

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Guidance

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Christian Brothers College
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Monkstown Park Dun Laoghaire Co Dublin
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	60180R

Date of Inspection: 03-05-2019



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

SUBJECT INSPECTION

Subject Inspections report on the quality of work in individual curriculum areas within a school. They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in Guidance under the following headings:

1. Teaching, learning and assessment
2. Subject provision and whole-school support
3. Planning and preparation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school 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.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

SUBJECT INSPECTION

INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

Dates of inspection	02-05-2019 and 03-05-2019
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and key staff• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during two class periods• Feedback to principal and relevant staff• Meeting with members of the student support team

School context

Christian Brothers College Monkstown Park is an all-boys fee-charging post-primary school in South Dublin under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. With a current enrolment of 506 boys the school offers the Junior Certificate and the new Junior Cycle, an optional Transition Year (TY) programme and the established Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The quality of teaching and learning was good; however, reflection on learning and provision of opportunities for students to submit projects were less than satisfactory.
- Overall provision of hours and whole-school support for Guidance is very good; there is a full-time guidance counsellor, highly effective student support structures assisted by year heads and academic mentors.
- The classroom guidance programme is less than satisfactory particularly for senior cycle groups; there are no regular TY guidance lessons and infrequent modules for fifth and sixth-year students.
- Students and parents are provided with valuable information booklets and seminars when making subject choice decisions.
- There are highly effective whole-school guidance activities to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM), creative Arts careers, and positive mental health.
- Overall guidance planning is satisfactory, the guidance programme has been planned by the principal and guidance counsellor but not with a wider whole-school team.

Recommendations

- The guidance department should include reflection on learning in lessons and incorporate project assessment opportunities into the guidance curricular plan.
- Senior management should oversee the provision of substantial guidance modules or weekly lessons for TY, fifth and sixth-year students.
- Senior management should form a whole-school guidance planning team to establish current whole-school guidance activities, identify guidance needs and work together to plan the overall guidance curricular and co-curricular programme.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching was good; the guidance counsellor was well prepared for lessons. Students were provided with useful worksheets, to assist group and pair work, and a variety of valuable resources such as a recent news article about trends in employment.
- Lesson planning was good; there was a clear sequence to activities which supported student engagement and facilitated multiple opportunities for students to work collaboratively and share opinions and ideas. However, there was scope to plan for the inclusion of a relevant short video clip to illustrate how the world of work has changed and to provoke more discussion and debate among students about the future of work.
- Students engaged well with the topics and offered thoughtful insights into the changing nature of the world of work and the impact of technology.
- Interactions were positive, supportive and encouraging between students and their peers and between the guidance counsellor and students. Students were attentive and respectful while team leaders presented their ideas to the class.
- Students had a good knowledge of career options and courses. It is positive that students expressed interest in a wide range of careers including Sports Science, History, Modern Foreign Languages, Medicine and Animation.
- Learning intentions were not explicit at the outset of lessons and there was no reflection on learning during the lesson. It is recommended that all teachers incorporate learning intentions and reflection on learning into their lesson plans.
- Assessment in Guidance is not a feature of the programme. There are no guidance projects and progress is not reported on school reports. When planning the new guidance module in TY, the guidance department should identify an area of learning for students to research, such as a career investigation, which can then be assessed and progress noted on school reports.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Overall provision by the school of twenty-two hours for Guidance is a significant time allocation which allows students very good access to the guidance counsellor for one-to-one appointments or small group support.
- A full-time guidance counsellor adequately leads and delivers the guidance programme which comprises a blend of one-to-one meetings and intermittent modules delivered to junior and senior cycle groups on an ad hoc basis. The classroom guidance programme is less than satisfactory particularly for senior cycle groups; there are no regular TY guidance lessons and infrequent modules for fifth and sixth-year students. The guidance department and senior management have identified this gap in provision and are planning to address it through improved timetable arrangements for the next school year.
- The school is cognisant of the requirements of Department Circular 0031/2011. Nonetheless, the guidance counsellor is privately employed by the school and holds a recognised qualification in guidance counselling, but does not currently hold a recognised second-level teaching qualification. It is recommended that school management address this issue and continue to make all reasonable efforts to employ an appropriately qualified registered teacher with a guidance counselling qualification.
- The school has a new senior leadership team this year and a priority for the new principal has been to establish a student support team in line with the guidelines from the National

