use of more student-centred learning methodologies.		Good progress In all of the lessons visited, good examples of investigative methodologies were observed. Students' prior knowledge was sought through discussion or questioning that supported enquiry-based learning. Where practical work was observed, students were asked to develop a methodology to conduct the investigation before performing their work. These practices are commendable. Teachers should ensure that questions are distributed across the class group so that as many students as possible are involved with the investigative process.			
While some formative written feedback was seen in samples of students' work, all teachers should provide such feedback and this should include guidance for students on how to improve the quality of their work.		Very good progress The science department has implemented this recommendation.			
Consideration should be given, where possible, to increasing the number of class contact hours available to Science during the first year of the junior cycle.		Partial progress The science department has been reduced in size by one teacher since the original inspection which has made this recommendation difficult to implement. Science is currently part of a taster programme in first year with a large number of subjects. It was reported by senior management that the school will review this recommendation when the new junior cycle specification for Science begins next year and the number of subjects for certification decreases.			
The good work produced so far should be adapted into a more integrated scheme of work with clearer linkages between topic lists, timeframes, learning outcomes, methodologies, assessment and resources.		Very good progress The schemes now include more specific methodologies linked to the learning outcomes as well as a detailed teacher review section in order to inform future planning for the department.			
It is also recommended that a better balance of the three sciences be taught in first year than is currently the case.		Very good progress The science department has fully implemented this recommendation.			
Summary of findings					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of good investigative methodologies was observed in all of the lessons visited. Samples of students' work showed that teachers were providing written formative feedback that identified both commendable work and areas for improvement. The science department has one less teacher since the original inspection and this led to difficulties in 					

implementing the recommendation on the number of Science lessons in first year.

- The schemes of work have been enhanced to include methodologies that are less generic and are now better tailored towards achieving the learning outcomes.
- There is now a better balance between Physics, Chemistry and Biology delivered to first year students in Science.

Recommendations

- Teachers should distribute questions across the student cohort when using enquiry-based methodologies to ensure that a higher number of students are engaged with the process.
- Management should keep under review the recommendation in relation to the amount of time given to Science in the school.

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.