

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Follow-Through Inspection
REPORT

St Angela's Secondary School,
Waterford
Uimhir rolla: 64990D

Date of inspection: 23 October 2014



Date of publication/issue of original report	8 November 2012	Type of original report	<i>Subject Inspection Science and Biology</i>	Date of FT inspection	23 October 2014
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 subject coordinator Meeting with relevant teachers Observation of teaching and learning in two lessons Focus group meeting with students Review of school documentation and records and students' work</p>					
Recommendation in original inspection report		Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation			
<p>In further building on the good approach being undertaken to practical work in Science, teachers should focus on developing students' skills and confidence in designing and planning open-ended investigations.</p>		<p>Good progress It was clear that, since the original inspection, teachers had given this recommendation much consideration. As part of subject planning, teachers discussed ways of addressing this recommendation and extending good practice. Agreed strategies are now being implemented. During the 2013/14 year, teachers' trialled formally assessed investigations along the lines of coursework B and reported it was very successful. From this year, all students in first and second year will carry out an investigation that will be a component of their end-of-year grade. In the student practical work observed, science students were guided in the required procedure, and while the outcome was reached through inquiry, the design of the investigation by students could have been open.</p>			
<p>To continue improving teaching and learning, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on promoting independent learning in senior cycle.</p>		<p>Good progress It was reported that across the school, a range of strategies have been put in place to develop independent learning in senior cycle. Examples provided included the use of mind mapping and engaging students in ways of summarising their learning in topics. These were evident in students' copies. In the lesson observed, students were actively engaged in writing the day's laboratory report independently and they were receiving effective guiding feedback from their teacher on developing these.</p>			
<p>Subject plans for Science and Biology should be developed with the setting of agreed key learning outcomes for each year.</p>		<p>Good progress Science teachers have developed sets of agreed learning outcomes that all students should be able to "do" by the end of each year of junior cycle. Teachers reported that this is making a difference to students' science process skills. Ideas for next year are emerging and this aspect of collaborative planning is productively supporting student skill development and enhancing consistency of experience for students.</p>			
<p>Appropriate plans should be developed collaboratively for each of the modules in TY and these should be evaluated annually.</p>		<p>Good progress The course content of the TY modules has been developed in line with TY guidelines. The module plans have more of a skills focus and the topics studied focus more on real-life applications and relevance to society.</p>			
Summary of findings					
<p>Good progress has been made in addressing each of the recommendations and this is strongly supported by the progressive and collaborative nature of the subject department. During the inspection, teachers engaged very productively with each aspect and discussed in a cooperative and collaborative manner how further development can take place.</p>					

Recommendations
<p>To further develop the good progress, it is recommended that teachers: integrate strategies for developing students' skills in designing open-ended investigations early in first year and revisit the principles of good investigations on an ongoing basis with students; continue to use the subject department meetings to discuss pedagogical approaches to Science and Biology; and further develop senior cycle students abilities in drawing justified conclusions. The significant demand on laboratory access remains an issue and management should explore options for extending the school's laboratory provision.</p>

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

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

Initial drawings of building programme to include 2 no. science labs. have been completed.