Educational Psychological Service. The student support team is very effective. The core team includes representatives from the additional education needs department, senior management, guidance department, and the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) co-ordinator. The team meets weekly, has clear referral pathways, appropriate referral forms and good record keeping practices. Beneficial links are maintained with year heads and tutors who may attend the meeting when deemed necessary.

- Students and parents are provided with valuable information booklets and seminars when making subject choice decisions. There is a whole-school approach and shared responsibility between the guidance department and subject teachers, who give presentations to students to assist them in making informed choices. Students may also avail of one-to-one meetings with the guidance counsellor to discuss the complexity of their choices and longer term implications. This collaborative approach provides students with very good support.
- There are effective whole-school social personal guidance activities including mental health promotion in SPHE, drama workshops, mental health week, Stand Up week, leadership development opportunities for students to train as mentors, and a valuable induction programme for first-year students. First and second-year students participate in an effective Education for Living programme which promotes self-reflection, journaling, and wellbeing.
- STEM are popular subjects in the school. Careers in STEM are very well promoted, by the various subject departments, through well-organised Maths and Science weeks whereby external speakers from colleges and the world of work visit the school. It is positive to note that STEM courses are in the top two college choices for the majority of sixth-year students.
- Senior management and the guidance department maintain very good links with parents and past students who organise school events such as *the future of the world of work* and provide students with valuable work placements.
- Students are provided with a broad range of subject choices including Arts, Science, Business and a number of practical subjects including Home Economics. A recent very successful Arts week celebrated student creativity, innovation, and diversity through drama, music, art and language. It is very good practice to expand students' awareness of the diversity of education and career possibilities in the arts sector.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Overall guidance planning is satisfactory. The guidance programme has been planned by the principal and guidance counsellor. The planning process would be significantly improved by the formation of a whole-school guidance planning team to collaboratively plan and identify the guidance needs of students. Senior management should form a whole-school guidance planning team to establish current whole-school guidance activities, identify guidance needs and work together to plan the overall guidance curricular and co-curricular programme.
- It is commendable that the principal and guidance counsellor have created a vision document for the development of the guidance service in the school. It is encouraging to note they have identified some of the following areas for development: guidance lessons and modules provision at both junior and senior cycle, guidance curriculum content, co-curricular guidance programme, guidance projects and assessment of learning. Time bound actions should now be identified to ensure improvements are achieved in a timely fashion.
- The curricular plan lacks details as it is mainly a list of topics. To improve the plan, the guidance department should include clear learning outcomes, resources, methodologies and assessment strategies.
- There are very good guidance-related procedures and policies including a recently updated critical incident management plan, subject change of level procedures and guidance support referral forms.

- Guidance is not formally evaluated but parents make suggestions for guidance talks and activities and a very good relationship exists between the guidance department and the parents' association. It is recommended that the guidance department undertakes a formal review of the guidance service to include the views of more parents.
- Record keeping of student guidance files is in line with good practice, password protected and stored appropriately.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and guidance counsellor at the conclusion of the evaluation.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the findings and recommendations made in the Inspection Report. It welcomes the affirmation of good practice and will work to support the school and Guidance Department in implementing the recommendations contained therein.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

As with all subject Inspections the school's Board of Management will consider all the recommendations of the Inspection Report. Moving forward we will endeavour to embed these recommendations into our practices in order to uphold the highest standards in all areas of teaching and learning in our school. The school has now employed a fully qualified teacher in Guidance and Counselling to oversee and deliver guidance classes and modules in TY, fifth and sixth year. In addition a whole-school guidance planning team has been established in the school to identify guidance needs and plan the overall guidance curricular and co-curricular programme.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the of quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;