

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection in Home Economics

REPORT

School name	Holy Child Secondary School
School address	Military Road Killiney Co. Dublin
Roll number	60250M

Date of Inspection: 14-02-2020



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 Home Economics 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	13-02-2020, 14-02-2020
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal, deputy principal and home economics teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four lessons• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal, deputy principal and home economics teachers

School context

Holy Child Secondary School, Killiney is a fee-charging school with a current enrolment of 352 girls. The school provides the Junior Cycle programme, a compulsory Transition Year (TY) programme and the Leaving Certificate.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Findings

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; the quality of individual lessons ranged from good to very good.
- In all lessons teachers shared learning intentions with students, however, some learning intentions were not achieved.
- Limited evidence of written formative feedback was observed on students' written work.
- Home Economics is a high profile subject in the school; teachers actively promote the subject through a range of whole-school and co-curricular initiatives.
- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good; development plans to provide additional home economics facilities are well progressed.
- Teacher collaborative practice is very good overall; nevertheless, too many learning outcomes are planned for within junior cycle units of work.

Recommendations

- To enable students to fully achieve the intended learning, teachers should plan for sufficient teacher inputs and student activities in lessons, and ensure the pace of delivery is appropriate.
- Written formative feedback should be provided on a regular basis by teachers to support student improvement in learning.
- Teachers should reduce the number of learning outcomes planned for at junior cycle within individual units of learning so that there is sufficient time to support deep learner engagement with learner outcomes.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was good; individual lessons ranged from good to very good.
- Teachers created very positive learning environments and this supported students to contribute in lessons and ask questions.
- In all lessons, highly effective practice was observed in literacy development. Key words were visible to students on the whiteboard and new terminology was emphasised during lessons. Best practice was evident when students' understanding of new vocabulary was assessed, students had opportunities to pronounce and spell new words, and opportunities were provided for students to apply their learning by using new terminology in oral responses.
- Teachers shared learning intentions with students in all lessons. On occasion, the phrasing of these intentions needed to be adjusted to aid clarity. In many lessons, all of the intended learning was not fully achieved. In one instance, an appropriate number of learning intentions was planned for, however, the pace of the lesson was slower than was necessary and this resulted in some of the intended learning not being achieved. In other instances, additional teacher inputs and student activities were needed to support students to fully achieve all of the intended learning. To enable students to fully achieve the intended learning, teachers should plan for sufficient teacher inputs and student activities in lessons, and ensure the pace of delivery is appropriate.
- Highly effective practice was observed in a textiles lesson when students co-generated success criteria. Students should be encouraged to use the success criteria generated to self and peer assess practical work as the lesson progresses.
- Teachers supported a high standard in students' development of practical skills. This was achieved by high quality whole-class instruction, spot-demonstrations, teacher monitoring, oral formative feedback and one-to-one support.
- Overall, questioning in lessons was very good. In all lessons, teachers effectively used a 'no hands up' approach when distributing questions and 'wait-time'. This supported high levels of student participation and provided time for students to fully consider the question posed before answering.
- In general, teachers monitored students' work regularly; some very detailed correction of work was evident, including the application of marking schemes in the correction of some homework tasks. Limited evidence of written formative feedback was provided on students' work. It is recommended that the provision of written formative feedback is provided on a regular basis so that students are aware of how they can improve.
- In some lessons, the work examined in students' copybooks reflected students' ability to generate their own notes. This very good practice should be extended to all lessons as it supports learner independence.

- In many lessons, students had opportunities to work collaboratively. When utilised, this approach included the use of think-pair-share activities and group work activities, which included tasks such as students working collaboratively to affix the names of the sewing machine to the respective parts of the machine. Further opportunities for collaborative learning could be explored, for example, students could work in pairs and use success criteria to assess the quality of practical work.

2. SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support is very good.
- Senior management supports continuous improvement in teaching and learning by providing opportunities for teachers to attend in-house and external continuing professional development events. Commendably, teachers are provided with opportunities to share their learning with their peers and this is positively impacting on classroom practice.
- Students have very good access to Home Economics. Subject option bands are created based on students' preferences, and this is good practice. Due to the high demand for the subject, Home Economics is offered on all option bands at junior and senior cycle.
- Senior management and teachers employ a range of approaches to support students to make informed subject choice decisions at junior and senior cycle. Notably, incoming first-year students are supported to participate in a short subject sampling programme.
- The home economics facilities consist of a kitchen and textiles room. School development plans are well advanced to provide an additional kitchen and textiles room.
- There is a health and safety statement, and the subject department has outlined potential risks in the home economics kitchen and textiles room. Preventative measures employed to minimise the identified risks have been implemented and recorded, and this is good practice. In consultation with senior management, a risk assessment of the home economics facilities should be undertaken on an annual basis. This should be recorded, signed, dated and filed appropriately.

3. PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- Teacher collaborative practice is very good overall.
- A detailed subject plan has been created which outlines how Home Economics is delivered in the school. Teachers have shared and agreed strategies to be implemented to support whole-school improvement targets.
- Commendably, teachers collaborate with other subject specialists through a local network and through their subject association.
- Subject department meetings are held regularly and minutes summarise decisions made relating to teaching, learning and assessment as well as organisational matters.
- Junior cycle units of work have been prepared. Commendably, each unit of work outlines the key skills students should acquire, and strategies for the development of these skills are identified. Some units of learning contain too many learning outcomes, and this can reduce the opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, understanding, values and skills implicit in learning outcomes. It is recommended that teachers review and reduce the

number of learning outcomes planned for within individual units of learning so that sufficient time exists to support deep learner engagement with the prioritised learner outcomes. In addition, units of learning could be further refined to create more concise working documents. Templates created by the Junior Cycle for Teachers may be useful in supporting this process.

- Teachers plan for students to engage in project work which is relevant to celebrations during the year, for example, student project work relating to marriage and the circulatory system was showcased on the school corridors in advance of St. Valentine's Day. Showcasing students' work promotes the profile of the subject in the school, develops students' self-esteem and raises awareness amongst the student body of relevant issues.
- Leaving Certificate programme plans reflect an incremental and integrated approach to teaching, for example, rather than teaching all of the nutrients in succession, carbohydrates and cereals are taught sequentially. This is very good practice.
- A wide range of whole-school and co-curricular initiatives has been planned by teachers to provide students with opportunities to learn and apply their learning outside of the classroom. Of particular note is the TY 'Significant Learning Day'. This provides all TY students with the opportunity to participate in a variety of workshops including cupcake decorating, Christmas cake decorating and decoupage.
- Commendably, teachers have identified areas for development to be addressed over the next three years. To support the realisation of the targets identified, it is recommended that an action plan be devised to include agreed strategies, assigned responsibilities, and a review process to assess the effectiveness of approaches implemented.
- The subject department reflects on certificate examination results and trends have been identified. In addition, teachers have identified some related strategies that are proving effective in supporting students to achieve their potential, and this is very good.

The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and subject teachers 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

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

The Board is pleased to note the Child Protection provisions were satisfactory.

We note you have assessed the subject provision and whole school support of the subject as very good.

We are pleased to see the move towards collaborative practice recognised.

We confirm our development plans include provisions for facilities upgrade for the subject.

We accept the recommendations in full, to ensure the pace of delivery is appropriate, in order to improve student outcomes.

The staff will accept recommendations in full to assist deep learner engagement.

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;